



For the first time since 2019, Kent State University remembered May 4, 1970, with an in-person annual commemoration. The public was invited back to the Kent Campus to honor the four students who were killed, the nine students who were wounded and the countless others whose lives were forever changed when the Ohio National Guard fired on Kent State students during an anti-war protest.

Here are some photo highlights from the 52nd annual commemoration.

THE POWER OF OUR VOICES MAY 4, 1970 - 2022 Annual Commemoration

1 CONCERT TO COMMEMORATE MAY 4, 1970

The Glauser School of Music and special guests perform “Stories of Peace, Protest and Reflection” at Severance Music Center in Cleveland on May 2, 2022.

The concert featured ensembles from across the School of Music performing a diverse array of genres including classical, jazz, gospel and world music. It also featured collaborations with the School of Theatre and Dance, the Wick Poetry Center and guest clarinetist David Shifrin, who was a student at the Kent Blossom Music Festival in summer 1970. Each work explored social justice, civil rights and the complex emotions felt before, during and after tragedy.

“Today we face many of the same challenges that led to May 4,” says Kent McWilliams, School of Music director and professor. “Through art, we can gather as a community to continue to learn and face them together.”

To help him develop the expansive program, McWilliams assembled a team that included Amitai Vardi, artistic director and professor of clarinet; Ricardo Sepulveda, logistics coordinator and director of the Kent Blossom Music Festival; and Marla Berg, opera director and associate professor of voice.



2 KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

Kendra and Michael Pacifico, BA '74, stand in front of the “Armed With Our Voices” exhibit on display in the Kent Student Center.

The interactive exhibit—developed by the Wick Poetry Center and partners—also has been displayed on the Stark, Geauga and Twinsburg campuses. It encourages visitors to explore the history of student protest and themes of peace and conflict transformation.

The Pacificos—who were introduced by the late Alan Canfora, BA '72, MLS '80—have been key supporters and organizers of the May 4 Candlelight Walk and Vigil for decades, along with the May 4 Task Force student organization.

Anti-war and political activists, they see the walk and vigil as a time when people can put their politics aside to honor those who died and were wounded on May 4, 1970. This year they are passing on their responsibilities to successors who will take over the staging of the event.



3 JERRY M. LEWIS MAY 4 LECTURE SERIES AND LUNCHEON

Jerry M. Lewis, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sociology since 1996, speaks during the inaugural lecture series, which was created to honor his legacy and advance the scholarship of May 4, 1970, and the Vietnam War era.

Lewis taught at Kent State University from 1966 until 2013. Serving as a faculty marshal in 1970, he witnessed the May 4, 1970, shootings firsthand, and has since devoted time to researching, memorializing and lecturing on the events of May 4. He remains an active leader and voice for the legacy and study of May 4, 1970.

The luncheon included a special recognition of the faculty marshals and all faculty members whose heroic efforts prevented more bloodshed on May 4, 1970, and enabled students to complete their studies.

Tammy Clewell, professor of English at the Kent Campus, was the honoree for this year's lecture. Her talk, “Remembering the Contested May 4 Memorializing Process,” focused on the controversial and protracted efforts to build Kent State's May 4 Memorial, which was dedicated in 1990.

The lecture series honoring Lewis was made possible through a generous donation from Michael Solomon, BBA '74.



1 CANDLELIGHT WALK AND VIGIL

Participants hold the stained-glass candleholders used by those standing vigil during the annual event that has become a cornerstone of the commemoration.

The candlelight walk and vigil were established in 1971 by Jerry M. Lewis, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, with the help of students. Each year since 1971, students, faculty and others gather at 11 p.m. on May 3 to take part in a candlelight procession around the perimeter of the Kent Campus.

Following the walk, a vigil begins, with people positioned on the spots where four students—Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer and William Schroeder—were killed. The vigil continues until 12:23 p.m. on May 4, the time of the confrontation between students and the Ohio National Guard.

In 1975, the Kent State University administration stopped sponsoring and supporting the annual commemoration program. In October 1975, the May 4 Task Force (M4TF) was founded by Kent State students and victims of the May 4 shootings to raise awareness, continue the search for truth and ensure that the lessons to be learned from the tragedy would be part of a continuous and living history. In the years since, the M4TF student organization has planned events for commemorations and conducted the annual candlelight walk and vigil.

