



# AFSA NEWSLETTER

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August 2013

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## Legislative Initiatives

### AFSA Advocacy

Thanks to the support of members like you, AFSA is able to further educate members of Congress and key decision-makers about the realities of the Foreign Service. We do this through Hill visits, educational events, strategic partnerships, and co-branded programs where we connect national influencers with active-duty and retired Foreign Service professionals. These subject matter experts help legislators better understand the role and importance of diplomacy and development in protecting and advancing U.S. national interests and values.

For your benefit, here are some of the bills that we are currently monitoring:

- FY 2014 International Affairs Budget Senate/House Appropriations and Reauthorization Bills
- S. 559, Justice for Former American Hostages in Iran Act of 2013
- S. 760, Government Customer Service Improvement Act of 2013
- S. 980, Embassy Security and Personnel Protection Act of 2013
- S. 1271, Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2013
- H. Res. 36, Special Committee on Benghazi/ Congressman Wolf's initiative
- H.R. 517, Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act
- H.R. 519, the Uniting American Families Act of 2013
- H.R. 925, To amend the Diplomatic Security Act
- H.R. 1409, the Export Promotion Reform Act
- H.R. 1541, Common Sense in Compensation Act
- S. 760/H.R. 1660, Government Customer Service Improvement Act of 2013

- H.R. 1781, Mustafa Akarsu Local Guard Force Support Act
- H.R. 2565, Stop Targeting our Politics IRS Act
- H.R. 2579, Government Employee Accountability Act
- H.R. 2711, Citizen Empowerment Act
- Death Gratuity/Casualty Assistance
- International Broadcasting Bureau Hearings
- Embassy Security and Enhancement Act of 2013 – Rep. Elliott Engel (pending introduction)

If there are specific issues or pieces of legislation that you would like AFSA to look into, please do not hesitate to contact the Advocacy Department at your earliest convenience at [Cuebas@afsa.org](mailto:Cuebas@afsa.org) or [Murimi@afsa.org](mailto:Murimi@afsa.org). We are here to help you.

### From the Department: Annuitant Express

Even after separating, federal employees can use Employee Express at <https://www.employeeexpress.gov/> to view or update numerous aspects of their payroll and personnel information. Access to the website remains active for 18 months after separation, as long as users log in every 90 days to remain active.

Foreign Service annuitants may continue to utilize the same website which then becomes their Annuitant Express. There they can initiate changes to their annuity taxes, modify financial allotments and update direct deposit information, such as account and routing numbers. Additionally, annuitants can use the website to view and print monthly annuity statements and annual Form 1099R.

After Foreign Service members retire, the Office of Personnel Management mails them a personal identification number to access Annuitant Express. Annuitants needing assistance using Annuitant Express should contact the Employee Express Help Desk at 1(888)353-9450.

# AFSA Memorial Marker

## What It Means To Us by Georgette J. Garner and Robert J. Garner

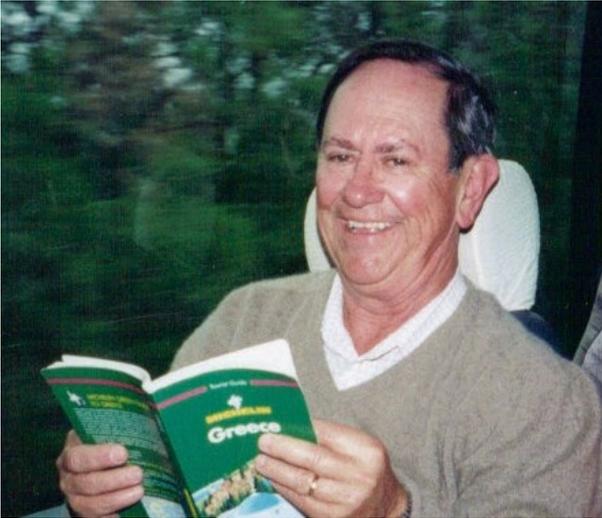


Photo courtesy of Georgette J. Garner

My husband, John D. Garner, passed away on Jan. 27, 2010. After his death, our son, Robert (now retired from the U.S. Air Force) and I discussed how it would be nice if there was an official emblem we could put on his grave marker from the Department of State. We proposed a memorial marker to AFSA and the emblem was brought to fruition thanks to AFSA and retirees. As you can see from the photograph, Robert and I had two emblems installed on our cemetery grave stone as I am also a retiree from the Department of State.

