



## UNH Recognizes Achievements Of State And National Leaders At Commencement May 20

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire will honor two New Hampshire residents for outstanding community service with Granite State Awards that will be presented at the 136th Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 20, 2006, beginning at 10 a.m. in Cowell Stadium. In addition, the founder of the international Slow Food movement and the world's leading expert in nonviolent political action will receive honorary degrees from the university.

This year's recipients of the Granite State Award are blues musician TJ Wheeler and Ann Peters, a leader among human service agencies in New Hampshire.

Wheeler has been the impetus behind several efforts to educate young people around the world about the importance of the message of the Blues. He co-founded The Blues Bank Collective; established the Hope, Heroes and The Blues Tour in 1989 to take the message to inner city schools, libraries, blues societies, after school programs and nursing homes from Boston to Atlanta; and started the Blues in the School program. Wheeler has also been a driving force behind the Black Heritage Festival and the Portsmouth Blues Festival. He was a key player in the fight for a Martin Luther King Holiday in New Hampshire.

For more than 25 years Ann Peters has served as the director of Lamprey Health Care, a federally funded community health center known nationally for its outstanding work serving over 16,500 patients in New Hampshire. She has been a leader in securing access to care for prenatal patients and basic health care for all regardless of ability to pay. Peters serves on the executive committee of the Endowment for Health and was appointed to chair the National Advisory Committee on Prenatal Care by the U.S. Public Health Service.

In addition to actor Mike O'Malley, this year's Commencement speaker, honorary degrees will be awarded to Carlo Petrini, founder of the Slow Food Association, and Gene Sharp, the world's leading historian, analyst, advocate and trainer of nonviolence political action.

Petrini founded the Slow Food Association in 1986 to support the protection of traditional foods and agricultural biodiversity. Slow Food became an international association in 1989 and now has over 80,000 members in more than 100 countries. One of the more compelling aspects of his work is its direct relevance to New Hampshire, UNH students and the university's land-grant mission. UNH is at the forefront of a renaissance of food and agriculture in New England. It is the first land-grant university in the nation with an organic research dairy; its Local Harvest Initiative emphasizes serving local and regional foods in dining and hospitality services; and it is home to an active Organic Gardening Club, a food waste composting program, and a recently launched waste vegetable oil project that will

produce biodiesel for heating greenhouses and powering farm tractors.

Gene Sharp has written more than 10 books, most notably his major work *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, two books on Gandhi and one – now happily obsolete – on how Western Europe could nonviolently resist a Soviet invasion. A booklet written by Sharp was translated into Serbian, and less than a year later the movement it inspired overthrew Milosevic. He founded and remains the senior fellow at the Albert Einstein Institute in Boston, which is one of the only think tanks dedicated entirely to the theory and practice of mass nonviolence.