25 Years After

Kent State
May 4, 1995

25th Commemoration
Program
Kent State, 1970 / Bruno Lucchesi

artists for justice
KENT STATE - TWENTY FIVE YEARS LATER

Can it be true that twenty-five long years
    Have come and gone since that so tragic day
When youthful panic far too sad for tears
    Purloined the lives of our four friends away
The campus seems serenely quiet now
    But if we listen hard we still can hear
The crack of rifles from the hilltop’s brow
    And screams of those who paid a price so dear.
Since then the world has changed a hundredfold
    In ways we never thought would be the case,
But our four friends who never can grow old
    Will always sanctify this peaceful place.
We mourn these victims of a nation’s strife
    And by our thoughts give them eternal life.

--William M. Kunstler
May 4, 1995
". . . They’re (campus protesters) worse than the brown-shirts and the communist element and also the nightriders and the vigilantes. They’re the worst type of people that we harbor in America. . . . I think that we’re up against the strongest, well-trained, militant, revolutionary group that has ever assembled in America."

—Gov. James Rhodes, at a news conference in Kent, May 3, 1970
We have not forgotten...
We will never forget.

The spirit of what Jeff Miller, Sandy Scheuer, Bill Schroeder, and Allison Krause represented for our future has been ever restless until this day. They should never have been killed, but they were, and so it fell to their parents and a few others to make sure that this truth be known.

**Peter Davies**
*May 4, 1974*

If there had not been a rally on this campus...Cambodia would be bombed today. People died, but the movement did not die and the effects of protest did not die.

**Daniel Ellsberg**
*May 4, 1974*

More than students died here. The shootings happened in the context of repression and terror that was aimed at crushing the anti-war movement.

**Jane Fonda**
*May 4, 1974*

Let us go forth remembering those who lost their lives while opposing an immoral war. But not only that, let us also go forth with the mission of making America a land free from economic want, free from social injustice and free from foreign war. Commissions fail to accomplish everything they should if we leave here and return to the routines of our daily lives, satisfied that we have done enough for one year.

**Tom Grace, wounded student**
*May 4, 1987*

On May 4, I will once again observe an anniversary that marks not only the most tragic event of my life, but also one of the most disgraceful episodes in American history...May 4 will be the anniversary of the shootings...and the death of my son, Jeff Miller, by the Ohio National Guard...To most people, Kent State is just one of those traumatic events that occurred during a tumultuous time. To me, it's the one experience I will never recover from.

**Elaine Holstein, Jeff's mother**
*May 4, 1988*

When the Vietnam War finally ended, an army lieutenant named Richard Shandlin wrote a letter home in which he said, "One thing worries me...will people want to hear about it, or will they want to forget the whole thing happened..' His concerns are much the same as the concerns of those of us who survived the shootings here at Kent State. I worry too that people will not want to hear about it...that people will want to forget the whole thing happened. Your presence here today is a testament to the world that May 4, 1970 has not been forgotten. Your message to the world is as important as our message was in 1970. We have a voice in this world...and never again should that voice be silenced.

**Chic Canfora-Knepp, survivor**
*May 4, 1990*
Friday night, one of the first warm evenings of the Spring, several hundred students gathered in downtown Kent in an area with a number of bars, known as "the Strip," on North Water Street. A spontaneous anti-war rally began in the street. Twice, while the rally was in progress, passing police cruisers were hit with beer bottles. Afterwards, police stayed away from the area. Meanwhile, more people were leaving the bars.

Many in the crowd chanted anti-war slogans, and a bonfire was set in the street. The crowd blocked traffic for about an hour and then moved toward the center of town. Some members of the crowd began to break windows. Primarily "political targets" were attacked, including banks, loan companies, and utility companies.

After being informed of the events, Kent Mayor Leroy Satrom declared a "state of emergency," and arbitrarily ordered all of the bars closed. Kent police, along with the mayor, then confronted the crowd. The riot-act was read and police proceeded to clear the area. People inside the bars were ordered to leave, forcing hundreds more into the streets. The crowd was herded toward the campus with tear gas and night sticks, which was in the opposite direction in which some of them lived.

Fourteen persons, mostly stragglers, were arrested. About $5,000 in damage was done as 43 windows were broken -- 28 in one bank.

