



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
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News Release

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ChessFest IV to Feature Leading Educator Sunil Weeramantry

RICHARDSON, Texas (March 10, 2005) — ChessFest, an annual tribute to the world-class chess program at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), this year will feature a lecture by educator and former New York chess champion Sunil Weeramantry.

Weeramantry, a native of Sri Lanka who holds a chess ranking of FIDE Master, will discuss “Creating a Curricular Chess Program in the Public Schools” at 7 p.m., Monday, March 21, in the McDermott Suite on the fourth floor of the McDermott Library on the UTD campus. The lecture is free and open to the public, but seating for ChessFest IV is limited, and anyone interested in attending should contact James Stallings at 972-883-2898 or james.stallings@utdallas.edu to make reservations as soon as possible.

Four years ago, the McDermott Library joined the UTD Chess Program in organizing the highly successful and popular ChessFest.

“The McDermott Library has reached out to collaborate with many programs on campus in recent years, but ChessFest certainly is one of our favorites,” said UTD Dean of Libraries Dr. Larry D. Sall.

“Sunil Weeramantry is one of the most successful chess coaches in the country,” said Dr. Tim Redman, founder and director of the UTD chess program and professor of literary studies in the School of Arts & Humanities. “A key part of our mission is chess education, and we are certainly fortunate to have Sunil visit UTD.”

While at UTD, Weeramantry will be presented with the chess program’s “Chess Educator of the Year” award, a national recognition that was initiated by the university last year.

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ChessFest IV also will include the popular “Challenge the Champions” competition. On Tuesday, March 22, from 1 to 4 p.m., in the McDermott Library lobby, members of UTD’s chess club, along with players from the university’s Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess championship squad, will take on students and anyone else who wishes to challenge them in games of chess. Team members often play as many as three to five challengers at once – and, of course, they rarely lose.

The McDermott Library will highlight chess in its main lobby display case during the two days of the festival.

Weeramantry has coached more than 30 individual and team champions in the National Scholastic Championships. Beginning in 1979, he developed a comprehensive chess program at Hunter College Campus Schools in Manhattan. That program has evolved to the point where chess is now a required subject for all students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Weeramantry served as coach for the U.S. team in three World Chess Championships and currently serves as executive director of the National Scholastic Chess Foundation. Weeramantry was the chairman of the Chess in Education Committee of the U.S. Chess Federation for many years. In his book, *Best Lessons of a Chess Coach*, Weeramantry teaches how to think during a chess game.

Chess apparently runs in his family. Last year, his stepson, Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura, won the U.S. Chess Championship at the age of 16.

About UTD

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor®, enrolls more than 14,000 students. The school’s freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university’s Web site at www.utdallas.edu.

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