



# President's Office

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## Selected Speeches

### RISING Baltimore

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October 23, 2017  
Westminster Hall

Good evening, everyone. I'm Jay Perman, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and I'm honored to welcome you tonight. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than being among those who work daily for peace, justice, and opportunity. I am, therefore, in the best of company, and I thank you all for serving as both the hope and the struggle that sustain us.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I extend my deepest gratitude to Lord John Alderdice, who will share his wisdom with us tonight, which he's earned over a remarkably accomplished career as a political leader and activist, a negotiator, a scientist, and an academic.

Accompanying Lord Alderdice are six faculty and staff members from Coventry University, and I thank you all for making the trip. We can't wait to share with you, and learn from you, and continue this wonderful friendship.

I thank Virginia Rowthorn and everyone at UMB's Center for Global Education Initiatives. I thank Flavius Lilly and his colleagues in our Graduate School. I thank Ashley Valis and everyone at our UMB Community Engagement Center who live this mission of engagement every day. You're an inspiration.

Tomorrow, you'll meet some of our partners in the neighborhoods we serve, the community residents and leaders who work with us to create neighborhoods of strength and resilience and hope. We simply couldn't do what we do in the community without their trust, without their candor and honesty, and without their unselfish collaboration. We are blessed by a city of partners, and we are in their debt.

Finally, we wouldn't be gathered here tonight if it weren't for Dr. Roger Ward and Prof. Mike Hardy. Last year, Dr. Ward, UMB's chief accountability officer, was invited to Coventry, and he was immediately taken with the university—most especially, with the Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations, and its director, Prof. Hardy. The two men knew they wanted to do something together, that there was an opportunity here to engage one another and to take from our different experiences—our different perspectives—potentially transformative ideas.

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I know these perspectives—where they align and where they diverge—will be instructive for us.

We often use different words to describe the same goals. Where we in Baltimore might talk about civil rights, and social justice, and community engagement, our colleagues in Coventry might talk of trust and peace and reconciliation.

But vernacular aside, our similarities are too many to ignore. The town of Coventry has pockets of acute poverty. It's a diverse city, with dozens of languages spoken there. Coventry is a multi-school university, deeply dedicated to working with its neighbors, deeply dedicated to international education, to using global strategies to effect local change—and vice versa.

Both of our nations face considerable uncertainty in the years ahead. Political crises eclipse the real and profound needs of communities that suffer from endemic poverty, isolation, and neglect.

The symposium we begin tonight is meant to help us share community engagement strategies across communities and professions, between universities and communities, and, indeed, across borders. Because sometimes you just need to hear a really great idea—in a different accent.

This is a rather historic occasion for UMB. This is the first RISING Global Peace Forum held outside of the city of Coventry, and I thank its pioneers for the tremendous honor of letting us use the RISING name.

If you don't know the history of RISING, it is the unique vision of Coventry University, the City Council, and Coventry Cathedral. It began as a platform for bringing people and policymakers together to share their stories and their ideas and—above all—to provoke peace.

Peace and reconciliation are truly in Coventry's blood. When the Coventry Cathedral was bombed during World War II, the decision was made the very next day to rebuild—not as an act of defiance, but rather as a sign of faith, trust, and hope for the future. The ruins of the old cathedral stand alongside the new one—built with donations and gifts from around the world.

And I wonder what landmarks there are in Baltimore that we can compare to Coventry Cathedral. Certainly they're not as grand, but there are buildings here rebuilt after conflict, communities restored after unrest, neighborhoods reclaimed from neglect, and people resilient in the face of systemic inequity.

These landmarks and people—this hope for the future and hope for humanity—are what compel our presence here tonight. And I thank you.

#### **Lord John Alderdice**

It's now my honor to introduce our most distinguished guest.

For 30 years, Lord John Alderdice has been a key figure in the Irish Peace Process. As leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, he was instrumental in every aspect of resolving the historic conflict—all the way through to the negotiation of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Lord Alderdice later became the first Speaker of the new Northern Ireland Assembly, leading the establishment of the new legislature. He was later appointed to the Independent Monitoring Commission, tasked by the British and Irish governments with closing down terrorist operations and overseeing normalization of security activity in Northern Ireland.

More recently, Lord Alderdice was invited to develop a new strategy to bring an end to the remaining paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland, and he established the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building in Belfast to work on the changes—in culture and attitude—that will complete the Irish Peace Process.

Lord Alderdice is equally committed to liberal politics outside Northern Ireland. He served in the leadership of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, and as president of Liberal International, a worldwide network of more than 100 liberal political parties. He was named Liberal International's lifetime "president of honour," the organization's highest distinction.

Lord Alderdice's contributions to liberal politics at home and abroad were recognized when he was appointed one of the youngest-ever life members of the House of Lords in the British Parliament, where he would serve as chairman of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party.

Lord Alderdice's main focus now is as Director of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict—based at Harris Manchester College at the University of Oxford, where he focuses on understanding and engaging with the problems of religious fundamentalism, political radicalization, and violent community conflict.

Lord Alderdice's professional background is as a clinical and academic physician and psychiatrist, and in this regard he has a serendipitous relationship with our University. To speak to Lord Alderdice's work in psychiatry and his collaboration with UMB, I'd like to invite to the podium Dr. Bankole Johnson, Dr. Irving J. Taylor Professor and Chair in the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry.

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