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MEDIA PEACE PRIZE

PRESENTATION OF 1982 AWARDS

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, SYDNEY, 24 OCTOBER 1982 12.30 P.M.

PEACE AND YOUTH

The Hon. Mr. Justice M.D. Kirby  
Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission

October 1982

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MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER 1982 12.30 P.M.

PEACE AND YOUTH

OF CHAOS AND PEACE

I am delighted that Senator Peter Baume agreed to present the Media Peace Prizes this year. We have know each other from university days and remain good friends, despite the passing of the years.

In fact, the Minister recently reappointed me to the Australian National Commission for UNESCO. At the meeting of the National Commission, in which Professor Hugh Philp took such a leading part over many years, a delicate question arose last week. It was: 'What is the oldest profession in the world?' I do assure the Minister that we also talked of other weightier things. But this issue attracted the attention of some of the participants.

A medical colleague asserted: 'Well, plainly it's the medical profession. God created Eve from Adam's rib. That was the first transplant operation. So, it was claimed, the medical was the oldest profession.'

'Not so', claimed an architect. 'The very first lines of the Book refer to God's creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This was the first act of the Great Architect. So architecture was first.'

But then a lawyer in the group said. 'Neither of you is correct. You should remember that God created the Heavens and the Earth out of chaos.' And, he asked, 'Guess who made the chaos?'

Well, chaos is the special feature of our time. The efforts to introduce order and world peace have not been notably successful in recent years, including the year past. But now there is an element of urgency. I imagine that many of you listen, as I do, to the Science Show presented by the irreplaceable Dr. Robyn Williams - a past winner of one of

these Peace Prizes. It remains a major media contribution to peace. A fortnight ago there was a moving interview with Sir Martin Ryle, Fellow of the Royal Society, Astronomer Royal and Nobel Laureate. Ryle, is only one of two Nobel Prize winners in astronomy. He looks at our world from the perspective of an astronomer - lamenting our incapacity, in our insignificant little planet, to solve our practical problems such as daily water supply for a third of mankind. Instead we verge on the brink of nuclear self-destruction. I inferred that Ryle was distinctly pessimistic about the long-term hopes for this world. Here is no fellow traveller, no weak-kneed pacifist, no suspect sympathiser with authoritarian regimes. Just a brilliant scientist who sees our world in its proper place and calls attention to the urgency of the realisation of the need to work positively for peace. What does it matter, he asked, if we stand in a drum of petrol and boast that we have more matches than someone else: when a single match can do irreparable self-destruction?

#### OF PEACE AND YOUTH

Because the achievement of peace is the imperative for future generations, concern about peace must be fostered amongst the young. As a contribution to this end, I am happy to announce that the Peace Program of the United Nations Association of Australia, supported by the Department of Education in Macquarie University, now launch a Media Peace Prize for Student Productions. Following the success of the Media Peace Prize (which is now in its fourth year in Australia and been copied elsewhere in the world) and following the success of the Junior Media Peace Prize, now in its third year, the Media Peace Prize for Student Productions will be available henceforth to students of the media at tertiary institutions in Australia in which media courses are taught. Like the Media Peace Prize and the Junior Media Peace Prize, the new Prize will be available Australia-wide. Its categories will be the familiar ones: film, video tape, radio and print (including photography). Details of the Prize, including eligibility, methods of submission and criteria will be announced in all of the tertiary institutions applicable. The aim of this new Prize is to encourage tertiary students - especially those who are likely to enjoy the great opportunities and responsibilities of the free media in Australia in future years - to look at peace as a subject, to include peace in their agenda and to give a high priority to the non-violent resolution of conflict.

I am sure you will welcome this new Media Peace Prize. We will all look forward to the first award of the Prize in 1983. May these practical efforts in the Media Peace Prizes contribute to a peaceful world for the youth of tomorrow.