

# The Delta Prize for Global Understanding

The University of Georgia

Awarded in 2002 to

**Mrs. Sadako Ogata**





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**Title page:** Mrs. Sadako Ogata accepts the Delta Prize from Michael F. Adams, President of The University of Georgia, and Frederick W. Reid, President and Chief Operating Officer of Delta Air Lines.

(Photo/Paul Efland)

**Front cover:** Mrs. Sadako Ogata delivers her acceptance speech for the Delta Prize on May 28, 2002, in Atlanta, at The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, co-sponsor of the award ceremony. (Photo/Paul Efland)

**Inset:** The Delta Prize Sculpture. The Delta Prize sculpture was designed by Barbara Mann and Gary Noffke. The sculpture consists of a sterling silver medallion, approximately 2 1/4 inches in diameter and 1/8 inch thick, held in place by a titanium pin on a bronze triangular base. The medallion portrays the earth with the abstracted continents in low relief. In raised lettering surrounding the earth are, on one side, the words "THE DELTA PRIZE FOR GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING," and, on the other side, the words "THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA." The medallion rotates in place on the stand. The name of the recipient of the Delta Prize is inscribed on the bronze base. (Photo/Paul Efland)



## The Delta Prize for Global Understanding

The Delta Prize for Global Understanding, endowed by the Delta Air Lines Foundation and administered by The University of Georgia, is awarded on an annual basis to individuals who by their own initiative have provided opportunities for greater understanding among cultures and nations. The Delta Prize honors a variety of contributions to peace and cooperation, such as grassroots projects that diminish hostilities in a particular region of the world, international programs that facilitate communication or commerce among different peoples, and the leadership of individuals in the solution of global problems.

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## Foreword

On behalf of the University of Georgia, it is my pleasure and privilege to introduce this record of proceedings from the Delta Prize for Global Understanding award ceremony on May 28, 2002. It was a great honor to join Frederick Reid of Delta Air Lines in presenting the Delta Prize to Sadako Ogata, former High Commissioner for Refugees at the United Nations.

Perhaps at no other time in our history has the need for global understanding been greater. Following the events of September 11, 2001, we are today perhaps a little less secure as a nation than we might have been at this time last year, but we are also more aware of the world and its awful possibilities. And awareness is the first step toward understanding and solving any problem.

The Delta Prize for Global Understanding is one of the University's many programs that emphasize the increasingly global nature of higher education and expand our students' knowledge of the world. The world our students will enter when they leave the University of Georgia is a much smaller, much more accessible world than the one I entered when I graduated thirty years ago. Many of them will have spent a semester or a year abroad by the time they graduate. I am pleased that the University of Georgia now owns three residential study abroad facilities and is in the top fifteen American universities in the number of students studying abroad every year.

Seymour Martin Lipset said, "Those who know only one country know no country." Our students must have the opportunity to see our country from other points of view and to see it in the context of the world.

The Delta Prize Program involves some of the University's outstanding students in the selection of the recipient and thus provides them a unique educational experience in global affairs. The Student Selection Committee—composed mostly of UGA Foundation Fellows—solicits, screens, and researches nominations that come from around the world and then develops a shortlist for consideration by the Delta Prize Board. The Delta Prize Board, composed of intellectual, political, and business leaders from many countries, meets annually in Atlanta to determine the following year's recipient.

This year we honor someone who has devoted her life to helping the helpless. Sadako Ogata has focused her most recent efforts on the plight of the world's refugees, victims of conflict who suffer through no fault of their own. We should all resolve to find some way to further her mission.

In its first four years of existence, the Delta Prize for Global Understanding has established itself as an award reserved for those who have made our world a better place. I am proud that the University of Georgia is engaged in such a worthy endeavor.

**Michael F. Adams**

President of The University of Georgia  
Member of the Delta Prize Board

## Preface

The terrorist events of September 11, 2001 made obvious to everybody the dangers of fanatical belief in the correctness of one's own ideas, the dangers of intolerance, the dangers of ethnocentrism. The conviction that one's own culture has the only correct set of beliefs and values makes conflict with others holding different beliefs and values inevitable. It produces death and destruction—and it sends people into exile.

