



Soka University of America

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Soka University of America's 2nd Annual Peace Gala – *Celebrating a Vision of Peace* Raises \$600,000 for Scholarship Fund *Gala More Than Doubles in Size from Previous Year*

Aliso Viejo, Calif., Oct. 10, 2006 – Soka University of America (SUA) announced that its second annual Peace Gala, *Celebrating a Vision of Peace*, held at the picturesque university campus in Aliso Viejo on October 7, 2007, netted close to \$600,000. Nearly 500 guests enjoyed an elegant evening of dinner, live auction and music featuring Grammy award winning jazz saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter, and fellow Grammy winner and icon of modern music, Herbie Hancock. Patrick Duffy, best known for his role as Bobby Ewing on TV's *Dallas*, was the Master of Ceremonies for the evening. DawnMarie Kotsonis led a spirited auction, contributing \$84,000 to the evening's total proceeds.

The annual event is held to raise funds to provide scholarships for Soka University students who come from around the world to participate in SUA's distinctive educational experience. A unique aspect of the university's curriculum requires that all students participate in a semester of Study Abroad/International Internship (SAII) during their junior year, for which they receive academic credit equivalent to four courses. SUA was the first college in the nation to require this semester-long study abroad experience which is included in the cost of tuition. This requirement reflects SUA's educational philosophy of creating relevance for students between their classroom study and the world around them.

"Our students are very grateful to those who have contributed toward their education and feel a true sense of responsibility to reply to their expectations," said SUA President Daniel Habuki. "Many of our students come from families who are unable to meet the financial requirements for higher education. Through the generosity of our donors and sponsors, many of these young people have been given the opportunity to overcome tremendous challenges to live a life filled with hope and determination to create value in their own lives, society and the world."

"It was here at SUA that I brought my often-blurry vision of a peaceful society into sharper focus by studying the political, philosophical and socio-economic realities obstructing peace on this planet," said Nathan Gauer, a member of the first graduating class of SUA (2005). "It was also here, during my senior year that I decided to apply to the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I am happy to report that I was accepted this past March to the Adolescent Risk and Prevention program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and began classes about 3 weeks ago. I believe this is clear proof of the power of receiving a Soka Education: SUA shaped me, a near high school drop-out who was told that he wasn't capable of attending college, into a future Harvard graduate."

Some of this year's auction highlights included a guitar autographed by Shorter, Hancock and Carlos Santana which brought in \$33,000; a diamond peace dove brooch at \$12,500; a 2007 Pontiac Solstice at \$20,000; a Napa weekend with private jet at \$4,500; a round of golf with Patrick Duffy at \$5,000; and dinner with SUA President Daniel Habuki at \$6,000. Following the auction, Shorter and Hancock delivered mesmerizing performances of selections from their 1997 release, 1+1.

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Editors Quick Notes:

WHO: Soka University of America

WHAT: Second Annual Peace Conference, *Celebrating a Vision of Peace*.

WHEN: Saturday, October 7, 2006, 5:00 p.m. Underwriters reception, cocktails, 7:30 p.m. dinner

WHERE: Soka University of America – 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

WHY: To provide scholarships for Soka University students

TICKETS: \$250 per seat

SPONSORS/UNDERWRITERS: See attached list

About Soka University of America

Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo (SUA) is a selective, independent, non-profit, co-educational, comprehensive institution of higher learning. The university offers a comparative study of Eastern and Western perspectives integrated across a traditional liberal arts curriculum. SUA serves both national and international students. Founded on the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life, SUA is open to students of all beliefs and is committed to diversity in its academic community. SUA opened in fall 2001 to its first 120 freshmen students. Currently the university has about 400 students with plans to grow to 800 toward 2020. The student-faculty ratio is 9 to 1. Other programs, including educational access for adult students and graduate programs through the doctorate, are planned for the future.

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