



Fact Sheet

Our Mission

The lessons of the Salem Witch Trials compel Voices Against Injustice to celebrate today's champions of human rights by presenting the annual Salem Awards, stewarding the Salem Witch Trials Memorial and inspiring members of our worldwide community to confront fear and social injustice.

What does VAI do?

For those interested in understanding how our shared past can influence our present and drive future change, **Voices Against Injustice** uses the lessons of the Salem Witch Trials to inform and inspire individuals and communities to advance social justice and celebrate today's defenders of human rights.

Remember

Maintain the Salem Witch Trials Memorial in partnership with the City of Salem and Peabody Essex Museum and use lessons to inspire action. Visited by over six million people since its opening in 1992, this monument is a Site of Conscience and is nationally acclaimed by the American Institute of Architects.

Honor

Recognize individuals and/or organizations helping those who suffer discrimination and injustice.

The Salem Award for Human Rights and Social Justice: We honor those taking action to alleviate discrimination, promote tolerance, and achieve justice for contemporary victims of social injustice. We acknowledge the significance of award recipients' work and join them in fostering tolerance and reconciliation.

The Rising Leader Awards: Publicly recognize local high school students for leadership in human rights and social justice with a book award and a cash prize.

The Salem Advocate for Social Justice: Presented in collaboration with Salem State University at the Speaker Series, the Advocate is awarded periodically to luminaries who use their platform to champion social justice issues.

Act

Partner to create, commission, and implement programming to educate and compel to action based on the lessons of the Salem Witch Trials. We have partnered with the City of Salem and the Peabody Essex Museum for citywide 6-word memoirs on the theme of Inclusion; supported the launch of a social justice curriculum at Salem High School; created Salem's Black History Audio Tour; organized and co-sponsored a symposium at Salem State University commemorating the 325th anniversary of the Salem Witch Trials; and partnered with Essex Heritage to host annual Trails and Sails events.

Salem Award Recipients

1992

Greg Allan Williams, aiding someone being beaten during the Los Angeles riots

1993

Morris Dees, opposing the Ku Klux Klan and founding the Southern Poverty Law Center

1994

William Johnston, directing the Boston Police Hate Crimes Unit and working with Facing History and Ourselves

1995

Harry Wu, exposing human rights violations in China, where he was held in Laogai Prison for 19 years, founding Laogai Research Foundation

1996

Aaron Feuerstein, supporting labor in the aftermath of the Malden Mills fire

1997

Dr. Vicky Guzman, providing medical care while advocating for the rights of the rural poor in El Salvador

1998

Barbara Vogel, founding STOP (Slavery That Oppresses People) and inspiring students to act

1999

Leonard Zakim, leading as Executive Director of ADL NewEngland (Anti-Defamation League)

2000

Dr. Jane Schaller, focusing on war's effect on children and youth as President of Physicians for Human Rights

2001

Robert Raiche, promoting friendship among opposing groups, Catholic and Protestant teens in N. Ireland, Jews and Arabs in Israel

2002

James C. McCoskey, overturning wrongful convictions

2003

Jane Elliott, teaching about discrimination and creating anti-racist curriculum for children and adults

2004 Fahima Vorgetts, advocating for Afghani women and children

2005

Paula Donovan, helping to eradicate HIV/AIDS in Africa as a focus of her work in international relations

2006

Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift and Prof. Neal Katyal, lead counsels in Supreme Court case, Hamden vs. Rumsfeld defending Yemeni prisoner held in Guantanamo

2007

Eric Reeves, Eric Reeves, championing human rights as a researcher, analyst, and advocate, and directing the Sudan Aid Fund

2008

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers, fighting human trafficking and violence in the US agriculture industry.

2009

Greg Mortenson, promoting peace and building schools, especially for girls, in Pakistan and Afghanistan

2010

Dr. Jonathan Shay, advocating for soldiers and veterans and bringing awareness to PTSD as a medical condition

2011

City Life/Vida Urbana, fighting economic injustices associated with mortgage availability abuse

2012

* Rededication of Salem Witch Trials Memorial

2013

Thomas Doyle, blowing the whistle on sex abuse in the Catholic Church and Horace Seldon, fighting structural racism and founding Community Change, Inc.

2014

Brian Concannon and Mario Joseph, working to restore democracy, justice and human rights in Haiti

2015

José Vargas, advocating for the rights of undocumented Americans as a journalist and activist

2016

Anne Driscoll, groundbreaking work in overturning wrongful convictions

2017-18

The GroundTruth Project and founder Charles Sennott, heralding truth, integrity, and sustainability in journalism

2019

Ana Maria Archila, for speaking out for victims of sexual assault, and for work with Center for Popular Democracy

2020

Massachusetts Bail Fund, fighting pre-trial incarceration and exposing gross inequities in the cash bail system