The emblem is very much appreciated as it represents our careers in the Foreign Service. After John's retirement he expressed his desire to return to his 'roots' and give back to the community. He was a major volunteer in the community of Eureka Springs, Ark. The following are remarks from our son, Robert, who grew up in the Foreign Service.

My father's last request was that he be buried in his family cemetery near the small town where he grew up in Booneville, Ark. When we buried my father, an uncle of mine walked us through the graveyard and pointed out many of our ancestors, all the way back to the 19th century. Looking over that cemetery, I could see the entire history of my family.

Each of the gravestones told a little bit about what each person did and contributed over the course of their lives. Some were farmers, while others worked in the lumber mill, and the military markers showed how members of this community had made

sacrifices and taken risks in defense of our nation. All of the markers showed how members of this small town and this family contributed to their community and mankind. It's inspiring to see that we all can have lives that contribute in our own unique ways to the benefit of all.

My father's contribution to the world was by being a diplomat and serving the cause of peace. He achieved the rank of minister counselor and, after 31 years of dedicated service, retired from the United States Information Agency in 1994. It is fitting that his marker has an official emblem representing that contribution. It is also fitting that that contribution be represented as just one part of all the contributions the people in the town of Booneville, Ark., have made over the course of their lives.

For me, grave stones and markers are important. They are emblematic of how our lives all fit together as part of a larger structure of life. They should inspire us all to pursue our own vocations to the highest level of attainment we can achieve, for life is finite and we have a limited time to achieve our dreams.

Though my father's life is complete, he continues to inspire me as does his gravestone with the Department of State's emblem. My mother and I thank AFSA and all those who made it possible for us to put that emblem on his stone.

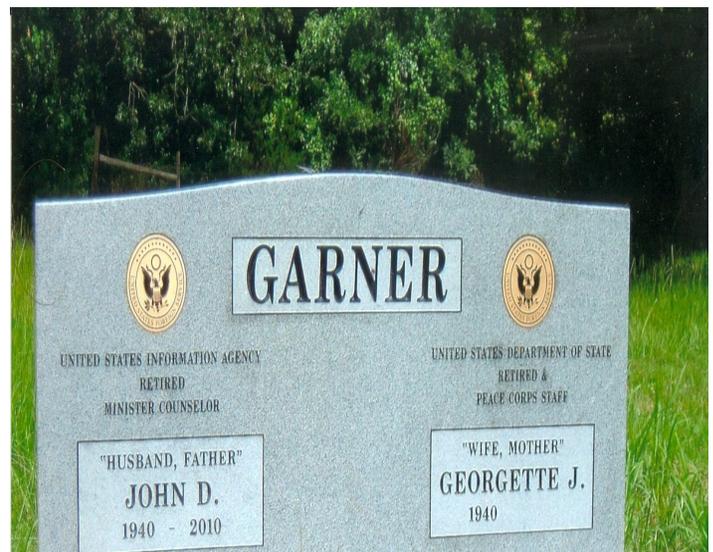


Photo courtesy of Georgette J. Garner

# WAE Program Update

## Notice from the State Department

The following is the latest notice from the Department with regard to the new WAE Global Registry Program:

*The Human Resources Bureau is still on track to start implementing the Department of State's centralized WAE Global Registry Program. Prior to implementing the new program we want to ensure retirees understand the purpose of the new centralized program.*

*The purpose of the program is to "Standardize, Centralize, and Add Value." We want to standardize how we bring reemployed annuitants (WAEs) on board. For example, different processes are currently used for entry on duty when a WAE is geographically separated. We are working with the HR Bureau's Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management (CSHRM) to ensure there is a standard process. We also created an out-processing checklist to standardize what actions must be taken before a WAE appointment expires. The registry is how we will centralize the process.*

