In September, former President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez presented two Patten Foundation lectures on the IU Bloomington campus: “Peace with Justice for Latin America and the World” and “Moral Leadership for the New Century.”

Arias, a 1990 recipient of an honorary doctorate from Indiana University Bloomington, is a spokesperson of international stature for the Third World, championing such issues as human development, democracy, and demilitarization. He has traveled the globe, spreading a message of peace and applying the lessons garnered from his award-winning Central American Peace Process to topics of current global debate.

As a philanthropist and humanitarian, Arias used his Nobel award to establish the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, under which three programs were established: the Center for Human Progress to promote equal opportunities for women in all sectors of Central American society; the Center for Organized Participation to foster change-oriented philanthropy in Latin America; and the Center for Peace and Reconciliation to work for demilitarization and conflict resolution in the developing world. To the people of industrialized countries, Arias carries a sincere message of solidarity and partnership. He hopes that message will counter the growing threats faced by all nations today and initiate an era of peace and prosperity for all humankind.

In his lectures, Arias encouraged his audience to consider the need for demilitarization and conflict resolution in the developing world through solidarity, tolerance, and love. In describing moral leadership, he stressed that actions cannot conflict with values. He cautioned that if the United States desires to lead the world, it must not contradict the values on which it prides itself—responsibility, freedom, democracy, and prosperity—by allowing interior interests to precede exterior causes. Arias emphasized that peace is “not a dream, but hard work” and can be achieved when adversaries “sit down and face each other as human beings.” Arias appealed to audience members to act as moral leaders themselves by taking action against government policies with which they do not agree.

The Patten Lectures, established in 1937 by IU graduate William T. Patten (B.A. 1893) to enrich the intellectual life of the IU campus, has brought more than 130 world-renowned speakers to IU Bloomington.

—Mary Tilton
Dean of Faculties Office, IUB