



Margaret Keyser

Conflict Transformation Practitioner

Mediator ~ Facilitator ~ Educator ~ Trainer ~ Speaker

Addressing conflict, culture and race – learnings from South Africa

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South African citizen, Margaret Keyser is Consultant in Conflict Transformation to a variety of groups and institutions dealing with conflicts. She has lived and worked in the U.S. since 1998. Between 1998 and 2005 she worked in the following capacities: as Executive Director of the Center for Conflict Transformation in Hartford, for which she received an award for her leadership in establishing this organization; as adjunct professor at Hartford Seminary, Director of Training with Plowshares Institute, an international Peace building Institute, and more recently as Executive Director of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice.

With a 19- year career in peace building, conflict transformation and reconciliation, drawing from her life experiences and learnings from the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa, she brings a unique set of skills in addressing and transforming conflicts in a variety of settings. She worked and collaborated with several not-for-profit, ecumenical, interfaith and peace organizations in South Africa, including the Centre for Conflict Resolution, Quaker Peace Center, South African Council of Churches, Institute for Contextual Theology, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa, working towards ending the system of apartheid, and building a new democratic South Africa. During the nineties she worked to empower communities in the Western Cape to understand and embrace the difficult and challenging work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. In 1995 she served as president of the South African Association for Conflict Intervention for two years and in 1994 became the principal founder, and chairperson of the National Peace Education Forum in South Africa. These were all important agencies that were instrumental in preparing South Africans for a new dispensation of justice, peace and reconciliation.

In the U.S she also presented and worked with leaders from all walks of life, in cities like Austin, Texas; Birmingham, Alabama; Chicago, Illinois; Hartford, CT; Jacksonville, Florida; Los Angeles, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Shreveport, Louisiana; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her work and presentations also include places like Montreal, Canada, Indonesia, Geneva, Switzerland, and Puerto Rico.

Margaret earned her Master's Degree in Theology from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. She was the first woman to qualify for ordination in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (now the Uniting Reformed Church) in South Africa, a historical moment for the church in opening the doors of ordination and leadership positions for women. In addition to her peace building and conflict transformation work, she taught at two teacher training colleges in Cape Town.

Margaret is committed to issues of social, political and economic justice, reconciliation, and peace. Her expertise includes facilitation, mediation, team building, training and speaking engagements to a range of constituencies including city and state government agencies, social service agencies, police, schools, religious institutions, businesses, neighborhood leaders and young people. Conflicts may range from the mundane to more severe and endemic. Significant transformation work during 2002 to 2012 included more than 100 Palestinians and Israelis who visited the U.S., more than 300 police officers in the Hartford Police Department; intense and divisive school and church conflicts in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York respectively, and developing successful training programs for work places, educational institutions and state agencies, such as the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Children and families of Connecticut.