

THE CARTER-MENIL
HUMAN RIGHTS
PRIZE

The Rothko Chapel

December 10, 1986

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation
Board of Directors

Jimmy Carter, Chairman
Dominique de Menil, President
Miles Glaser, Secretary
George G. Schira, Treasurer and Executive Director

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Our commitment to Human Rights must be absolute. The powerful must not persecute the weak, and human dignity must be enhanced. The world itself is now dominated by a new spirit. People are craving and now demanding their place in the sun—not just for the benefit of their own physical conditions, but for basic human rights. Because we are free, we never can be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere.

President Carter in his
Inaugural Address,
January 20, 1977.

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation

Well before he was elected president of the United States, Jimmy Carter was deeply concerned with violations of human rights. To promote continued efforts on behalf of human rights, the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation was formed, combining President Carter's influence with the advocacy of Dominique de Menil, a prominent proponent of respect for human rights.

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation recognizes one or two individuals or organizations with a major prize for courageous and effective work to further human rights.

Yuri Orlov, a Soviet physicist and dissident recently released from exile, and the Group for Mutual Support of Guatemala, known as GAM, are the first Carter-Menil Prize recipients. The Carter-Menil Prize will be presented every year on December 10—the anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The prize will be awarded in Atlanta in 1987, and in Paris in 1988 to honor the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration.

A distinguished panel of advisers representing the foremost human rights organizations assists in the selection of award recipients.

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation encourages the preeminence of human rights and their recognition among all nations. The foundation provides a forum for information and mediation between government and dissidents. Additionally, the foundation helps human rights groups publicize abuses and intercedes directly on behalf of victims.

The foundation will have offices in Paris and Houston as well as in the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta. President Carter is chairman, Mrs. de Menil is president, and George Schira is executive director.

The Recipients

Yuri Orlov

*Soviet physicist and co-founder
of the Moscow Helsinki Group*

The Group for Mutual Support (GAM)

*An association of families
of disappeared persons in Guatemala*

Yuri Orlov

Yuri Fyodorovich Orlov, a physicist, was born August 13, 1924. A veteran of World War II, he is married to Irina Orlova and has three sons from a previous marriage. An activist for human rights, Dr. Orlov recently was released from exile in Siberia and now resides in the United States.

Dr. Orlov was employed as a physicist at the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics of the USSR Academy of Sciences until 1956 when he was expelled from the Communist Party and dismissed from his job for outspoken criticism at a party meeting. Subsequently, he was forced to move to Armenia where he received a doctorate in physical and mathematical sciences.

He returned to Moscow in 1972. Following a letter in defense of Andrei Sakharov, Dr. Orlov lost his institute post in 1974. He since has been denied the opportunity to work in his profession in the Soviet Union.

His position as a founding member and chairman of the Moscow Helsinki Group led to his arrest February 10, 1977. He was charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and sentenced to seven years in a strict regimen labor camp followed by five years in exile.

In February 1984, Dr. Orlov was released from the labor camp into exile in Siberia where he lived in complete isolation in a primitive hut under extremely harsh conditions. He was not permitted to receive any mail or telephone calls from the West beginning October 1984. He suffered from a number of unattended chronic ailments, including cystitis, nephritis, prostatitis and the after-effects of an old skull injury.

