

Cindy Piester Bio

“Isn’t it time?”



“My loyalty is to humanity who has been purposely misled about human caused global warming for the short-term benefit of special interests. Knowledge carries the burden of action. I am, therefore, called upon to act.”
Cindy Murphy Piester

Early Life: Born the day that the United States bombed Hiroshima, vowed at 12, that as an adult I would pay attention to what was going on in the world and do what I could to help. Honored this until my husband’s death in 2012. Withdrew for five years.

Working Life: Began working in California State Hospitals and Developmental Centers as a Licensed Psychiatric Technician for 33 years. Led tens of thousands of hours of group therapies primarily with youth. Union Rep. testified on client and staff safety issues to CA. Senate Sub-Committee. Fought severe forced overtime, and worked to create improved treatment guidelines for our HIV+ clients. Also, exposed union corruption. Retired as a Supervisor after 33 years.

Activism: Lifetime commitment guided by teachings of Gandhi. Deeply involved in antiwar efforts largely through public education, alternative media, op-eds, event organizing, group formation, and coalition building. Incorporated climate concerns on return to activism in 2017.

In solidarity with Cesar Chavez’ fast and the United Farm Workers Strike (farmworkers were dying from pesticide exposure), organized bringing three truckloads of food and students to Delano, California to help support farm workers during grape strike.

Began study of US Covert Ops in my late 20s. Committed to liberation theology in the face of US backed oppression and death squads in Central and South America.

In 1989, had the rare one-to-one opportunity to spend three-day period in deep “Q and A” conversation with the former CIA Vietnam Station Chief, turned whistleblower and author, John Stockwell.

1990s, Organized intense opposition to closure of Camarillo State Hospital. Supported the work of others in their efforts to keep multiple California State facilities open, in face of Gov. Pete Wilson’s putting the mentally ill out on the streets and “getting out of the hospital business.”

Actively opposed Gulf War intervention. Familiarized myself with Attorney General Ramsey Clark’s *Highway of Death*.

1999, took documentary film making classes. Joined Cable Access station, began contributing material (mine and others). Researched and edited film on Gulf War Syndrome and Depleted Uranium for use as a KPFFK fund drive premium.

2000, My husband, a Viet Nam Veteran, went into a two-year deep depression with the election of George W. Bush and the advent of the Iraq War. I joined two-week public fast with Code Pink.

In 2006, arrested with my son and two others in high profile non-violent peaceful and media-intensive civil disobedience in San Diego, CA. We were protesting the illegal war in Iraq, the use of torture, spying on the American people and calling for Bush’s impeachment. Son was selectively prosecuted a year after the fact.



Founded and Chaired Citizens for Impeachment, Ventura County which sought GW Bush's impeachment. Coordinated with others nationally. Joined the National Impeachment Network (NIN)

2006, Joined Veterans for Peace chapter 112. Involved in distributing Opt Out forms to students at local high schools as part of anti-recruitment effort. Over next number of years, began producing events, bringing intellectuals, authors, events were often cosponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of others.



Ventura, Veterans for Peace, and

2006-2012, As Producer/host of programming, I did intense

alternative media cable access television research on issues of the day. Covered

many veteran's issues including rape in the military, whistle-blowing, and war crimes. Specific shows were distributed in DVD format by local VFP chapter as part of their anti-recruitment campaign,

Guests/interviewees included Daniel Ellsberg, Ray McGovern, Col. Ann Wright, Helen Benedict, Vincent Warren, S. Brian Wilson, Cindy Sheehan, Ethan McCord, Michael Prysner, Dahr Jamail, Medea Benjamin, Peter Dale Scott, Michael Parenti, Jeff Patterson, Robynn Murray, Susan Rosenberg, Professor Richard Falk, Cynthia McKinney, Deborah Slagboom, Vincent Bugliosi, David Ray Griffin, Elizabeth Kucinich, Allison Weir, David Corten, David Swanson, Mikey Weinstein, Bruce Gagnon and many others.

In 2008, attended and filmed the Justice Robert H. Jackson War Crimes Conference convened by Lawrence Velvel, a prominent Legal Educator at Massachusetts School of Law at Andover.