Such ethnocentric certainty is the opposite of global understanding, which the Delta Prize was designed to honor. The increased understanding of and respect for cultures different from one's own is the only way we can imagine for the world's diverse peoples to come together to make a more peaceful global society. Delta Air Lines and The University of Georgia established the Delta Prize to pay tribute to individuals who, by their extraordinary efforts, have significantly advanced intercultural understanding and have thereby made the planet safer for all its inhabitants.

The Delta Prize was awarded in 1999 to President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter and The Carter Center; in 2000 to Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and in 2001 to President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In 2002 it is awarded to Mrs. Sadako Ogata for her leadership in promoting human rights, drawing the world's attention to the plight of refugees, and bringing about more peaceful and productive interaction among groups once at war with one another.

Mrs. Ogata is a scholar, with a PhD in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley, a diplomat, and a public servant. In 1978 she was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. At the United Nations, she later chaired the Executive Board of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund; she represented Japan on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; and she won election, three times, to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. She has also received over twenty-five awards for her efforts to bring about more harmonious intercultural relations.

During her time at the UN Mrs. Ogata organized aid for refugees in Iran, Turkey, Bosnia, Liberia, the Great Lakes Region in Africa, Indonesia, Kosovo, West Timor, Guinea, and other troubled parts of our world.

On many occasions, Mrs. Ogata has emphasized the importance of cooperation. "Refugees," she argues, "are a real, global responsibility," requiring collaboration among governments, humanitarian organizations, and the business community.

In 2000, Mrs. Ogata initiated a pilot project, called "Imagine Coexistence," to bring about reconciliation between previously warring groups: It provides support to small, community-based inter-ethnic income-generating activities, which then spawn other inter-ethnic activities in such realms as sports and theatre. It thereby stimulates productive communication among groups of people who once interacted only in hatred. The project "Imagine Coexistence" exemplifies the belief that is the foundation for the Delta Prize for Global Understanding: that communication can lead to understanding.

Mrs. Ogata ended her ten-year position as High Commissioner for Refugees in December of 2000. But she did not cease her humanitarian efforts. After the war in Afghanistan, she assumed leadership in the rebuilding of that country; she co-chaired last January's International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan. And she is co-chairing the Commission on Human Security, an organization designed to address critical threats to human security, such as conflict, poverty, infectious diseases, and human rights violations.

Mrs. Ogata is currently Scholar in Residence at The Ford Foundation.

We are pleased that the 2002 Delta Prize for Global Understanding has been awarded to Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who is teaching people everywhere to "imagine coexistence."

**Gary K. Bertsch**

Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Delta Prize Program

**Betty Jean Craige**

Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Delta Prize Program

## On Behalf of Delta

On behalf of Delta, I am pleased to help recognize Mrs. Sadako Ogata as the fourth recipient of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding.

Adlai Stevenson once quoted a Chinese proverb when he said about former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt that “she would rather light a candle than curse the darkness.” In bestowing the Delta Prize on Mrs. Ogata, we are honoring a great woman of Japan to whom that proverb applies equally well. In fact, there are many interesting parallels between Mrs. Ogata and Mrs. Roosevelt: both came from political families; both studied outside their native lands; both devoted themselves to improving the lives of suffering people; and both worked with the United Nations.

The one main difference between them is that Eleanor Roosevelt did her work as a politician, while Sadako Ogata has done hers as an academic and a diplomat. But whether working miracles to alleviate the suffering of Americans during the Depression or working miracles to alleviate the suffering of refugees around the world during the 1990s, both women have left their distinct mark upon the world.

Let me give you a few details about Mrs. Ogata’s life. She was raised in a political family. Her father was a diplomat, her grandfather was Foreign Minister of Japan, and her great grandfather was Prime Minister. Her father encouraged her to continue her education abroad after she had graduated from college in Japan. Her experience was quite unusual for a Japanese woman, particularly at that time. She came to the United States to study for her Masters degree in International Relations at Georgetown University, and she later received her PhD in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley.

