

Gandhi's grandson marks 9/11 anniversary

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Marking the five-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, professor Rajmohan Gandhi visited Niles West last Monday to offer his vision of the post-9/11 world.

The grandson of slain Indian peace activist Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi is currently a visiting professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, specializing in South Eastern and Middle Asian studies. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the International Humanitarian Award in 2004. He is also an author, having currently released *Revenge and Reconciliation: Understanding South Asian History*.

Gandhi's visit began by having lunch with the Peer Mediators. He was open for conversation with students as all sat around a table posing questions for the professor. When a mediator asked why he chose to meet with high school students, he responded, "You still have faith in faith, faith in hope. Older students become sort of cynical."

Gandhi also questioned the students, inquiring about their ideas on peace and mediation.

Shortly thereafter, Gandhi was introduced to the freshman class by Principle Dale Vogler. His lecture, "Peacemaking in Times of Struggle and Strife: [Mahatma] Gandhi's Vision Toward Peace and World Harmony," encompassed a wide variety of topics.

He addressed issues, such as terrorism, noting that "terrorism must be opposed, and Arab demands must be recognized." However, his most-stressed point was asking students to always have "space in mind and hearts to understand both sides."

This philosophy served him well later, in the question-answer session when Gandhi was asked if he preferred West or North. He responded, "As a possible peacemaker I will not be able to give a clear answer," to which the audience gave a large round of applause

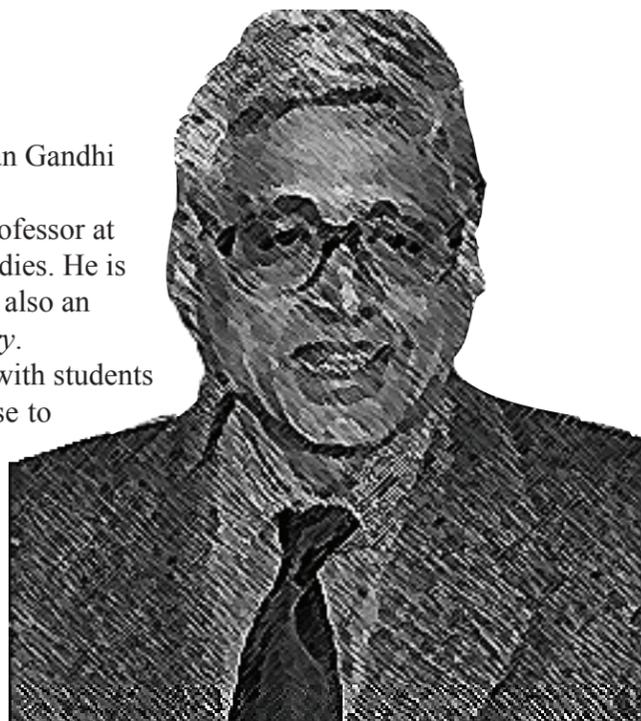
When questioned about the India-Pakistan conflict, he said, "They may not like one another but they have to live with one another. You cannot choose your neighbors."

Another popular question was whether war was justifiable. "There could be some cases where war may seem unavoidable," Gandhi said, "but those cases are few and far between. On the whole most wars are unavoidable,"

Not all questions were serious in nature. When asked if he preferred grapes or oranges, Gandhi replied, "As a University of Illinois professor, I am very much in favor of the color orange."

Before he walked off the stage, he received a standing ovation from those in attendance. Students then flocked to the front of the auditorium for pictures with Gandhi or an autograph.

The visit and presentation to the freshman class will be tied into a social studies unit focused on Gandhi's grandfather and his contributions to world peace.



Gandhi