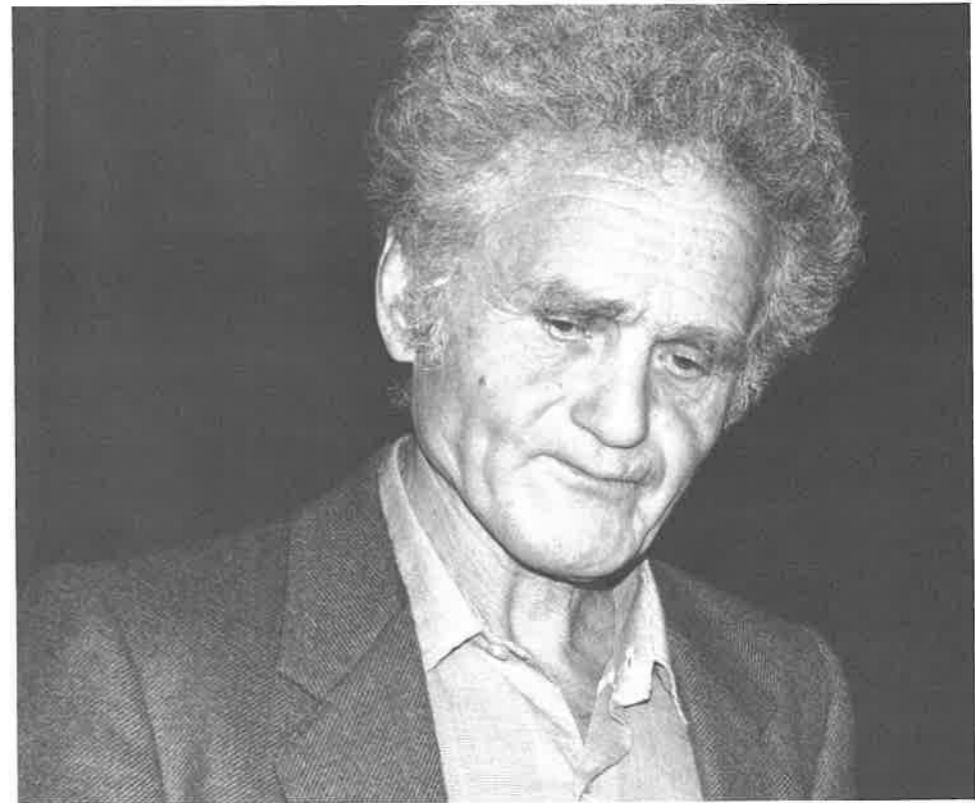


Photo: Janet Fleischman

It seems that I have done so little, and yet a week has gone by, a month (true, years are behind me, a whole eternity). What is the meaning of life? That your soul may outlive your remains in something sacred and should escape decay. This month, with a clear head, I have again looked at, added up, corrected, and sized up what I have been doing during these last years and have seen that this is good.

Yuri Orlov, August 1980,
before being returned to an isolation cell.

The Group for Mutual Support (GAM)

The Group for Mutual Support (Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo or GAM) of Guatemala is an organization uniting families whose relatives have been abducted, kidnapped or have disappeared in Guatemala.

GAM was founded on June 5, 1984 by Nineth Montenegro de Garcia and Isabel Choxom de Castañón, both of whom count their husbands among those who have disappeared. Its members initiated inquiries with the Guatemalan government to determine the whereabouts of their disappeared relatives. When those petitions went unanswered, GAM organized marches and other forms of protests.

Two weeks before a protest march in April 1985, two of GAM's leaders were kidnapped, tortured and assassinated—one along with her 21-year-old brother and two-year-old son. That march became not just a further GAM protest over human rights violations in Guatemala, but an indignant outcry over the murders of two of its own.

Today, GAM has a membership of 1,400 families. Most of their disappeared relatives are young men—students, professionals, community and union leaders, and peasants—between the ages of 20 and 40, according to an Americas Watch report. Women, children and even infants also have been abducted and murdered.



Photo: Jean-Marie Simon

Keep going! Fight to survive in that secret corner, and here we will continue fighting for your freedom, because they will never, ever be able to make honorable men vanish into thin air, as if they were nothing.

Isabel de Castañón, a GAM founder,
in an open letter to her missing husband, Gustavo.

President Carter

Born October 1, 1924, Jimmy Carter grew up in the small southwestern Georgia farming town of Plains. His father, James Earl Carter Sr., was a farmer; his mother, Lillian, a nurse.

He was educated in Plains public schools, attended Georgia Southwestern College, Georgia Institute of Technology, and was graduated from the United States Naval Academy. He did graduate work in nuclear physics and worked under Admiral Hyman Rickover in the development of the atomic submarine program.

During his naval career, he lived in many parts of the United States and served around the world, including the Far East. When his father died in 1953, he resigned his commission and returned to Plains. In addition to working his own farm, he continued a small business of his father's while his wife, Rosalynn, kept the books. The business grew into a profitable, general-purpose seed and farm supply operation.

Soon after his return to Plains, Jimmy Carter became involved in the affairs of his community. He became a deacon and Sunday School teacher in his small church, chairman of the School Board, among other civic activities, and was the first president of the Georgia Planning Association. In 1962, he was elected to the Georgia Senate. He waged his first gubernatorial campaign in 1966.

In 1971, Jimmy Carter became Georgia's 76th governor. His fellow governors selected him to serve as chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Coastal Plains Regional Action Planning Commission and the Southern Growth Policies Board.

In 1973, he became the Democratic Party's National Chairman for the 1974 elections. He announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination on December 12, 1974, and won his party's nomination at the 1976 Democratic National Convention on the first ballot. Jimmy Carter was elected president on November 2, 1976, with 297 electoral votes and 50.1 percent of the popular vote.

President Carter's autobiography, *Why Not The Best?*, was published in 1975. His presidential memoirs, *Keeping Faith—Memoirs Of A President*, were published in 1982. He also is the author of *A Government As Good As Its People*, 1977, and *The Blood of Abraham*, 1985.

In recent years, he has spent considerable time and effort organizing the Carter Presidential Center, which was dedicated October 1, 1986.



The Carter Presidential Center Atlanta, Georgia

After leaving the White House, President Carter felt an obligation to use the knowledge, influence, and experience he gained in office to continue the search for solutions to problems on the national and international agenda established during his presidency.

Among the issues President Carter feels significantly affect the nation and the world are hunger, health, the declining state of the environment, human rights abuses, international conflicts, and arms control.

To determine the most effective means of continuing the work begun during his presidency, he sought the counsel of knowledgeable and distinguished leaders both here and abroad.

The result was the creation of the Carter Presidential Center: a combination of the presidential library, a home for international programs addressing the Carter agenda, and a public policy center.

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation is one of the four entities promoting the agenda and initiatives President Carter established during his administration. The foundation supports efforts to correct human rights abuses everywhere.