An area of great interest to Professor Ogata is education. She explains what the United Nations High Commission for Refugees does by saying: first it provides humanity’s most basic needs—food, shelter, and sanitation—and then it provides education. She firmly believes nothing can change for the better in this world if people do not reach their intellectual potential. And she also believes that what prepared her best for her job as a diplomat were her graduate studies in history and theory. She would tell us that we all need to study two things: history, to obtain a perspective on the world; and theory, to be able to analyze what shapes our present and our future.

If Mrs. Ogata could sum up her life’s work—which, by the way, is still very much evolving, now that Prime Minister Koizumi has appointed her as Japan’s special envoy to Afghanistan—she would acknowledge that she has striven to light a candle rather than curse the darkness. Not known for sitting in an office and pushing paper, Mrs. Ogata has frequently and tirelessly visited the areas of war and conflict wherever her UN commission could help.

Afghanistan has been a particular touchstone for Mrs. Ogata. When she became the UN High Commissioner in 1991, there were

6.2 million Afghan refugees, the largest number of refugees from any single country at the time. When she left office nine years later in 2000, 2.5 million Afghan refugees remained in exile. Because of the oppressive practices of the Taliban regime, repatriating these refugees to Afghanistan was not a viable option. But since the Taliban regime has been removed, the refugees are now returning to their homeland, and Mrs. Ogata has not stopped finding ways to help them. Now, in her role as Japan's special envoy to Afghanistan, she has already shown how her knowledge and determination can get results. At the beginning of this year, she chaired the reconstruction talks in Tokyo that encouraged major countries to pledge more than \$4.5 billion to rebuild Afghanistan. In addition, thanks to her insistence, Japan will contribute \$500 million over the next two years.

Mrs. Ogata began her tenure as High Commissioner at 64, an age when many people might be thinking of retiring. And more than ten years later, she is still going strong. A prominent columnist for Japan's newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* has suggested that she is creating a new role for Japan in this century. Calling it "Ogata Diplomacy," the columnist wrote that she "expresses Japan's vision of itself as a global civilian power," in which Japan will be active in several important areas: disposing of land mines from areas of conflict, aiding refugees, protecting the environment, and helping economies to develop.

Mrs. Ogata has led the difficult but necessary fight to return displaced people to their own communities. During that time, she has often spoken about how nations can make the job of the UN High Commission for Refugees an easier one. Here is an example from a speech she gave to the Commonwealth Club in 1999: "We must learn to be inclusive. We must not consider weak, vulnerable groups such as refugees and returnees as an obstacle to growth or as competitors for scarce resources. We must think of them as men and women capable of making valuable contributions to society. Isn't that what history teaches us?"

Our own nation's history of welcoming immigrants to our shores has shown us how strength can be found through diversity and adversity. We at Delta are proud of our role in bringing people from one nation to another to promote the understanding of different cultures. In the past difficult months, we have had cause to remember how our openness to other points of view, cultures, and religions has made us a nation that aspires to tolerance and inclusiveness.

I am proud to present the Delta Prize to a great humanitarian, a great woman, and a great citizen of Japan who has lit many candles in her relentless desire to lift the darkness from the miseries of innocent refugees around the world. Mrs. Ogata, let me congratulate you personally and say that we are all inspired by your ability to keep a sense of hope in the face of human conflict. Thank you, and best wishes for further success.

**Frederick W. Reid**

President and Chief Operating Officer of Delta Air Lines



*Mrs. Sadako Ogata delivers her acceptance speech for the Delta Prize, May 28, 2002, at The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, in Atlanta. (Photo/Paul Efland)*

## Protecting Refugees, and Some Insights for the Future

(Acceptance Speech)

It is indeed a great honor and pleasure to be given the Delta Prize for Global Understanding. I accept it in the name of all my colleagues at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who dedicated their lives to the understanding and assistance of some 23 million refugees throughout the world.