**SUNDAY, MAY 2**

On the morning of May 2, some KSU students assisted with the downtown cleanup. Rumors of radical activities were widespread, and KSU's ROTC building was believed to be the target of militant student actions that evening. During the Vietnam War, students on many college campuses opposed the presence of ROTC and often were successful in forcing the removal of ROTC from their campuses. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed on the city of Kent, and students were restricted to the campus. At 5 p.m., shortly after assessing the situation, Mayor Satrom alerted the Ohio National Guard. KSU officials were unaware of this decision.

Shortly after 8 p.m., about 300 people gathered on the Commons, where a few anti-war slogans were chanted and a few brief speeches given. An impromptu march began and participants headed toward the dormitories to gain strength. Large numbers of people joined the march. The
now 2,000 marchers swarmed down the hill over looking the Commons, crossed the Commons. They then surrounded the ROTC building, an old wooden World War II barracks which was scheduled to be demolished. Windows were broken, and a few persons eventually set the building on fire.

Plain-clothed police who were standing nearby made no attempt to stop the students at this point. Firemen arrived on the scene but their action were abandoned because some of the crowd attacked the firemen and slashed their hoses. The blaze quickly died out. The firemen eventually regained control and the fire died out.

The building was ignited again. This time, however, firemen arrived with massive police protection. Police surrounded the building and dispersed the students with tear gas. The firemen again got the fire under control. The crowd then moved to the front of the campus and were astonished to see units of the Ohio national Guard arriving on their campus. The students retreated to the Commons to find the ROTC building smoldering at both ends. Within minutes, the building was fully ablaze.

The crowd then assembled on the wooded hillside beside the Commons and watched as the building burned. Many shouted anti-war and anti-ROTC slogans. In the first two weeks of May, thirty ROTC buildings would be burned nationwide.

Armed with tear gas and drawn bayonets, the Guard pursued students, protesters and bystanders alike, into dormitories and other campus buildings. Some stones were thrown and at least one student was bayonetted. The question of who set the fire that destroyed ROTC building has never been satisfactorily answered by any investigative body.

SUNDAY, MAY 3

May 3 was a relatively quiet day. By now, however, the campus was fully occupied by Ohio National Guard troops, and armored personnel carriers were stationed throughout the campus. Although some students and guardsmen fraternized, the feeling, for the most part, was one of mutual hostility. That morning, Ohio Governor James Rhodes, who was running for U.S. Senate, arrived in Kent and along with city officials, held a news conference. Rhodes, running on a "law and order" platform, attempted to use this opportunity to garner votes in the primary election, which was only two days away.

In a highly inflammatory speech, Rhodes claimed that the demonstrations at Kent were the handiwork of a highly organized band of revolutionaries who were out to "destroy higher education in Ohio." These protesters, Rhodes declared, were "the worst type of people we harbor in America, worse than the brown shirts and the communist element....we will use whatever force necessary to drive them out of Kent!"

Later that evening, a National Guard commander would tell his troops that Ohio law gave them the right to shoot if necessary. This merely served to heighten guardsmen's hostility toward students.

Around 8 p.m., a crowd gathered on the Commons near the Victory bell. As the group increased in size, Guard officials announced the immediate enforcement of a new curfew. The crowd refused to disperse. At 9 p.m., the Ohio Riot Act was read. Tear gas was fired from helicopters hovering overhead, and the Guard dispersed the crowd from the area.

Students attempted to demonstrate that the curfew was unnecessary by peacefully marching toward the town, but were met by guardsmen. Students then staged a spontaneous sit-in at the intersection of East Main and Lincoln streets and demanded that mayor Saytrom and KSU President Robert White speak with them about the Guard's presence on campus. Assured that this demand would be met, the crowd agreed to move from the street onto the front lawn of the campus.

The Guard then betrayed the students and announced that the curfew would go into effect immediately. Helicopters and tear gas were used to disperse the demonstrators. As the crowd attempted to escape, some were bayonetted and clubbed by the guardsmen. Students were again pursued and prodded back to their dormitories. Tear gas inundated the campus, and helicopters with searchlights hovered overhead all night.

