



DANIEL PEARL AWARD

for courage and integrity
in journalism

From Tragedy Comes Inspiration

*A Decade
After Daniel
Pearl's Death,
His Parents
Continue to
Promote the
Projects That
Reflected His
Passions*

BY ANNA SCOTT

TEN YEARS AGO, the world was shaken by the death of *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Daniel Pearl. While Daniel's story touched thousands, few have felt the loss more deeply than his parents, Judea and Ruth, and his then pregnant wife, Mariane. But they have not let the tragedy of Daniel's death overshadow his extraordinary life. Through the Daniel Pearl Foundation, they continue to share his spirit with the world.

The nonprofit foundation honors Daniel, who was not only a well-respected foreign correspondent but also an accomplished violinist and by all accounts a fun-loving soul, through myriad projects that reflect his passions. The organization's story is an unlikely one of transcending tragedy to make some sense out of the senseless.

It all began on Jan. 23, 2002, when Daniel was in Pakistan reporting a story about the Al Qaeda terrorist network's financial ties. That evening, he kissed Mariane, also a journalist, goodbye and went to meet a source in the Pakistani port city of Karachi. Though Daniel was known to be an extremely careful reporter, the source lured him into a trap, and he was abducted.

For the next excruciating month, Daniel's parents, wife and colleagues at the *Journal* bounced between hope and despair. All they saw or heard of him was in video

footage released by his kidnappers. Efforts by the FBI and the Pakistani police failed to yield information on Daniel's whereabouts. More than once, the family was told that Daniel's body had been found, only to learn later that the reports were false. Daniel's co-workers feared that if his parents' Israeli background leaked out he would be in grave danger.

Judea hails from the Orthodox Tel Aviv suburb of B'nai Brak. Ruth is from Baghdad, and came with her parents to Israel in 1951, where she later met Judea at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

In what the *Jewish Journal* of Greater Los Angeles described in 2006 as "a rare display of professional solidarity in the competitive media," no outlets reported on the Pearls' Israeli backgrounds until after Daniel's death.

Ruth told the *Jewish Journal* she held out hope in the weeks after her son's abduction in part because Daniel's "goodness shone through, and we couldn't believe that his kidnappers could live with him for weeks and not be affected by it."

Then, on the morning of Feb. 21, 2002, the unthinkable happened. The family received the news that the kidnappers had released a gruesome video of Daniel's murder by decapitation.

Although Daniel and Mariane's son Adam was born several months after his father's death, it was six months from the time



Daniel Pearl in concert.



Daniel Pearl, far right, plays electric violin in a band in Mumbai.

of the killing before Daniel's parents were able to bury their son.

Ruth told the *Jewish Journal* that at the time, "I felt that my life was over." Yet she and Judea also felt something more powerful than grief: They felt driven to preserve that basic goodness Daniel possessed, and to share it with the world.

"We refused to accept the idea that Danny's contributions to the world as a journalist, as a musician, as a gentle human being was ended forever," Judea told the *Jewish Journal*. So in the days after Daniel's death, they funneled the various donations they'd received into a newly established nonprofit entity that would become the Daniel Pearl Foundation.

Today, the Foundation sponsors multiple efforts in journalism, music and multicultural dialogue.

In journalism, the foundation provides opportunities for young and older journalists alike. The Daniel Pearl Journalism Fellowship brings mid-career journalists from South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere to work for six months in a U.S. newsroom.

For younger aspiring journalists, the Foundation offers training, internship and writing programs.

The online Pearl Youth News service brings together students from all over the world to be trained by volunteer professionals and report, write and publish their own stories for the Internet. The program partners with school newspapers so they can publish articles by students all over the world.

Before students can contribute to the news service, they must complete a certification program that teaches basic reporting skills, from ethics to developing sources and conducting interviews to building compelling articles.

In music, the Foundation has created Daniel Pearl World Music Days, which fall during Daniel's birthday month of October. The celebration has grown to include more than 8,900 performances in 119 countries.

The Foundation also fosters respectful multicultural dialogue with the Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding, a series of public conversations between



President Barack Obama signs the Daniel Pearl Freedom of Press Act while widow Mariane Pearl (L) and son Adam Daniel Pearl (2nd-L), stand nearby on May 17, 2010, in Washington, DC. The act, named in honor of Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was kidnapped and killed by Islamic extremists in Pakistan in 2002, expands the examination of press freedom worldwide in the State Department's annual human rights report.

DANIEL PEARL AWARD THE PEARL FAMILY

UCLA professor Judea Pearl and Dr. Akbar Ahmed, chair of Islamic Studies at American University. The conversations, which cover ground as diverse as current news, religion and history, aim to improve relations between Muslim and Jewish communities.

That kind of dialogue continues at the Daniel Pearl Lecture Series at UCLA and Stanford, featuring scholars, journalists and policy makers speaking on topics ranging from journalism and music

to psychology and religion. The only rule for the speaking engagements, the Pearls insist, is that the tone remain civil and respectful.

The influence of the reporter and the family has extended even further. In May 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act. The measure, which received bipartisan Congressional support, is intended to promote a free press around the world.

Through all these efforts, Judea and Ruth have refused to allow Daniel's untimely death to stand as a pure loss. By taking inspiration from his life, they continue to enlighten and provide opportunities for people all over the world who otherwise would never have known of their son and his remarkable life.

It is not an easy road, Judea and Ruth have admitted in interviews. But knowing that what they do makes a positive impact in the areas their son cared about most passionately drives them to continue, day in and day out. 🕊

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A Menorah belonging to the great-grandfather of Daniel Pearl is lit by his parents, Judea and Ruth Pearl, during the Festival of Lights in December, 2007, in the Grand Foyer of the White House.

White House photo by Joyce N. Boghosian



MARIANE PEARL'S MIGHTY HEART

AN AWARD-WINNING international journalist, Mariane Pearl was married to *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl when he was abducted and brutally slain by terrorists in Pakistan in 2002.

She is on the honorary board of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, which aims to carry on his legacy by promoting tolerance and understanding internationally through journalism, music and dialogue.

In 2003, she wrote "A Mighty Heart: The Brave Life and Death of My Husband Daniel Pearl," which recounts her life with him and his tragic murder. In its review of what it called "a brave and beautifully written book," the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* wrote: "Mariane Pearl moves beyond horror and grief to write elegantly and knowl-

edgeably about the vortex of religion, politics, and terrorism into which her husband was swept."

In 2007, the book was made into a movie starring Angelina Jolie. That same year, Mariane penned "In Search of Hope: The Global Diaries of Mariane Pearl," which profiles courageous women she encountered in her world travels for her *Glamour* magazine column.

She continues to promote tolerance through understanding. In a recent interview, she explained that after terrorists took her husband's life, "I was very much determined that our son was going to be free of that sort of hatred that they were trying to promote."



Mariane with son Adam, born May 2002, three months after his father's death.