

# Los Altos High hosts second History Week

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## **Ellie Van Houtte/Town Crier**

Activist and folk singer Betsy Rose, above, leads Los Altos High School students in song last week during the school's second History Week. Joining her on stage are, from left, student Zach Gospe and teacher Mike Messner.

Los Altos High School students could be heard clapping and singing along to some of history's most famous protest songs last week during the school's second History Week.

Framed as a multimedia and music session, students took a walk through history via songs used in various protests from the 1930s through the Civil Rights Movement to today.

Professional folk singer and peace activist Betsy Rose led the discussion/sing-along, tying different songs to the historical events and highlighting their significance. Los Altos High teacher Mike Messner and student Zach Gospe joined Rose on stage during the multimedia event.

The trio accompanied an audio/visual presentation of the March on Washington and other rights-related milestones compiled by sophomore Will Thabit.

"When people were marching in the '50s, there were a lot of scary moments, but these songs always came back," Rose said. "The music held in it the strength of survival – that is what gives songs power."

Los Altos High's second History Week centered around the theme "50 Years Since the March on Washington." The three-day program examined the progress and struggles in the pursuit of equal rights and access to jobs and education for all Americans over the past five decades.

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Kennedy opened the week with a presentation focusing on events that spurred and shaped the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

Kennedy, a Stanford University professor and founding director of the Bill Lane Center for the American West at Stanford, won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 2000 for his book "Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945" (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Other highlights from History Week:

- Clayborne Carson, Ph.D., director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford, discussed King and the progress of civil rights since the 1963 March on Washington. Coretta Scott King, King's widow, in 1985 personally selected Carson to edit and publish King's papers. He is the author of several books and a frequent news commentator on King.
- The Honorable Judge Eugene Hyman (Ret.) of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, who has appeared on "60 Minutes II" and "Good Morning America," explored changes in family law and new approaches to the handling of juvenile offenders.

Additional speakers included Zahra Billoo, Esq., executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, who addressed civil rights in relation to America's war on terror; Santa Clara University School of Law Professor Michelle Oberman and Santa Clara University Professor Nancy Unger, who covered gains in women's rights and opportunities over the past 50 years; Stanford University Professor of Emergency Medicine Dr. James Quinn and Dr. Marcia Stefanick, Professor of Medicine, Stanford Prevention Research Center, who discussed changes in the rights of medical patients and medical research subjects since the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male" and other research programs; and Donna Brorby Esq., who discussed youth and minority incarceration issues.

Principal Wynne Satterwhite, instructors Dee Dee Pearce and Messner, and parent volunteers Carole Wunderlich and Katherine Williams, M.D., oversaw this year's History Week. Student volunteers included Thabit and Rebecca DeShetler.