MONDAY, MAY 4

At 11 a.m., about 200 students gathered on the Commons. Earlier that morning, state and local officials had met in Kent. Some officials had assumed that Gov. Rhodes had declared Martial law to be in effect-- but he had not. In fact, martial law was not officially declared until May 5. Nevertheless, the National Guard resolved to
disperse any assembly.

As noon approached, the size of the crowd increased to 1,500. Some were merely spectators, while others had gathered specifically to protest the invasion of Cambodia and the continued presence of the National Guard on the campus. Upon orders of Ohio’s Assistant Adjutant General Robert Canterbury, an army jeep was driven in front of the assembled students. The students were told by means of a bullhorn to disperse immediately. Students responded with jeers and chants. When the students refused to disperse, Gen. Canterbury ordered the guardsmen to disperse them. Approximately 116 men, equipped with loaded M-1 rifles and tear gas, formed a skirmish-line toward the students. Aware of the bayonet injuries of the previous evening, students immediately ran away from the attacking National Guardsmen. Retreating up Blanket Hill, some students lobbed tear gas canisters back at the advancing troops, and one straggler was attacked with clubs.

The Guard, after clearing the Commons, marched over the crest of the hill, firing tear gas and scattering the students into a wider area. The Guard then continued marching down the hill and onto a practice football field. For approximately 10 minutes, the Guard stayed in this position. During this time, tear gas canisters were thrown back and forth from the Guard’s position to a small group of students in the Prentice Hall parking lot, about 100 yards away. Some students responded to the guardsmen’s attack by throwing stones. Guardsmen also threw stones at the students. But because of the distance, most stones from both parties fell far short of their targets. The vast majority of students, however, were spectators on the veranda of Taylor Hall. While on the practice field, several members of Troop G which would within minutes fire the fatal volley, knelt and aimed their weapons at the students in the parking lot.

Gen. Canterbury concluded that the crowd had been dispersed and ordered the Guard to march back to the Commons area. Some members of Troop G then huddled briefly. After reassembling on the field, the guardsmen seemed to begin to retreat as they marched back up the hill retracing their previous steps.

Members of Troop G, while advancing up the hill, continued to glance back to the parking lot, where the most militant and vocal students were located. The students assumed the confrontation was over. Many students began to walk to their next classes. As the Guard reached the crest of the Blanket Hill, near the Pagoda of Taylor Hall, about a dozen members of Troop G Simultaneously turned around 180 degrees, aimed and fired their weapons into the crowd in the Prentice Hall parking lot. The 1975 civil trials proved that there was a verbal command to fire.

A total of 67 shots were fired in 13 seconds. Four students; Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer and William Schroeder were killed. Nine students were wounded: Joseph Lewis, John Cleary, Thomas Grace, Robbie Stamps, Donald Scott MacKenzie Alan Canfora, Douglas Wrentmore, James Russell and Dean Kahler. Of the wounded, one was permanently paralyzed and several were seriously maimed. All were full-time students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Contact:

The KENT MAY 4 CENTER
a non-profit off-campus organization dedicated to increasing awareness of May 4 related issues and student activism before and after May 4, 1970. The Kent May 4 Center is committed to seeing the May 4 Memorial completed on campus as intended by the original Ast design, and building a permanent educational center for the study of the Kent State tragedy and the history of student activism.

P.O. Box 3313
Kent, Ohio 44240
(216) 673-7070

The MAY 4 TASK FORCE
an on-campus student organization dedicated to educating students and others about the May 4 Tragedy. The Task Force has sponsored the official May 4 Commemorations each year since 1976, and the candlelight vigil on the May 4 site since the mid 1980’s. The Task Force also is active in the promotion of student activism today.