*Adding value means different things to different stakeholders. We will add value for you as retirees by providing a one stop shop for general inquiries via the HR Service Center. For instance, in the current decentralized process, no office is responsible for maintaining and updating a list of WAE bureau coordinators. But in the new program, the HRSC will be able to provide you with a current WAE bureau coordinator list to help you network.*

*Our vision is that the HRSC will also be able to add a retired employee's name and skills to the registry. Bureaus will be able to use the registry to help them find retired employees who are interested in work as a re-employed annuitant on a temporary intermittent basis.*

*The purpose of the new centralized program is not for HR to tell bureaus who they should hire. The new centralized program will not change current hiring practices because the positions will still be funded by bureaus. Nor will the new program increase the total number of WAE positions in the department.*

*The new centralized program is not a job search program. Our objective is not to find a job for every*

*retired employee who wants to rejoin the work force. This is not possible, because there are more retired employees who want jobs than positions available. Having your name added to the registry is one action. Securing a WAE position from a bureau is a different action that will depend on your ability to network with the right people.*

*The only thing that we can do to help is to provide the names of WAE bureau coordinators and what skills bureaus want when they hire a WAE. The rest is up to you. If you want a job you must network with either the WAE bureau coordinator or hiring manager.*

*The new centralized program is a tool for hiring managers to leverage when searching for qualified and experienced employees to fill a temporary need. From this perspective, the need for a WAE is driven by the bureau and not the population of retired employees. We are aware that many of you have very impressive qualifications. However, please keep in mind that you are competing against your peers, who also have very impressive qualifications. That is why it is critical you network with the right people if you are seeking employment. Since a lot of you have impressive backgrounds, the ability to network successfully will determine who finds work as WAE and who is not selected.*

*Hopefully, the above information and examples clearly explains the purpose of the new centralized program. We appreciate your patience and look forward to working with you in the near future with the department's centralized WAE Global Registry Program.*

AFSA will continue to engage with the department on the topic of the WAE program. We have already been in contact with Steven Polson, State's chief labor-management negotiator and Abram Baker, of HR Shared Services in charge of implementing the new global registry, about setting up a briefing for the new AFSA president, Bob Silverman, and AFSA Retiree VP, Larry Cohen. At that meeting, we hope to share many of the concerns and comments we have already received from our members, and to begin a dialogue on the best way to move forward with the WAE program.

## And the Winner Is...

### The 2013 National High School Essay Contest

AFSA is pleased to announce the results of the 2013 National High School Essay Contest. This year's winner, **Kailee Marie Pedersen**, is a 2013 graduate of Lincoln East High School, Neb. and will attend Columbia University this fall. Kailee's essay offers a thorough description of how she would improve U.S. –Burmese relations if she were the ambassador by promoting democratization and political liberalization in a country that has long suffered under military rule. Her detailed plan includes incentivizing democratization through economic pressure and fostering the development of civil society. As ambassador, she would also encourage Burma to allow an outside inquiry to be launched inside the country, to help alleviate concerns of continuing human rights violations, as well as improve relations abroad.

[http://www.afsa.org/Portals/0/kailee\\_marie\\_pedersen\\_essay.pdf](http://www.afsa.org/Portals/0/kailee_marie_pedersen_essay.pdf)

At Columbia University, Kailee plans to study East Asian Studies, with an emphasis on politics or literature. She will also continue her studies in Japanese, Russian, and French. When considering where she may study abroad with her Semester At Sea voyage, her prize for winning the essay contest, she is considering East Asia, Russia, and France. She hopes one day to have a career in foreign policy or intelligence.

The runner-up of this year's contest, **Joshua Ferry**, is a rising senior at Wall High School in Wall, N.J. Joshua wrote about improving U.S.-Indian relations through education, gender equality and trade, and opening up more consular offices to accommodate the influx of visa applications. The most challenging goal of his mission as ambassador would be to monitor India's relationship with China and Pakistan, in order to help maintain global peace and security.

[http://www.afsa.org/Portals/0/joshua\\_ferry\\_essay.pdf](http://www.afsa.org/Portals/0/joshua_ferry_essay.pdf)

As a runner-up to the contest, Joshua won a full scholarship to attend the National Student Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., and New York City, in late July/early August 2013.

