The Mary-Ella Holst Fund for Global and UN Advocacy

UUSC

The Mary-Ella Holst Fund for Global and UN Advocacy honors Mary-Ella Holst, longtime member of All Souls New York City, for her extensive and enduring contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), our Unitarian Universalist denomination, and our broader world. The Fund supports advocacy and youth programming that further the human rights and policy goals of UUSC international grassroots partners. A first project supported by Fund will be UUSC's Spring Seminar in New York City, which will bring together 20 youth in grades 10-12 for a spiritually grounded activism program in April 2027.

Mary-Ella's UU and UN Legacy

After learning about Unitarian Universalism when she won an essay contest about the United Nations sponsored by the Unitarian Church in Toledo, Mary-Ella began a lifelong journey advancing UU values and helping UU organizations—particularly related to children and youth, history, advocacy, and women's rights. During her 62 years as a member at All Souls NYC, Mary-Ella served the congregation in numerous ways, including as Director of Religious Education and President of the Historical Society, and she also lent her talents to the Unitarian Universalist Association's Young Adult Committee. At UUSC, Mary-Ella served on the Board of Trustees, raised awareness as a UUSC Ambassador, coordinated volunteers as a National Co-Chair, wrote and narrated a UUSC women's history video called "The Women of UUSC," and conceived of and organized an event honoring Unitarian Service Committee founder Martha Sharp, who, with her former husband, the late Rev. Waitstill Sharp, led a mission to Prague in 1939 to rescue people from Nazi persecution. Over the course of organizing the event, Mary-Ella worked with Martha to locate people who had been children when the Sharps rescued them and was able to re-unite Martha with 11 of these people.

What the Fund Supports

With a focus on policy advocacy and youth programs, the Fund helps UUSC grassroots partners advance gender justice, climate justice, international justice and accountability, and more. In addition to supporting the youth Spring Seminar in New York City in April 2027, examples of work the Fund will support include:

- Sponsoring UUSC partner participation at UN and global decision-making forums such as the UN Climate Change Conference and UN Human Rights Council.

- Supporting the next steps in the groundbreaking campaign for an Advisory Opinion on climate change from the International Court of Justice, led by UUSC partner Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change.

- Accompanying UUSC partners seeking restitution from regional and international mechanisms, such as efforts for justice and accountability for the Rohingya Muslim minority of Burma following the genocide that began in August 2017.

Learn More and Make a Gift at uusc.org/Mary-Ella