The ten years I spent as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have given me insights not only into the state of human suffering in the world but also into its root causes. Let me first review some of the operations that I led to share with you some of the lessons I gained.

When I became High Commissioner in 1991, the Cold War had just ended and people spoke of a new world order. The changes for the better were extraordinary. Democracy spread across Central and Eastern Europe and nearly all of Latin America. Apartheid in South Africa was defeated. But elsewhere there was constant outbreak of humanitarian crises. Millions of refugees fled across borders in record speed. I often characterized the 1990s as the “decade of no world order.”

But within weeks after my arrival, almost two million Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran and Turkey. Soon we moved into Northern Iraq, and for the first time we worked closely with international military forces to bring back the people to safety. In the following years, especially in the Balkans and Central Africa, we were constantly challenged to rethink our protection, assistance, and solution strategies. These were times when massive outflows of people took place across borders. These were also the periods marked by internal conflicts, with large-scale displacement of people within borders.

The foundation of refugee protection remained legal, but *ensuring* protection increasingly became an operational, practical, hands-on activity. UNHCR was on the frontlines, often in war situations. We became much more active in countries of origin, particularly when helping returnees reintegrate. The times also demanded innovative approaches to asylum. We broke new ground by promoting temporary protection for refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If I were to claim achievements, I would cite at least two. We saved a lot of lives, and we were able to repatriate millions home. Starting with the return of the African National Congress exiles to post-apartheid South Africa, the most significant case that followed was that of Mozambique, where a twenty-year war had uprooted more than a third of the population. We worked hard, and by 1995 all 1.7 million refugees were back home. And, more importantly, they *stayed* home.



*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata talks to Ethnic Albanian refugees as she visits a makeshift refugee camp in Kukes, April 8, 1999. (AP Photo)*

There were successes in Asia and Latin America, too. In Cambodia, we helped 400,000 refugees return home. The completion of repatriation from Thailand to Laos and the closure of the Vietnamese Pillar Point centre in Hong Kong in 2000 signaled the end of the 25-year-old Indochinese refugee saga. I traveled to Mexico in 1999 to witness the formal closure of the Guatemalan refugee camps and sent off the last returning refugees, putting an end to decades of refugee crises in Central America.

Solutions to refugee problems take time. This is a lesson I learned over the years. But the success stories demonstrate that even very complex refugee problems can be solved when governments are committed and resources are available. Formal peace agreements certainly provide the best basis for repatriation of refugees. At the same time, a combination of innovative and comprehensive approaches has also proven to produce unexpected results. The Vietnamese refugee problem was settled through a UNHCR-sponsored Comprehensive Plan of Action, which combined refugee resettlement, non-refugee return, and migration outlet.

Though not completely solved, there are hopeful signs in the Balkans. At one point, UNHCR had to cope with almost four million refugees, internally displaced and affected civilians in the Balkans. Five years after Dayton, minority returns are finally becoming a reality both in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Croatia. Refugees are returning to Croatia or integrating in Serbia. Even Kosovo is moving towards normalcy.

Rwanda has also made progress. After the genocide and large-scale killings in Zaire in the course of the rebellion, UNHCR undertook the most difficult rescue operation. The

refugees are largely back, and gradually reintegrating. What the country needs is new development investments to consolidate returns and foster reconciliation.

In Congo, the theatre of a complex clash of political, military, and economic interests, people are still suffering, and little is done to address their plight. It is a paradox that while Congolese continue to seek refuge outside their country, Angolans, Sudanese, Burundis have sought refuge in the Congo. This shows the regional dimension of the crisis.

The Afghans were the largest refugee group when I became High Commissioner in 1991. Five million Afghans were not living in their homes. Had it not been for the terrible attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, they might have remained forgotten or unattended. Now, with the peace process in motion, some 700,000 refugees have returned home, requiring urgent response for early reintegration. The world learned that it should not leave a failed state to turn into hotbeds of terrorists.

