

# NEWS

## The Legacy of Pope John Paul II



Nick Stewart  
News Editor

On Saturday, while thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square to pray for him, Pope John Paul II died from a long list of health problems. John Paul II was a papal leader who will be remembered in the history books. Born and raised in Poland, he was the first non-Italian pope in over 450 years. He is the longest-serving pope in recent history. He also was the center of plenty of controversy. His stands on abortion, birth control and same-sex marriage have earned him the label of an ultra-conservative from his critics. His response to the sex scandal involving several American priests was considered too weak by some. But despite the harsh rhetoric from his critics, I would argue that John Paul II contributed very much to the good of human-kind, a quality rarely found.

To find the true significance his papacy to the entire global population, we must look at not at his dealings within the Catholic Church, but at his work with mankind in general.

Upon becoming Pope John Paul II in 1978, he devoted many of his efforts to freeing his fellow Polish citizens from the grip of Communism. Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa said it was the moral values that the Pope brought back to Poland that defeated the Communist system. He visited Poland several times during the last decade of Communist rule, each

time providing inspiration for the citizens seeking change. In 1989, the Polish Communists fell, and Communist regimes fell like dominos throughout Eastern Europe following the initial success in Poland.

Pope John Paul II also emerged as a symbol of reconciliation between peoples of different religious faiths. He sought to bring together Christians, Jews and Muslims, as violent conflicts centered on religious differences continue to threaten mankind. He visited Holocaust memorials in Israel, apologizing for the Catholic Church's indifference to the suffering of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. Amongst Christians he sought reconciliation between the divisions of Christianity. He became the first pope to visit with the Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation.

His ability to forgive is highlighted by his visit to a Turkish extremist who shot him in a failed assassination attempt in 1981. Pope John Paul forgave this man who almost fatally shot him. This spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation is special. Such a spirit inline with the best principles of human-kind is desperately needed in a world plagued by differences that are too often solved by hostile and violent means.

## NEWS SHORTS

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### SU Election Results Ratified

Despite an attempt by defeated Executive VP candidate Brad Deighan to force a re-vote of the Executive VP position, Student Council voted to ratify the results of last month's student union elections. The Student Union also strongly recommended that problems with electronic voting be explored, but there was no commitment for a probe of last month's controversial results. CRO Pat Curley claimed the matter was already sufficiently explored and claimed there were no problems. Deighan had presented student council with a petition containing over 100 signatures of students demanding a re-vote of the Executive VP post, claiming that there were voting irregularities with the electronic voting system.

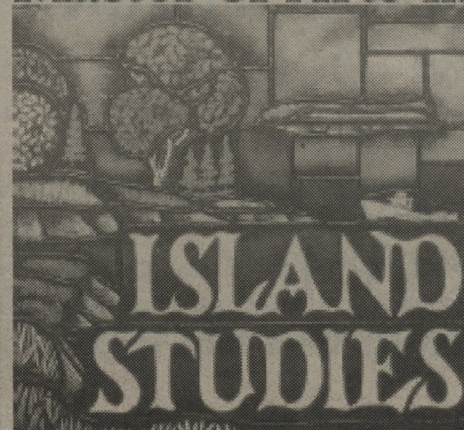
### Action on the Ice Heats Up During Seal Hunt

The Gulf of St. Lawrence has been home to some red-hot action during the seal hunt. On Friday, shots were fired into the air during a confrontation between protesters and sealers. On Thursday, the RCMP arrested 11 anti-sealing protestors, most from the United States, for entering the half-mile buffer zone around sealing activities. These activists, members of the Sea Shepard Conservation Society were taken into custody in Charlottetown before being released on Friday after being ordered by a court to remain on their boat, the *Farley Mowatt*. Some protestors claim they are being assaulted by sealers on the ice. Bad weather has hampered the seal hunt, and two vessels have sunk in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. All crew members were rescued.

### Neil Young Recovering from Brain Aneurysm

Canadian rock legend Neil Young is recovering from surgery after an MRI discovered a brain aneurysm. He is expected to make a full recovery but he missed the Juno Awards ceremonies on Sunday, held in his hometown of Winnipeg.

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