AFSA would also like to honor our **Top 23 honorable mentions**: **Talia Fradkin** (Palm Beach Virtual School, Fla.), **Brieanna Iyomahan** (Montgomery Blair High School, Md.), **Nadia Safar** (Pulaski Acad-

emy, Ark.), **Cameron Leahy** (Fort Zumwalt South High School, Mo.), **Shoshana Schoenfeld** (Hunter College High School, N.Y.), **Samuel Steed** (Dartmouth High School, Mass.), **Tess Saperstein** (Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Fla.), **Matthew Cohen** (Tarbut V'Torah, Calif.), **Emily Iris Dahl** (Stanford University Online High School, Calif.), **Edward Gao** (Thomas Worthington High School, Ohio), **Joanna Bascom** (Grand Rapids Christian High School, Mich.), **Frances Krupkin** (Cleveland Heights High School, Ohio), **Saumya Jain** (Neuqua Valley High School, Ill.), **Jake Blumencranz** (Jericho High School, N.Y.), **Meaghan Green** (Hermitage High School, Va.), **Madeline Morris** (Topsail High School, N.C.), **Elizabeth Bailey** (Statesboro High School, Ga.), **Nicole Jugovich** (Benet Academy, Ill.), **Michelle Solinger** (Homeschooled, Ky.), **Gabriela Goitla** (University Gardens High School, Puerto Rico), **Rachel Hersh** (Episcopal School of Dallas, Texas), **Nicole Schmit** (Homestead High School, Calif.), and **Alexander Eggers** (Episcopal School of Dallas, Texas).

AFSA would like to extend a sincere thank you to all applicants who submitted an essay this year.



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## 2013 AFSA Awards Ceremony

On June 27, AFSA held its annual Awards Ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room of the Department of State. The event honors the Foreign Service and those who have made significant contributions to American diplomatic efforts. This year, Ambassador George W. Landau won the AFSA Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award after his many years of service to the United States. As an exemplary member of the Foreign Service, Amb. Landau's contributions have spanned decades and affected countless lives. Past recipients of this award include former President George H.W. Bush, Thomas Pickering, George Shultz, Rozanne Ridgeway, and Bruce Laingen.

AFSA was also proud to present its constructive dissent awards, the only kind of award to exist in its field. These awards are given to those who have exhibited extraordinary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, and intellectual courage in the context of constructive dissent. The W. Averell Harriman Award was presented to James T. Rider of Embassy Tel Aviv, and the William R. Rivkin Award was awarded to Theodore Lyng of Embassy Jakarta. AFSA awards for exemplary performance were also presented to Leah Evans (Avis Bohlen Award), Elizabeth Jenkins and Jessica McVay (M. Juanita Guess Award), and Mikkela Thompson (Nelson B. Delavan Award).

For more information about AFSA's awards and to nominate a colleague, please go to [http://www.afsa.org/awards\\_main\\_page.aspx](http://www.afsa.org/awards_main_page.aspx).

## AFSA Awards Over \$196,000 in Financial Aid Scholarships in 2013/2014

More than \$196,000 will be awarded as need-based, undergraduate Financial Aid Scholarship to 68 students attending colleges in the U.S. and overseas in the 2013/2014 academic year in the form of \$2,000-\$4,000 awards. AFSA thanks all the retirees and organizational donors like DACOR who contributed funds. This program is a benefit of AFSA membership and dependent on a family's assets and income. In addition, the AFSA Scholarship Program, overseen by the AFSA Scholarship Committee, provides \$40,000 in Academic and Art Merit Awards to

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high school seniors so more than \$230,000 will be awarded this school year.

Applications for the next scholarship cycle (2014/2015 year) will be available in November 2013 at [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar). This program is only open to children of AFSA members who are active duty, retired or deceased. Unfortunately, grandchildren of AFSA members are not eligible for these scholarships and awards.

Any questions can be directed to Lori Dec, AFSA Scholarship Director at [dec@afsa.org](mailto:dec@afsa.org) or (202) 944-5504.