Box 49, Student Life, KSC
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
(216) 672-3096

E-MAIL: MAY4TF@KENTVM.KENT.EDU
1. Joseph Lewis, Jr. 71 feet away
2. John R. Cleary 110 feet away
3. Thomas Grace 200 feet away
4. Alan Canfora 225 feet away
5. Jeffrey G. Miller 265 feet away
6. Dean R. Kahler 300 feet away
7. Douglas A. Wrentmore 329 feet away
8. Allison B. Krause 343 feet away
9. James D. Russell 375 feet away
10. William K. Schroeder 382 feet away
11. Sandra L. Scheuer 390 feet away
12. Robert F. Stamps 495 feet away
13. Donald S. MacKenzie 730 feet away

THE GUARD'S MARCH
12:20 - 12:24 P.M.
Return from the practice field
May 3rd, 1995

- 11 am - 3 pm
  Informational Tables, Student Center Plaza
  Current student activist groups display what they're doing to change the world today

- 3 - 5 pm
  M4TF Picnic, Fred Fuller Park (Rt 59)
  Donations accepted

- 5 pm
  "We March With Them", Student Center Plaza
  Student Activist March, bring your banners, slogans, and favorite chants!

- 6 pm
  "Kent State: A Requiem", KIVA
  Performed by students from Emerson College, Boston, Mass.

- 7 pm
  "Student Power: When students take a stand, students change the world", KIVA
  Perceptions of student activism from past and present activists. Speakers include:
  - Mark Rudd - National SDS
  - Bill Whisker - Kent SDS
  - Joyce Cecora-Kessler - Kent SDS
  - Ken Heineman - Author of Campus Wars
  - Paul Rogat Loeb - Author of Generation at the Crossroads
  - Alan Canfora - Wounded May 4, 1970
  - Sarah Lund - Student Action Coalition/M4TF
  - Stephanie Arrellano - United States Student Assoc.
  - Jeremy Smith - University Conversion Project

- 10:30
  "I Hear The Drumming", May 4th Memorial
  Informal gathering of local drummers

- 11 pm
  Silent Candlelight March, Commons

- Midnight
  Candlelight Vigil, Prentice Parking Lot
  Start of 12 hour vigil in the places were the four students fell. To stand 1/2 hour vigil, please contact M4TF

May 4th, 1995

- 8 am - 12 noon
  Tours of May 4th Site
  See M4TF Members at Williamson Alumni Center or Prentice Hall Parking Lot

- 11:50 am
  Gathering in the commons
  • Maggie

- 12:24 pm
  Ringing of the Victory Bell. Commons
  The bell is rung annually at the commemoration 15 times, 13 to honor the KSU victims and 2 to honor the Jackson State victims

- 12:30 pm
  "In the footsteps of history, we march with them" Commons
  25 annual commemoration event. Speakers include:
  • Howard Metzenbaum, Former US Senator
  • Paul Rogat Loeb. Author of "Generation at the Crossroads"
  • Mark Rudd, National SDS
  • Stephanie Campbell, Co-President M4TF
  • Barbara Agte, Friend of Allison
  • Steve Drucker, Friend of Sandy and Jeff
  • Lou Cusella, Friend of Bill
  • Chic Canfora-Knep - Eye witness May 4th, 1970
  • Peter Yarrow, Singer
  • Sanford Rosen, Attorney
  • Roland Colom, Jackson State
  • Kermit Dilworth, Jackson State

- 3 pm
  "Finding a Common Ground", Commons
  A participatory public work of art dealing with negative space

- 3:45 pm
  Student Activism Teach-in, KIVA
  • Peter, Paul and Mary

- 7:30 pm
  Benefit Concert
  • Peter, Paul and Mary
  • Special guests - The Murmurs
  Proceeds go to the May 4 Commemorative Student Activism Scholarship Fund
  (Tickets available though Ticketmaster)

25th Annual Commemoration
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio
Chronological Summary of the May 4 Court Cases

NON-JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS

July, 1970........... FBI concludes investigation. Chief investigator from Justice Dept. recommends on basis of report that at least six guardsmen be prosecuted.

September, 1970..... Scranton Commission issues report, concluding the deaths of students at Kent State were "unnecessary, unwarranted and inexcusable."

STATE CRIMINAL TRIAL

September, 1970..... Special State Grand Jury issues indictments against the "Kent 25" comprised of 24 students and one faculty member and issues a report placing primary responsibility for the May 4 tragedy on the KSU administration, faculty and students.


December, 1971..... Trial of the "Kent 25" results in one defendant being found guilty on one of four counts, two pleading guilty to lesser counts for their actions during events in the weekend preceding May 4, one dismissal and one acquittal, leading the state prosecutor to call for a dismissal of charges against the remaining 20 defendants.

