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# University of Connecticut students hold vigil for ICE victims


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A vigil for ICE victims was held last week by students at the University of Connecticut.

Students rallied together to bring awareness and voice justice for those who have died at the hands of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

On this cold night, over 40 students gathered to listen and mourn people lost to ICE brutality.

Harry Cohen, a sixth-semester student majoring in French and civil engineering at UConn, was involved in organizing the event.

"The people we honor today were members of our community, our people killed in a violent act of destruction," Cohen said.

The vigil was held at Dove Tower, located between the Student Recreation Center, the Homer Babbidge Library and the School of Business.

Different student organizations including the UConn chapter of Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D), UnDocu Huskies and Alcanzando el Mismo Sueño helped put the event together.

Various students delivered speeches urging students to come together, fight for the rights of all people and take action during this time.

"If you've been sad, if you've been angry if you've been staring at your screen every day, not knowing what to do, but knowing that you should do something, now is the time," Cohen said.

Emerson Zecena-Perez, a political science major and the president of C4D at UConn, voiced his concern about the brutalities by ICE.

He said that part of organizing this event was held to let people know that they aren't alone in the fight against injustices caused by ICE.

"It's the unfortunate reality that our brothers and sisters have to be going through these injustices. And part of organizing this was to make sure that they know as well as our brothers and sisters across the nation, that they are not alone," he said later in an interview with the Daily Campus.

Zecena-Perez said people are being silenced for not talking about the injustices taking place.

During the event, Alex Pretti and Renee Good were mentioned in multiple speeches. Zecena-Perez said he feels disheartened hearing about their deaths.

"I am very thankful for everyone that showed up here, because it's a testament to not only our bravery and our courage, but to the community to be willing to show up in these very scary and troubling times," he said.

Reem Saood, a fourth-semester human rights and political science major, spoke up and voiced her concern on Palestine.

"I decided to speak up about Palestine because I feel like you can't bring up ICE without bringing up Palestine," Saood said later in an interview.

She said when fighting for human rights, we are fighting for everyone.

Saood said she wants to speak out because of the cruelty being shown to immigrant families by ICE and what the Palestinian people have been going through.

Katherine Gutierrez, a sixth-semester political science major at UConn and part of Alcanzando el Mismo Sueño, said that as a daughter of immigrants, the events taking place feel personal to her.

Aleena Chaudry is an eighth-semester physiology and neurobiology major and co-president of UnDocu Huskies at UConn. She said that she and her club felt it was important to speak up about current events.

"There's a lot of misinformation going around, so just taking the steps to actively understand what is going on through the correct lens and not a biased one is very important," she said in an interview.

She said reaching out to her organization and getting informed is a good step for students who want to get involved. "I think the criminalization of children, families, mothers, people who are just here to have a better life and work hard and do things for the country, is what truly bothers me the most."

Chaudry also said that people of color are being targeted specifically.

"You're always going to be seen as an outsider to the government here, and we need to stick together... and together we can make active change happen," she said.

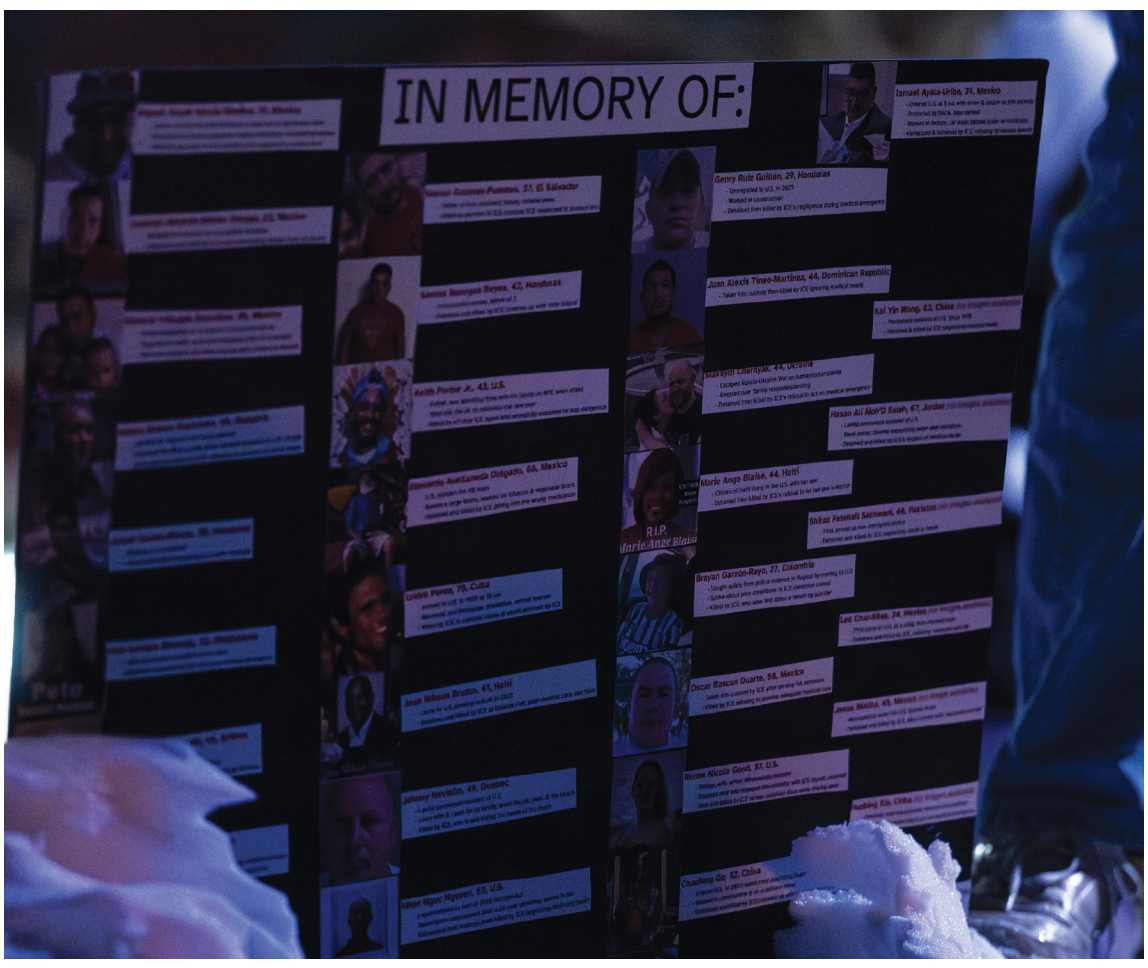
Luis Walker is a sixth-semester finance major who attended the event. "Our goal is to make the lives of our future better, to take the struggles that our past and us ourselves have dealt with and pave it for the better generation and for our children, for our future, and to see these people denounce that road and kick dirt on it and support this is infuriating," he said.

