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Betty Williams, speaker

Stephen Lay, moderator

1981?

Series: University focus series

Stephen Lay said Betty Williams, 1976 Nobel Peace Prize winner, was the annual Bartlett lecturer at the university. Mrs. Williams won her prize for organizing the major peace movement in Northern Ireland. She witnessed a terrorist's car crash into three children and killing them. Williams started going door to door organizing her peace drive. It grew into a major series of marches of both Catholic and Protestant residents of Northern Ireland. Williams sees them as the beginning of the long term effort to bring peace to the country. She believes it will take thirty years because of the centuries old patterns of violence and hatred. Williams said their history itself is a very violent one and unjust one. They wanted to be on their own, but they were never allowed to be that way. There came to be a conclave that took up guns. They started killing children and a war was started and it was called peace with justice. Once the marching was over Williams and her movement realized it would take more than marches and rallies to bring peace to Ireland. It takes a change in attitude and the development of positive community involvement in daily life. She said instead of starting to look for solutions from the top down they would build them from the bottom up. Everything else had been tried in Northern Ireland and had failed miserably. The media had written off the peace movement about a hundred times. They taught people self-help. How to be effective culturally and socially in their area. This involvement offered new employment opportunities and provided financial support for survivors of violence. Today the group promotes peace through the involvement of positive activities. Williams has campaigned against the fund-raising activities by the Irish Republican Army in the United States. According to Williams Irish Americans are one of the primary sources of weaponry for the IRA. Today Williams has become an activist for peace throughout the world. She has traveled extensively throughout the Third World as a representative of the United Nations. Williams said for those of us who believe in humanity she doesn't care what religion you are or what color you are. For those who believe human life has a right to exist without threat of nuclear war or any other kind of war. She finds when she goes around the world the greatest problem and violence she comes across is from the "my syndrome" and the attitude of not my problem. People do not see what is on their doorstep. They only see it when it is in their living room and by then it is far too late. Lay said Williams devoted a third of her speech to non-Irish issues. She condemns military build-up and spending for nuclear arms

Stephen Lay reports on the campus calendar and activities.