



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

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CONTACT: Pam McCurdy  
pmccurdy@cvt.org

## **CVT Honors Peter Dross with Special Edition Eclipse Award**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.**—The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) presented a special edition of its Eclipse Award to Pete Dross, CVT vice president of external relations, as he steps down from his full-time role. CVT recognized him in an unprecedented second award given in 2023 because of the extraordinary contributions he made to the work caring for survivors of torture. During his 30+ years, his leadership helped CVT grow from a small organization on the University of Minnesota campus with a few paid staff members and a small budget of less than \$700,000, to being the largest organization of its kind in the world. Today, CVT has more than 400 staff members with programs in six countries, a budget of more than \$34 million, and programs that touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year.

When Pete started in 1993, he hit the ground running. Only days after he started, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former Vice President Walter Mondale asked for a short-notice visit to the center in Minneapolis. Pete quickly set up [the visit](#), which included meetings with staff, clients and volunteers. Pete demonstrated a talent for planning and implementing important events on very short timelines, with an eye to ensure that these guests had a meaningful visit and had the opportunity to understand the lives of survivors and of the specialized work needed as they began rebuilding their lives. This attention to detail and focus on positive outcomes would be a hallmark of Pete's time at CVT.

Doug Johnson, CVT executive director from 1988-2012 who hired Pete, said, "It was great for me to have Pete because he had real capacity to think politically, and we were able to talk through ideas. It really sharpened my thinking."

During the next incredible years, Pete moved into the role of director, and later vice president, of external relations. He formalized a department dedicated to development and fundraising and another to communications with external audiences in news and social media, and he established a Washington, D.C. policy office focused on advocacy to support survivors and work for accountability for U.S. torture. Pete's work continually resulted in bipartisan agreement from leaders and elected officials, who came together to support many initiatives to end torture and work for accountability.

"I think I was a stronger, smarter person by having Pete as my partner for so long," said Doug Johnson. "I became more able to take risks and more able to think clearly because of Pete's partnership."

Curt Goering, who was CVT executive director from 2012-2021, commented about all the ways that CVT expanded during those years: "Pete was a key partner in that sort of endeavor. I would

say probably no single individual has had a greater impact on that trajectory than Pete. He's just been a critical lynchpin for so many initiatives, some of which have been transformational.”

Dr. Simon Adams, CVT president and CEO, commented, “Today it is our deep honor to present the CVT Eclipse award to Pete Dross. He has tirelessly worked, day in and day out, to help those who have survived torture receive specialized, dignified care to rebuild their lives, and to do all he can so that someday torture will be eradicated around the world.”

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*The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization with offices in Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, United States and additional project sites around the world.*

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