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Duke City Native Starts Peace Prize

By Martin Salazar, Journal Staff Writer

Paul Ré graduated near the top of his class with a physics degree from the California Institute of Technology.

From there, the Albuquerque native took the road less traveled — at least for someone holding a degree from one of the world's top universities.

"Back in 1972 there were many, many things going on in the world," Ré said, citing the war in Vietnam and environmental issues. "I felt I could make a better contribution to the world as an artist than as a scientist. ... I felt that if we did not heal our ways, that we were certainly headed for very, very bad environmental ruin of the planet."

Nearly 40 years later, the artist is still trying to make a difference, this time through a peace prize he has established at the University of New Mexico.

The Paul Bartlett Ré Peace Prize is to be awarded every other year to a UNM student, faculty, staff member or retiree who has promoted peace, harmony and understanding. The award comes with a stipend of about \$4,000, artwork by Ré and a numbered copy of Ré's book, "The Dance of the Pencil."

Nominations for the prize are due by March 31.

"Promoting peace and harmony in the world through my art and actions has been the theme of my life for many decades," Ré said. "(Establishing the prize) was just a natural extension of that."

He has already donated about \$40,000 to UNM for the endowment, and he has made arrangements to contribute another \$100,000 when he dies.

Ré, 59, lives in Albuquerque and is still an artist, writer and poet. He said he established the prize at UNM partly because he is a native of Albuquerque and partly because the university approached him.

The peace prize winner will be selected by a four-person committee based on nomination packets that can be 40 to 70 pages. Ré will serve as adviser to the group. People of all disciplines are welcome to apply.

The prize "... emphasizes all disciplines and also inner and outer peace," he said. "I don't think we can really promote outer peace in the world unless we have inner peace within ourselves."

Ré said while he didn't pursue a career in physics, his education from Caltech has nevertheless been put to good use.

"It was just natural for me to use the math and physics that I had learned and to put that into my artwork and to hopefully uplift the world and try to encourage people to be kinder to the planet and to themselves and everyone else," he said. "It's been quite a journey."