<https://www.villagevoice.com/2008/10/01/considering-the-war-crimes-trial-of-the-bush-administration/>

Stayed at the Code Pink House in Washington DC with Col. Ann Wright and others, joined in lobbying Congressional Reps. Calling for impeachment of G.W. Bush.



2009, assisted in formation of Venturans for a Just Palestine (VJP) with members of local Muslim community. Lead organizer of two major "Let Gaza Live" fundraisers. See: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2009/05/in-brief/> and <https://www.vcreporter.com/2010/03/finding-a-rapport/>

In 2010, awarded Citizens for Peaceful Resolution's Earth Charter Award for Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace.

In 2011, As writer, producer, director, and part of a three-woman team, released an online no-budget documentary exposing suppressed US War Crimes as reported by John Needham: *On the Dark Side in Al Doura, A Soldier in the Shadows*. <https://vimeo.com/33755968>. With the support of the Huffington Post, Cynthia McKinney, Truth Out, Project Censored, Vets groups, and the European Occupy Movement we began getting 400 hits an hour from 150 nations within the first four days of our on online release.

2012, With the assistance of Marjorie Cohn, then the Executive Director of the National Lawyers Guild, we were able to get the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) to review the transcript and supportive documentation of the John Needham story and ask them to take legal action for the cause of justice. CCR decided that they would take the case and approach it collaboratively. They informed us that they would request a thematic hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)

2012, My husband, John Piester died.

In 2013, My friends and I were all too grief stricken to participate in CCR's presentation on the steps of the White House on the tenth anniversary of the Iraq War as they called for The Right to Heal Campaign. I withdrew from public life for five years.



2017, Began weekly meetings in my home forming, Action for Change in Changing Times (ACCT). Group organized a variety of successful events and protests. Took on local homelessness and climate issues. Regularly participating in City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings. Intense effort in support of getting appropriate climate protections and language into Ventura County General Plan Update.

2018-2019, Organized two local Climate Action and Environmental Justice Summits. Both events were attended by 250 students and members of the public and were well received. My son, Environmental Physicist Dr. Omar Clay, was the keynote speaker.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2S_UeYXsso<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/education/2019/04/26/environmental-justice-summit-oxnardcollege/3586808002>.

June 2019, Emceed Ventura's Green New Deal Town Hall which I helped organize as part of Sierra Club's National GND Town Hall effort. Instrumental in starting a Green New Deal Working Group which has been meeting regularly in Oxnard, Ca.

August 2019, Invited to speak on Climate Change at the Unitarian Universalist Ventura Church. Did intensive research and prepared a one hour 130 slide power point presentation covering the science of climate change, its impacts and making the connections between climate change and the military industrial complex. Response was overwhelmingly positive. Encouraged by former VFP National Vice President to take the presentation on National tour.

September 2019, Participated in a three-day Unitarian Universalist Create Climate Justice Conference in Washington DC that featured numerous guest speakers. Participated in lobbying the staffs of Charles Schumer, Kamala Harris and Diane Feinstein asking support for climate justice and the Green New Deal. Also participated in Climate marches and with thousands of others risked arrest blocking streets in DC area on 23rd.



October 2019, My Climate Change and US Militarism presentations were hosted by Chicago Area Peace Action (CAPA) and held at Grace Lutheran Church in Chicago. VFP in collaboration with Park Forest Environmental Commission hosted my presentation held at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church in Park Forest, Il. Also presented on Climate Change, the Science, and Impacts at the Third Unitarian Church in Chicago. Was well rewarded by the enthusiasm and engagement of the audience and desires to have me return were expressed.

Member of or affiliated with: Veterans for Peace, National Climate Action Working Group; VFP Chapter 112, Associate Member, the Unitarian Universalist Ventura Church, Social Action Committee, UU 7th Principle Environmental Action Team; Action for Change in Changing Times; Sunrise Movement, Sierra Club, 350 VC Climate Hub, the Extinction Rebellion, and others.

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Veterans for Peace
Climate Working Group, Natl.

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