

Reflections on Pioneers of World Culture



“From generations of soldiers and government officials on my father’s side I inherited a belief that no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country – or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions. From scholars and clergymen on my mother’s side, I inherited a belief that, in the very radical sense of the Gospels, all men were equal as children of God, and should be met and treated by us as our masters in God.”

Dag Hammarskjold

Secretary General of the United Nations, 1953-1961

Aim # 3 “To honour through appropriate observance the contributions of men and women of all ages to world culture”

The third aim of the Institute’s Declaration of Interdependence reminds us that world culture does not just emerge as a plant from the ground, however nourishing the soil. It takes the imagination and courage of human beings to create culture, whether by the articulation of principles, the expression of values or by engagement in action. From human intentions and deliberate actions, specific forms such as artistic compositions, ethical practices and constructive institutions are brought into view for the education and enjoyment of others. Through sharing a vision of possibilities for enlightened living a culture is created.

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Institute of World Culture

We learn culture from our perception and experience of what others have created, and we may be inspired to make our own contributions through experiment and a fresh definition of values. Since world culture is only embryonic at this time, those who are helping to create world culture invite us to learn more than the conventional modes taught through traditional socialization. We are invited to become pioneers in a fascinating enterprise of our era by imaginative thinking and empathetic vision expressed, for example, in the other aims of the Institute's Declaration of Interdependence. A first step in this undertaking is to honor by study and use the contributions of those who have gone before and can be viewed as heroes. To this end, the Institute's programs in 2010 will focus on several pioneers, past and present, from several continents and cultures. Please join us in this journey that combines biography, history, intellectual creativity, political engagement and enthusiasm for a future in which lives are lived with the support of a nourishing world culture.

Carolyn Dorrance, President

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