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Leading Voice of the Armenian Genocide to Receive Spendlove Prize

Peter Balakian, who brought renewed attention to the Armenian Genocide, will be the 2012 recipient of the Alice and Clifford Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance

MERCED, Calif. — Peter Balakian, an award-winning author and a leading voice of Armenian Genocide recognition, has been named the 2012 recipient of the Alice and Clifford Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance.

The University of California, Merced, will award the prize to Balakian during an evening ceremony April 12. The following day at 10 a.m. in the Classroom and Office Building, Room 105, Balakian will give a talk that's open to the public. No RSVP is required.

The Spendlove Prize was established through a generous gift to the university from Sherrie Spendlove in honor of her parents, lifelong Merced residents Alice and Clifford Spendlove. The prize every year honors an individual who exemplifies the delivery of social justice, diplomacy and tolerance in his or her work.

Quick Facts

- Peter Balakian, an author who has become a leading voice of Armenian Genocide recognition, will be the 2012 Spendlove Prize recipient.
- The Spendlove Prize each year honors an individual who exemplifies the delivery of social justice, diplomacy and tolerance.
- Balakian has received several awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.



"Peter Balakian has been called 'the American conscience of the Armenian Genocide,'" Sherrie Spendlove said. "Our world history is incomplete without the full story of the Armenian Genocide being inscribed therein for all to see. Genocide in any part of the world in any epoch is an affront to humanity everywhere, in every time."

Balakian is the author of the memoir "Black Dog of Fate," winner of the PEN/Albrand Prize for memoir and a New York Times Notable Book. In the book, Balakian writes about learning what his family and ancestors experienced with the Turkish government's extermination of more than a million Armenians in 1915, including many of his relatives. The massacre led to the creation of the word "genocide" and served as a template for Nazi Germany's Holocaust.

In "The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response," Balakian chronicles the massacres of the Armenians in the 1890s and genocide in 1915 at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Balakian used rarely seen archival documents and remarkable first-person accounts to present the chilling history of how the Young Turk government implemented the first modern genocide behind the cover of World War I. He also resurrects an extraordinary lost chapter of world history.

The book won the 2005 Raphael Lemkin Prize and was a New York Times Notable Book and New York Times best seller.

Balakian, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities in the department of English at Colgate University, is the recipient of many awards and prizes and civic citations, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the Emily Clark Balch Prize for poetry from the "Virginia Quarterly Review." He has appeared widely on national television and radio including "60 Minutes," "ABC World News Tonight," "Charlie Rose" and "Fresh Air." Foreign editions of his work have appeared in a dozen languages including Arabic, French, Dutch, Hebrew, Greek and Turkish.

"For decades, Peter Balakian has spoken with personal knowledge and great courage about the Armenian genocide," said Mark Aldenderfer, dean of the UC Merced School

of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. "Through the award of the Spendlove Prize, we are honored to help him in his efforts to bring to light the horrors experienced by the Armenian people in the 20th century so that they may never be forgotten or repeated by others."

The Spendlove Prize Selection Committee is chaired by Aldenderfer and includes a representative from the Spendlove family or a designee; an undergraduate student; a graduate student; a faculty member; and representatives from the UC Merced community.

The Spendlove Prize includes an \$8,000 award. Previous recipients of the award are:

- 2006 - Charles J. Ogletree Jr., a Merced native, professor of law and founding executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard University.
- 2007 - John Y. Tateishi, a civil rights activist who led the successful redress campaign for Japanese-Americans in the aftermath of World War II internment.
- 2008 - Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Fedderson, founders of Childhelp, a nationwide organization devoted to the prevention and treatment of child abuse. O'Meara and Fedderson have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with abused children.
- 2009 - Faye J. Crosby, a professor of psychology at UC Santa Cruz and expert on affirmative action and inclusiveness.
- 2010 - Jimmy Carter, a former United States president who made the global quest for basic human rights a central platform in his administration.
- 2011 - Cruz Reynoso, a former California Supreme Court Justice and civil rights lawyer who has spent his life fighting for immigrants' rights.

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UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. The campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research and as a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the

region. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the university is expected to grow rapidly, topping out at about 25,000 students within 30 years.