Walker said the anger is good because it can be used as fuel to take action to fight back against ICE. Having immigrant family members and being Latino himself, he is scared for their futures despite being citizens.

Walker said his mother had him when she was 17, and that all the actions and decisions his mother has made paved a way forward for him. Considering this, he said he couldn't stay silent when it came to ICE and immigration issues.

"This vigil allowing me to connect with people who are organizing, allowing me to associate with just with people who know other people who can create a protest, who can organize, who can do something, is a huge leap that I'm willing to that I'm proud to have taken," he said.

There have been eight killings involving ICE in 2026, according to The Guardian.




**Students ignite lighters at a vigil to honor the victims of ICE at Dove Tower on Feb. 4, 2026. Event organizers, as well as attendees, shared their stories and messages to the crowd.**
PHOTOGRAPHED BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



# Local artifacts, art to be showcased in Coventry art installation


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The David Hayes Sculpture Fields in Coventry will begin exhibiting local artifacts and works from historic Coventry artists as a part of the America 250 CT Commission, which aims to celebrate the 250th anniversary of America's independence.

> **"For this year specifically, we are doing displays that talk about the history that we found both in the dirt, and also the history of the arts in Coventry."**
> DAVID HAYES

The commission was started by Gov. Ned Lamont to "coordinate the commemoration, celebration and reflection of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence," according to a Jan. 10 press release.

The David Hayes Sculpture Fields, which opened in 1971, is a ten-acre plot of land owned by the David Hayes Art Foundation which houses dozens of sculptures from Coventry-based sculptor David Hayes.

In 2026, the fields will have year-round programming that will focus on the artifacts found in the field and art in Connecticut and Coventry's history.

"For this year specifically, we are doing displays that talk about the history that we found both in the dirt, and also the history of the arts in Coventry," David Hayes, the son of the sculptor, said.

Since the field was opened in 1971, Hayes said many different artifacts have been found using metal detectors. Usually, the artifacts are old farm implements, but other things have been found before.

"We found coinage that actually goes back to the King George III era... We found buttons from colonial era uniforms," Hayes said. "There's all kinds of stuff."

Art from six historic Coventry artists will also be featured in the fields' programming: Irwin Benoni, Harlan Page, William Talcott, George Dudley Seymour, Erastus Salisbury Field and Roderick Dimock.

The works from the artists date back to over 250 years ago, and include "visual, performing and written arts." The works will be featured in indoor galleries on the field.

The David Hayes Sculpture Fields are free-of-admission and offer self-guided and docent-led tours. The fields "showcase large steel sculptures across ten acres of mowed fields, orchards and clearings in the woods," the press release said.

The fields are also home to a historic homestead called Stonewalls, which used to be utilized by the Underground Railroad, according to Hayes.

"It would be a hiding place for people while they were transiting from southern states up towards Canada," Hayes said.

Hayes said he was interested in University of Connecticut students discovering the David Hayes Sculpture field, as he believes it can help students in different ways.

"For one thing, getting away from the stress and pressure of term papers or final exams," Hayes said. "There's something to be said about getting off the bus for a while and rebalancing your mind and getting literally a breath of fresh air."

A sculpture by Hayes is located on the UConn Storrs campus, titled "Rouge et Noir."

"It's a little cultural jewel that's a bike ride away," Hayes said.

More information about the American 250 CT Commission can be found at ct250.org, and more information about the David Hayes Sculpture Fields can be found on their website.



**TOP: A series of 12 sculptures from the David Hayes Sculpture Field. The ten-acre plot features dozens of sculptures from Hayes, and is open to the public year round.** PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID HAYES.

**BOTTOM: A Screen Sculpture stands in the snow in the David Hayes Sculpture Fields in Coventry, Conn. The David Hayes Sculpture Fields opened in 1971 and is free for the public to visit.** PHOTO COURTESY OF @DAVID_M_HAYES ON INSTAGRAM.


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Piss In The Wind review

**TALIBAN | PAGE 7**
Factionalism threatens their own sovereignty

**BASKETBALL | PAGE 12**
Big East Baller Update


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