

Brian Beeley – UNA LASER Distinguished Service Award, 2024

When I ran the Council for Education in World Citizenship in the 1990s, the school speaker on whom we got the most glowing reports was our today's distinguished service award recipient. He preferred to call his talk *The Holy Land*, because of the dispute over names and borders – although he always clarified these with meticulous maps and accurate historical and cultural explanations. He wrote one of our most popular Broadsheets on this subject in 1992 and, for more than 30 years, he has been a widely appreciated source of reliable and balanced information on this challenging part of the world.

He had lived for a year in a Turkish village around 1969, when he developed a deep appreciation of the Middle East. He then worked at the Economist Intelligence Unit and the OECD before becoming a full-time academic in the USA, Iran, Scotland and, finally for more than 30 years, the Open University, where I first met him and, more importantly, he met his wife, Jane.

He has always been a strong internationalist, and was central in a group I set up to link schools in Tunbridge Wells with some schools in Cochi, Kerala, India. He always provided a combination of wisdom and fun – such as explaining the mysteries of croquet to the visiting Indian teachers. He has been involved with UNA groups at least since the 1950s, when he gave a talk on Malta to the Tyneside UNA. He and Jane have for many years run the Tunbridge Wells UNA, where they were central to more than 20 years of MUNGAs involving about 12 local schools. He always took a leading part in the briefing day and in mentoring the young people in their knowledge and leadership.

Brian Beeley – now approaching his 90th birthday in January and fighting ill health – continues to be a much-valued source of information and judgement on many international issues, particularly those in the Middle East. We enormously appreciate his many contributions to our community and are delighted to award him the 2024 LASER Distinguished Service Award.

Trisha Rogers
Chair, UNALASER