FEDERAL CRIMINAL TRIAL


August, 1973........ New Attorney General Elliot Richardson announces Justice Dept. will reopen the Kent State case.

December, 1973..... Justice Dept. announces a Federal Grand Jury will be convened to investigate the May 4 shootings.

March, 1974......... Eight guardsmen are indicted by the Federal Grand Jury on charges of willfully violating the rights of the dead and wounded students.

November, 1974..... U.S. District Judge Frank Battisti dismisses charges against the guardsmen, ruling that the government had no proved beyond a reasonable doubt that guardsmen had willfully intended to deprive students of their civil rights.

CIVIL TRIALS

May, 70-Mar., 74.... Lawyers for the parents and wounded students try to bring civil suits against Governor James Rhodes, former KSU President Robert White the national guard officers and enlisted men, but courts rule that "sovereign immunity" prevents this action.

April, 1974......... U.S. Supreme Court rules 8-0 that sovereign immunity is not absolute, but qualified," allowing the parents and students to bring the suit.

August, 1975....... U.S. federal court jury decides 9-3 against the parents and students on all issues.

May, 1976......... Appeal of civil suit filed in U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals

January 4, 1979..... An out-of-court settlement is reached providing for the payment of $675,000 in damages by the State of Ohio and for a signed statement of regret and intention by Gov. Rhodes, the leaders, officers and men of the Ohio National Guard, with a substantial portion of the settlement to be given to Dean Kahler who was paralyzed in the May 4 shootings.
U.S. Department of Justice
Summary of the FBI Investigation of the Kent State Massacre:
Principal Conclusions
(Partial List)

- The crowd [of students on the Commons on May 4th] apparently was initially peaceful and relatively quiet.
- Information suggests that it was the National Guard who determined that the rally would not be held.
- Forty-seven Guardsmen claim they did not fire their weapons. There are substantial indications that at least two and possibly more Guardsmen are lying concerning this fact.
- The Guardsmen were not surrounded.
- No Guardsman claims he was hit with rocks immediately prior to the shooting.
- There was no sniper.
- At least one person who has not admitted firing his weapon did so. The FBI is ... in possession of four spent .45 cartridges which came from a weapon not belonging to any person who admitted he fired.
- There was no request from any Guardsman for permission to fire his weapon.
- Although both Jeffrey Miller and Allison Krause had probably been in the front ranks of the demonstrators initially, neither was in a position to pose even a remote danger to the National Guard at the time of the firing. Sandy Scheuer ... was on her way to a speech therapy class. We do not know whether Schroeder [an ROTC student] participated in any way in the confrontation that day.
- We have some reason to believe that the claim by the National Guard that their lives were endangered by the students was fabricated subsequent to the event.

May 4th Bibliography


Looking back...

History speaks for itself.

On April 30, 1970, President Richard Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia. He must have known that American students, already active in opposing the Vietnam War, would react angrily to his announcement. But he had set an anti-student sentiment in motion that year long before his announcement. The President called campus protesters "bums" whose only purpose was to burn buildings and books and destroy higher education in America. After that, many followed suit...

One modest suggestion for my friends in the academic community: the next time a mob of students, waving their non-violent demands, starts pitching bricks and rocks at the Student Union--just imagine they are wearing brown shirts or white sheets and act accordingly."

Vice President Spirow Agnew
April, 1970

If it takes a bloodbath, let's get it over with. No more appeasement.

Calif. Governor Ronald Reagan
April 7, 1970

They're worse than the brownshirts and the Communist element and also the night riders and vigilantes. They're the worst type of people that we harbor in America...It think we're up against the strongest, well trained militant revolutionary group that has ever assembled in America...We're going to eradicate the problem, we're not going to treat the symptoms.

Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes
Kent, May 3, 1970

These students are going to have to find out what law and order is all about.

Brig. General Robert Canterbury
Noon, May 4, 1970

When dissent turns to violence, it invites tragedy.

President Richard Nixon
May 5, 1970
The shock of learning of the decision of the Department of Justice not to convene a Federal Grand Jury is nearly as great as the shock that came to us when our children were killed at Kent State University on May 4, 1970. When National Guard troops fired high powered combat weapons and killed unarmed students, we suffered an inestimable personal loss, but our nation's Bill of Rights was seriously damaged as well.

