

**SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA TAKES FLIGHT  
BY JAMIE LIPTAN  
STAFF WRITER**

On May 3, under beautiful skies and in grand style, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo was officially dedicated. More than 2,500 people attended the daylong event, with even more witnessing the ceremony on the university's Web site, [www.soka.edu](http://www.soka.edu).

"It is my hope and desire that an unbroken succession of outstanding leaders will depart from these gates to serve humanity in the 21st century," said SGI President and SUA Founder Daisaku Ikeda in his message to the event (see p. 4 for full message). "It is my hope and desire that these waves of world citizens, united and awakened to a genuine global ethic, will spread without cease into an ever more brilliant future."

The new campus, which will begin classes in the fall offering a four-year, liberal arts education, welcomed visitors from all over the world, bringing warm wishes of congratulations. Representatives of Aliso Viejo, Calif., and many neighboring communities brought resolutions proclaiming May 3 Soka University of America Day. Messages were also received from politicians, scholars and human rights activists around the world, including President George W. Bush, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Rosa Parks.

"Welcome to Aliso Viejo!" said Carmen Vali, chair of the Aliso Viejo City Council-elect. "We consider this campus a gift to our community. Each year, we will remember this day with reverence and celebrate those with the bold vision to make this dream a reality."

"I can't quite believe this day is finally here," said Dr. Daniel Habuki, president of SUA. "I see this day marking the beginning of a new era for value creation as we advance together along the path of learning."

The ceremony, held in the new Recreation Center, began with a processional of dozens of visiting university presidents and representatives, as well as SUA's board of trustees, faculty and staff. Responding to thunderous applause, 75 representatives of the first entering class of students bounded into the room.

"As a member of the first class, I will strive to become the bridge that links all nations and closes all gaps among enemies," proclaimed Nicole Chu of Culver City, Calif. "I know that the students of SUA will break all barriers to be victorious in this world."

Dr. Alfred Balitzer, dean of faculty at SUA, clarified that "the aim of SUA is to produce global citizens. Our faculty care about students, and we will put their concerns ahead of all other considerations."

A choir of fifth-graders from all four Aliso Viejo elementary schools performed "Song for the Children," welcoming the audience in a dozen languages. Two of the children also assisted in placing many SUA artifacts in a time capsule to be opened in 100 years.

After a ceremonial blessing from members of the Native American Acjachemen Nation, the original inhabitants of the Aliso Viejo area, and a booming performance from ADAWE, a women's African drum group, everyone moved to Peace Lake and Fountain, located in front of Founders Hall. Dr. Habuki officially opened the campus in the name of SUA's core values of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life.

Visitors then enjoyed lunch and tours of the campus, including viewing the Linus Pauling and the 20th Century exhibition in Founders Hall. The exhibition was opened on May 2, along with the dedication of Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall, and will be on view until June 10 (see story, p. 8).

Feelings of joy at the university's completion were in evidence everywhere. "I pulled into the parking lot and just started crying," said Emily Frausto of Seattle. "This place is the epitome of the good things people can do."

Jason Evans of Norfolk, Va., agreed: "I've been here before but the campus has transformed. It's breathtaking."

"I'm honored to be present to witness this grand occasion," said Herbie Hancock, SGI-USA member and Jazz legend. "The accomplishments of these students and their impact on society will be President Ikeda's legacy."

—*Jason Henninger contributed to this article.*