University of Maryland Press Release:

On Tuesday, October 19, 2010 selected leaders of the interfaith movement worldwide gathered in New York city to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Temple of Understanding and to launch two major works: “Living My Dreams: The Remarkable Story of the Temple of Understanding” written by Juliet Hollister with a preface by Professor Suheil Bushrui, and “The Spiritual Heritage of the Human Race: An Introduction to the World’s Religions” written jointly by Professor Suheil Bushrui and Dr. Mehrdad Massoudi. The latter work was a recipient of the first Temple of Understanding Interfaith Education Award for outstanding work in the field of interfaith education.

“[One hundred twenty international] interfaith visionaries, environmental experts, civic and business leaders met to engage in a creative conversation to explore how they are uniquely positioned and poised to help shape the transformational potential of this intersection of ecology and religion.”

Founded in 1960 by Juliet Hollister, a leading American interfaith visionary, the Temple of Understanding which enjoys a consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Counsel, has become a world renowned institution which aims to “achieve peaceful coexistence among individual, communities, and societies through interfaith education to develop an appreciation of religious and cultural diversity, to educate for global citizenship and sustainability, to expand public discourse on faith and ecology, and to create just and peaceful communities”.

In 1996 the Juliet Hollister Awards were created to honor individuals whose efforts have advanced the aims and ideals of the interfaith movement. Previous recipients included HRM Queen Noor of Jordan, His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama, President Nelson Mandela, Chief Arvol Looking Horse, and Professor Suheil Bushrui [in 2004]. This year’s recipients were His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, The Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu, Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa, and Karen Armstrong, renowned authoress. Dr. Suheil Bushrui, Honorary Co-Chair of the Hollister Committee, introduced and paid tribute to His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. Furthermore, 50 individuals, considered by the international community to be authorities in their respective fields, were selected to receive the Interfaith Visionary Award in recognition of their unceasing efforts in promoting religious harmony, dialogue, and understanding, and developing “an appreciation of religious and cultural diversity.” Among the honorees was Professor Emeritus Suheil Bushrui of the George and Lisa Zakhem Kahlil Gibran Chair for Values and Peace at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Maryland. He is also the first incumbent of the Bahai Chair for World Peace [1992-1995]; Senior Scholar CIDCM and Fellow of the Temenos Academy, London, UK.

1 Statement from the Call to Action Conference of Interfaith Visionaries, organized by the Temple of Understanding, October 19, 2010 New York City
2 Program from the Call to Action Conference of Interfaith Visionaries, organized by the Temple of Understanding, October 19, 2010 New York City
3 Ibid.