Today, the most serious concern is the fate of the world's oldest refugees, some 3.7 million Palestinians who live in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Only one-third of these refugees are in camps, and they suffer overcrowding and poverty. Most recently I was requested by the UN Secretary General to join a fact-finding team "to develop accurate information," on the humanitarian crisis in the Jenin refugee camp. I was very disappointed that we could not carry out our mission to prevent the further suffering of the civilian population on both sides. More than any other situation, the solution of the Palestinian refugees is totally intertwined with the outcome of the Middle East peace process.



*The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata is greeted by Eritrean refugees at the refugee registration center in Gulsah on June 12, 2000. (AP Photo)*



UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata speaks during her last news conference as UNCHR Chief at the United Nations building in Geneva, Switzerland on December 14, 2000. (AP Photo)

But how can we mobilize the world leaders and the concerned public to prevent wars and conflicts, to bring down deaths and human suffering? Can we not stop people from being forcefully displaced within their countries or abroad? Given the kind of world we live in—with terrorism, ethnic tension, social and economic inequities, separatist movements—I think governments and humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR, must continue to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacity. They must increase their “surge capacity” through expanded stand-by arrangements, rosters of people trained and ready for rapid deployment. UNHCR can definitely make a difference through effective emergency action.

However, when it comes to the question of more fundamental policy changes to prevent growing calamities and downward spirals, I wish to propose rethinking on three scores. *First, to place military action in the overall context of building peace. Second, to link humanitarian and development assistance in a seamless phase of transition. Third, to place justice in the process of community reconciliation process.*

Let me start with the first issue: *placing military action in the overall context of building peace.* The predominant character of wars that produced large-scale exodus of refugees in the last decade has been communal: ethnic, religious, or political groups trying to gain autonomy, equity, or justice. Military intervention was undertaken when the humanitarian disaster reached catastrophic levels, as witnessed in northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo. But military action rarely addresses the root causes that have led to intense confrontation. As such it deals with the immediate physical threats, but its overall effect generally remains inconclusive. In several situations when conflicts were resolved by the conclusion of a peace agreement, administered by the United Nations or other international arrangements, combined with refugee repatriation, reintegration, and overall reconstruction programs, the fruits of peace were widely shared and led to overall stability. UNHCR was able to participate in such comprehensive efforts in Cambodia, Mozambique and Bosnia.



*Japan's Special Envoy for Afghan Affairs Sadako Ogata delivers a speech at the opening session of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo, January 21, 2002. Ogata chaired the conference for rebuilding the war-torn nation with representatives from more than 60 nations and international organizations. (AP Photo)*

However, in many other situations such as northern Iraq or Somalia, military action was not linked with reconstruction work; and, as of today, the benefits of peace have remained inconclusive. Current development in Afghanistan presents a test case. In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> threat posed by the Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists, military action was needed to destroy their forces and establish a new governing body. But can the eradication of the surviving Taliban and al Qaeda forces be attained by military action alone? What the people in Afghanistan are really waiting anxiously for are some clear signs of the benefits of peace. They are longing to see reconstruction work reaching their villages. Unfortunately, reconstruction work has been slow to arrive.

Second, *the linking of humanitarian and development assistance*. Organizationally speaking, the international community has set up two separate compartments, humanitarian and development, to respond to crises involving victims during and after conflicts. However, the needs of these societies do not fall into two neat categories. Reality demands much more simultaneous relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction interventions. My own experiences during the crises in the Great Lakes region in Africa taught me that while UNHCR was engaged in returning refugees back to Rwanda—not because the country was ripe for secure and orderly voluntary repatriation, but more because there were no survival assurances in the war-torn Congo—there were massive needs for shelter construction, farm rehabilitation, and school and health care service restoration. The government insisted that UNHCR stay on to help the returnees reintegrate and become self-sufficient, but the donor governments criticized us for moving on to development work. I pressed the development agencies to accelerate their assistance inputs, but

they usually remained slow. It was the difference in the speed and mode of operation that clearly produced the gap between the work of emergency prone humanitarian agencies and longer-term-focused development agencies.