We, as parents, like many of our age and generation, retained a faith in our system. Even after the deaths of our children, we believed that our system of justice would be activated and would show clearly the wrong that was done...Now we know the Department of Justice will not act. It is inconceivable to us that this is so, particularly because its own investigative reports indicate that such action would have been fully appropriate...

We continued to believe that "the system works" or that it can be made to work. Now we know that it may work for some, but that it does not work for all, and at times it does not work at all. We deeply regret this, for the loss of faith in our Government, in this instance, is nearly as great, as we have said, as the loss of our own children. Now we have sorrow for both.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Krause
Mrs. Elaine Holstein
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Scheuer
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Schroeder
Parents of Allison, Jeff, Sandy and Bill

James Ahern, another member of the Scranton Commission [appointed by President Nixon], said that the only question that had to be answered about Kent State and Jackson State was whether or not the crime committed by those who shot and killed unarmed students was murder or manslaughter."

Peter Davies
*The Truth About Kent State*

The impact is only barely suggested by the statistics, but they are impressive enough. In the next four days [after the Kent State shootings] from May 5 to May 8, there were major campus demonstrations at a rate of more than 100 a day. Students at a total of at least 350 institutions went on strike and 536 schools were shut down completely for some period of time, 51 of them for the entire year. More than half of the colleges and universities in the country (1,350) were ultimately touched by protest demonstrations, involving nearly 60 percent of the student population (nearly five million students) in every kind of institution and in every state in the Union.

*Kirkpatrick Sale*
author of *SDS*

...there can be little doubt that the current period (May, 1970) of student unrest had had more impact on the body politic than any previous epoch in American history.

*Seymour Martin Lipset*
author of *Passion and Politics*
Flowers for the Departed

Allison Krause, for you this flower
Desert-born in a distant land
Suddenly, in rain miraculous
Flamed into life and lit with orange fire
The arid plain. So may your seed,
Returned untimely to the earth
Bring back the beauty to your desert land.

Sandy Lee Scheuer, for you this flower
Shining and vivid like your life
Which feeling as it were a shadow
Continued in so short a stay
May your shiningness return
To your dark land.

Jeffrey Miller, for you this flower
A golden eye amidst a field of tares
Yet by the blind machine cut down
We mourn for you, and yet shall mourn
With ever-returning Spring.

William Schroeder, for you this last
From this far country.
Out of this grief come joy
Out of this darkness, light
Out of your dying, life.

America, for you these flowers
Would we could reach out hands to comfort you
But we dare not
We dare not touch those fingers dripping
With children’s blood.

—Alan Paton
When on May 4, four students at Kent State University were killed by rifle-fire from National Guardsmen dispatched by Ohio Governor James Rhodes to keep order during several days of violence, there was a shock wave that brought the nation and its leadership close to physical exhaustion...

The momentum of student strikes and protests accelerated immediately...Washington took on a character of a besieged city. A pinnacle of mass public protest was reached...Police surrounded the White House; a ring of buses was used to shield the grounds of the President’s home...The tidal wave of media and student criticism powerfully affected the Congress...The very fabric of government was falling apart. The executive branch was shell-shocked. After all, their children and their friends’ children took part in the demonstrations...The President saw himself as the firm rock in this rushing stream, but the turmoil had its effect on him as well. Pretending indifference, he was deeply wounded...Nixon reached a point of exhaustion that caused his advisors deep concern.

Henry Kissinger
The White House Years

Kent State, in May 1970, marked a turning point for Nixon: a beginning of his downhill slide toward Watergate. None of us realized it then; we were all too busy trying to calm the nationwide furor over the Cambodian invasion.

H. R. Haldeman
The Ends of Power

Those few days after Kent State were among the darkest of my Presidency.

from The Memoirs of Richard Nixon
In the footsteps of history,  
we march with them.

...It could have been me, but instead it was you.
So I'll keep doing the work you were doing as if I were two.
I'll be a student of life, a singer of song, a farmer of food and the righter of wrong.
It could have been me, but instead it was you.
And it may be me dear sisters and brothers before we are through
But if you can die for freedom...freedom, freedom, freedom,
If you can die for freedom, I can too.

Holly Near
May 4, 1990