On March 6, 2019, Kent State’s Board of Trustees passed a resolution that committed the university to assume responsibility for the annual May 4 commemoration and ongoing educational events through the Office of the President, beginning with the 50th commemoration in 2019-2020 and continuing from that time forward.

2 DEDICATION OF WOUNDED STUDENT MARKERS

President Todd Diacon poses with five of the wounded survivors from the May 4, 1970, shootings. (L-R) Back row: Donald Scott Mackenzie, BBA ’71; John Cleary, BArch ’74; Thomas Grace, BA ’72; Diacon; Joseph Lewis; Front row: Dean Kahler, BS ’77

The nine students who were wounded on May 4, 1970, were honored during a dedication ceremony for the markers placed at each spot near Taylor Hall where the students were shot 52 years ago. Each marker features the name of the person wounded, along with the distance in feet they were from the National Guard at the time of the shootings.

Five of the nine survivors attended the ceremony (named above). Douglas Wrentmore did not attend and Alan Canfora, BA ’72, MLS ’89, James Russell, BFA ’79, and Robert Stamps, BA ’72, MA ’96, MA ’99, are deceased.

“Having a visual reminder of where those students were when they were shot is so powerful,” President Diacon says. “You realize how quickly violence gets out of control.”

Planning for the new markers began four years ago—called for by Alan Canfora; Rod Flauhaus, BS ’86, May 4 commemoration project manager; and other wounded students—so they would be in place for the 50th commemoration. The markers join the memorials for the four students killed on the Prentice Hall parking lot, which were dedicated in 1999.



3 RINGING THE VICTORY BELL

Thomas Grace, BA ’72, PhD, one of the nine students wounded on May 4, 1970, rings the bell in memory of the victims of the Kent State and Jackson State shootings during the May 4, 2022, commemoration on the Commons.

Originally rung for athletic triumphs, the bell was later used to call together political protests. After the events of May 4, 1970, it was removed from the Commons, but returned after students voiced strong support for the bell. It is now rung during May 4 memorial remembrances.

For commemorative purposes, Kent State students and university administrators established a tradition in 1971 of ringing the Victory Bell 15 times to acknowledge the dead and wounded of Kent State as well as the two students killed at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Grace had previously rung the bell for that purpose on May 4, 1972.

4 MAY 4 COMMEMORATION

Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian, delivers an address at the 52nd annual May 4 commemoration on the Commons at noon.

Meacham, whose knowledge of politics, history, religion and current affairs makes him one of America’s most prominent public intellectuals, also delivered the keynote speech on the evening of May 4 for Kent State University’s Presidential Speaker Series, where he compared today’s political climate to the events that took place on May 4, 1970.

Other remarks at the noon ceremony were given by Tiera Moore, BA ’21, graduate student member of the May 4 Education Committee; Todd Diacon, president; Amy Reynolds, dean of the College of Communication and Information; Roseann “Chic” Canfora, BS ’76, MA ’87, PhD ’01, presidential advisory and commemoration chair; and Melody Tankersley, senior vice president and provost. Performances by the Kent State University Chorale, conducted by Scott MacPherson, PhD, opened and closed the program.

A sign in front of the stage read, “Long live the spirit of Kent and Jackson State,” acknowledging the two students—James Earl Green and Phillip Gibbs—killed May 14, 1970, at Jackson State in Mississippi. Over the years, their deaths were “underreported and overlooked because of a legacy of racism that devalues the lives of Black Americans,” wrote Thomas Grace, BA ’72, PhD, in a reflection printed on the commemoration program.

5 THE POWER OF OUR VOICES

Students join the crowd listening to the remarks at the noon commemoration.

“What makes planning for the commemoration so special each year is not only collaborating with people whose connection to May 4 spans more than 50 years, but also working with students today who are as committed as we are to remembering Kent State and Jackson State,” says Roseann “Chic” Canfora, BS ’76, MA ’87, PhD ’01, May 4 witness, professional-in-residence in the School of Media and Journalism, and chair of the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee.

Learn more at www.kent.edu/may4.