The "gap" issue has become widely known. At the kick-off meeting for Afghan reconstruction that took place in Washington on November 22, 2001, both Jim Wolfensohn and Mark Malloch Brown of the United Nations Development Programme announced their determination to carry out a "seamless transition" from relief to reconstruction, through paying concentrated attention on the reintegration phase. The need to link humanitarian assistance with reconstruction has been duly recognized. I hope the gap filling process in the Afghan reconstruction will demonstrate genuine progress.

Third, *the placing of justice in the community reconciliation process*. Again, during my ten years at UNHCR we grappled with the causes and consequences of conflict on a daily basis. Whether in Bosnia or Rwanda or Burundi, the vast majority of the fleeing people had escaped the cruelest of man's inhumanity: genocide, ethnic cleansing, and massive violations of human rights. In the course of these developments, war crimes tribunals were set up in The Hague and in Arusha. Slowly they started to function. In Rwanda, more than 120,000 genocidaires awaited trial. The battle cry of public debate was always "justice." But would justice have been sufficient to heal the kind of mass atrocities that people suffered? It was only in 1998 that I noted some change in the Rwandan political dialogue. They were beginning to talk about "reconciliation," and that year they even established a Commission on National Unity and Reconciliation.

From Bosnia to Rwanda, and from Timor to Kosovo, UNHCR had to grapple with the difficulties of integrating people back to broken communities with lingering memories of hate and suspicion. With inspiration gained from a group of academics who had worked on reconciliation projects in violence-ridden American inner-cities, UNHCR launched an initiative called "Imagine Co existence." The challenge is to come up with projects that necessarily bring people together for common survival purposes. The pilot projects in Bosnia and Rwanda have already introduced interesting job-sharing potentials to be applied in many other post-conflict societies. The coexistence impact might be slower to emerge, but would certainly be more permanent in effect.

The three proposals that I have presented might bring far-reaching results on alleviating human suffering and preventing crises from turning catastrophic. There is one crucial issue that must be addressed. How do you move governments and policy-makers to bring about changes in fundamental policy thinking? How do you move the political will of governments and leaders to care and act on behalf of those who suffer? It should be



*Mrs. Ogata meets University of Georgia students at the Delta Prize award ceremony, May 28, 2002. (Photo/Paul Efland)*

reminded that the cause of refugee flight is basically political. Human suffering is largely determined by political action or inaction. In expressing my gratitude for the honor you have bestowed on me, I wish to appeal to you to join forces for changing the world for a safer and more humane place for all, particularly for the refugees and the dispossessed.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Sadako Ogata**

Recipient of the 2002 Delta Prize for Global Understanding

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\*Associate Director of the Foundation Fellows Program





## Recipients of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding

**1999**

President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter and The Carter Center

**2000**

Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu

**2001**

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev

**2002**

Mrs. Sadako Ogata

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For information, please contact The University of Georgia, The Delta Prize for Global Understanding, 164 Psychology Building, Athens, Georgia 30602 (prize@uga.edu). See also <http://www.uga.edu/news/deltaprize/>

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The University of Georgia  
Delta Prize for Global Understanding  
164 Psychology Building  
Athens, Georgia 30602-3001

**Michael F. Adams**

*President*

(presuga@uga.edu)

**Karen A. Holbrook**

*Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost*

(kholbro@uga.edu)

**Steve Wrigley**

*Senior Vice President for External Affairs*

(swrigley@uga.edu)

**Gary K. Bertsch**

*Director of the Center for International Trade and Security*

(gbertsch@uga.edu)

**Betty Jean Craige**

*Director of the Center for Humanities and Arts*

(bjcraige@uga.edu)

**Lloyd Winstead**

*Managing Director of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding*

(prize@uga.edu)





The University of Georgia  
Delta Prize for Global Understanding  
164 Psychology Building  
Athens, Georgia 30602-3001