

# **GCC Alum Lauded at United Nations for International Peace Garden**

GCC President's Inauguration to Mark Opening of Campus Peace Garden  
Monday, April 23, 2012

Batavia, New York - Ceremonies last week at the United Nations in New York City honored a Batavia native and Genesee Community College graduate for her work planting the seeds of what is now an international effort aimed at advancing global friendship and international understanding through the creation of peace gardens and cultural programs around the world.

Paula Savage (GCC class of 1976) initiated the first Peace Garden in 1990 while representing the Canadian capital of Ottawa in the Tourism and Hospitality industry. Back then, she orchestrated the gift of 4,000 tulip bulbs from Canada to the United States, and worked with the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. to create the first International Peace Garden, which honors the International Boundary as the longest undefended border in the world.

From those humble beginnings sprouted the International Peace Garden Foundation, which serves to foster world peace and friendship through the creation of Peace Gardens across the globe. Ms. Savage serves as International President of the IPGF (<http://ipgf.org/>), which has gardens in North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia.

The ceremony at the U.N.'s Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on April 12, 2012 marked the beginning of the World Harmony Run, which carries a flaming torch to countless schools in more than 100 countries around the world to promote international friendship and understanding. Ms. Savage was honored with the Torch-Bearers Award for her efforts to promote those goals. "I am humbled and overwhelmed to be in the company of such remarkable people," said Ms. Savage. Previous U.S. award recipients include renowned athletes Billy Jean King and Carl Lewis and business magnate Russell Simmons. The honor will also bring the torch through Batavia in early August as it makes its way from Buffalo to Albany on its 10,000 mile U.S. journey.

Ms. Savage's long-running affiliation with GCC dates back to the school's very beginnings, when she was among the first students to enroll, and she has continued her relationship by serving on the Advisory Committee for Tourism and Hospitality. She also serves on the selection committee for the Alumni Hall of Fame, and was among the first graduates to be inducted into the Hall in 2007.

GCC will honor Ms. Savage when the College celebrates the inauguration of President James M. Sunser next month. As part of a week-long series of events to mark the prestigious occasion, GCC will celebrate the opening of the Honorary International Peace Garden in the new outdoor courtyard by the Conable Technology Building. The ceremony will take place at dusk on Thursday, May 3, 2012.

"Having the garden at GCC is quite an honor. It sends a message to students that the choices we make during our time at GCC will ultimately have an impact on the path we take in life and where that path leads us," said Ms. Savage. "I will be the first to admit that many of the skills needed to administer the International Peace Gardens were developed during my time at GCC."

Ms. Savage also leads tourism efforts in Rochester as the director of tourism for the Visit Rochester Association.