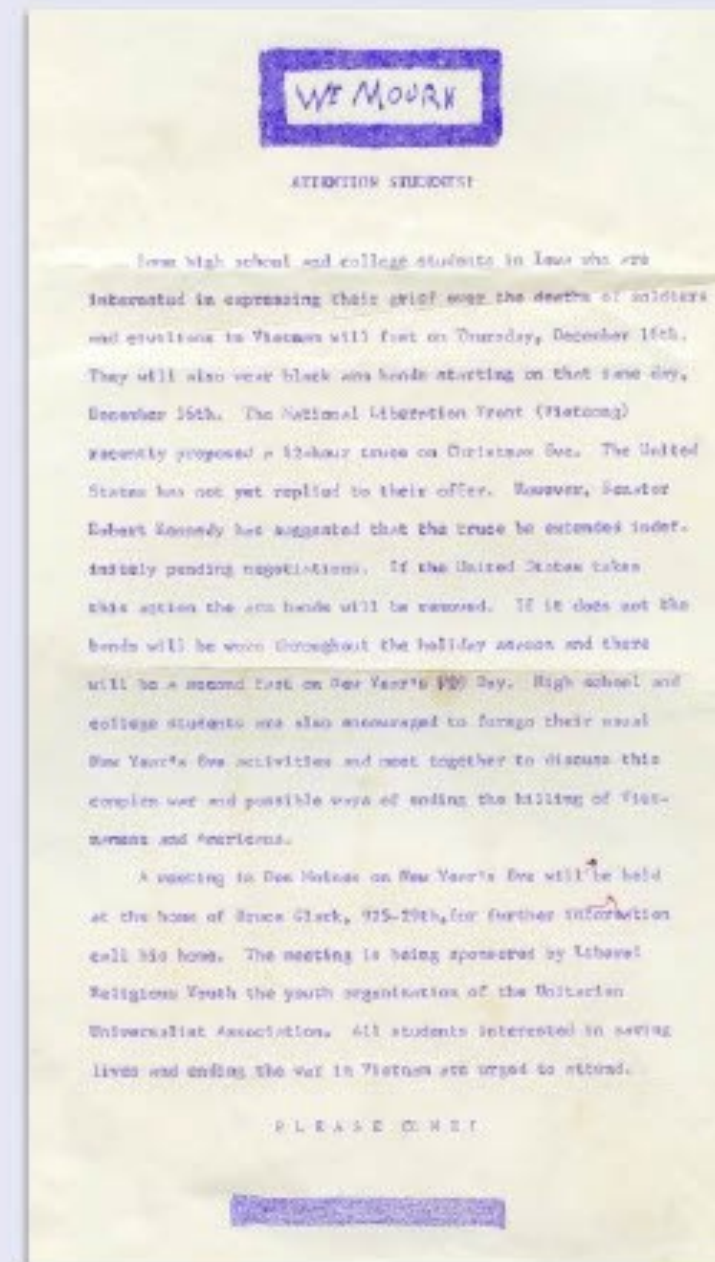


A DECISION MADE

Members of the Tinker and Eckhardt families attended the November 1965 peace rally in Washington D.C., along with an estimated crowd of 25,000. On the drive home, there was a discussion in one of the vehicles about how they could support the anti-war movement back in Iowa. Herbert Hoover, a Quaker and distant cousin of former President Herbert Hoover, suggested the idea of wearing black armbands.

A follow-up meeting was held at the Eckhardt home, with college students, adults, and several high school students present. The students who attended Roosevelt High School began planning an action to wear black armbands and to fast beginning on December 16th. They proposed the idea in a meeting of their Unitarian Youth Group, Liberal Religious Youth, where other students decided they would join in the action, too. Students of the Des Moines Friends (Quaker) Youth Group also heard about the action and became involved.

Roosevelt High School student, Ross Peterson, wrote an article about the upcoming action for the school newspaper. Additionally, a flier was created to inform students about the upcoming action (pictured right).



BLACK ARMBANDS

Black armbands have been used throughout history to mourn the dead. Often, families of soldiers and others would wear them if their family member was killed in action.

During the Vietnam War, students wore black armbands to mourn the dead on both sides of the war and to support Senator Robert F. Kennedy's call for a Christmas truce.

Black armbands were also worn in Des Moines, Iowa, during a memorial service mourning four girls who were killed in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama.

Today, black armbands still represent a desire for peace. They have also come to symbolize the wish by people to have their voices heard and their First Amendment rights respected.



Lorena, Paul, and Mary Beth Tinker following U.S. Supreme Court decision. November 24, 1969. Bettmann via Getty Images

"It was an amazing experience. I had never been to a big city. I had never seen that many people, but we all agreed on the wrongness of the Vietnam War. It was a real morale booster for me."

—John Tinker
(speaking about the November 1965 anti-war rally in Washington D.C.)



Large crowd with peace signs at anti-war demonstration in front of Capital Building, Washington, D.C. Frederick Lombardi. Photo Researchers. Universal Images Group.