Counseling and Legislative Coordinators

Bonnie Brown [brown@afsa.org](mailto:brown@afsa.org)

(202) 944-5509 or (800) 704-2372, ext. 509

Matthew Sumrak [sumrak@afsa.org](mailto:sumrak@afsa.org)

(202) 719-9718 or (800) 704-2374, ext. 522

[www.afsa.org/retiree/](http://www.afsa.org/retiree/)

# From AFSA

## AFSA Speaker Series: Divorce in the Foreign Service

On July 30 AFSA hosted the sixth installment of its *Speaker Series on Federal Benefits*. AFSA and the Department of State's Divorce Working Group presented a seminar and panel discussion on the sensitive yet important topic of divorce in the Foreign Service.

The event was a great opportunity to become a resource on this issue for colleagues at post or in your bureau.

Susan Frost, Director of the Family Liaison Office (FLO), moderated the discussion, which featured the following panelists: Daniel Hirsch, management officer and former AFSA State Vice President; Elizabeth Royal, work life specialist; Jacqueline Long, chief policy adviser of the Office of Retirement; and Sharon Zarozny, Founder, Brilliant Exits LLC, a divorce consulting and support group.

Among the topics covered were what happens at



post when a family splits up; what are spouses' rights upon divorce; and divorce decrees.

AFSA has set up a website with a list of resources on the topic of divorce and can be accessed at [www.afsa.org/divorce](http://www.afsa.org/divorce). A video recording of the event can be found at that page or at <http://youtube/6t63-SPcFCE>

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# MOMENTS FROM DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

## Blood On Ice



*From the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training: Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History at <http://adst.org/2012/08/blood-on-ice/>*

On the night of 20–21 August 1968, the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia in order to quash the liberal reforms instituted by Alexander Dubcek during the Prague Spring. Over 200,000 troops and 5,000 tanks were sent in and were able to occupy the country the very first day. The nation would have to wait another 20 years before those dreams of freedom and democracy were realized. In one of those ironies of history, Czechoslovakia and the invincible Soviet Union would face off, not once but twice, in the March 1969 World Ice Hockey Championships in Stockholm. Hundreds of thousands of Czechs would gather in Prague to bask in a small but satisfying bit of pay-back.

Kenneth N. Skoug was born in North Dakota in 1931 and served at Embassy Prague during the Soviet invasion. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy from ADST in August 2000. These excerpts are taken from the Czech country reader found on the ADST website.

SKOUG: As the tanks came through the city in the night to take over the downtown area, they then went for the radios.... I had gone back to report from the embassy. The radios by this time had come on and they were broadcasting for all they were worth, and they were broadcasting that a group of students and civilians were trying to keep the tanks away from the building. You could hear the firing, the heavy machine gun firing, which shattered concrete walls.... They were firing on the Radio [Prague] sta-

tion. And then finally there was a very poignant moment when the radio announcers said, "We're going to have to sign off the air now. When you hear the radio again, you'll hear other voices, but don't trust them." It was really quite something, and then you heard the Czech national anthem, which is particularly beautiful. And then there was just the firing, gunfire following, and there was silence on the radio. And then it came back on, but they were not the bad guys after all. The Czechs had been prepared. They thought the Americans or the West Germans might invade the country, and they had a whole elaborate scheme for broadcasting. For one thing, they broadcast from hidden facilities in the radio [station] itself. The Russians didn't find them for a couple of days. And in addition, they began to broadcast from transmitters which were mobile, and they began to pass from hand to hand, not only in Prague, but in 15 or 16 points throughout the country. And it was those radios that told the world that the Czechs were still resisting.... [Some 20 people were killed before Radio Prague was recaptured.]

Ironically, the European hockey tournament [which doubled as the World Ice Hockey championship] was supposed to be held in Prague, but they transferred it to Stockholm because they didn't feel that they could provide the right atmosphere—this was after the invasion. They didn't feel that the Czechs would be very receptive to a Soviet hockey team. They expected that this would be bad, so they got the tournament transferred to Stockholm. The Czechs played the Russians, and the Czechs, with the whole country watching, defeated the Russians two to nothing. And the television played this up by showing the defeated Russians. It did everything that a clever television crew can do to accentuate the defeat. The Czechs refused to shake the Russians' hands. They did all the things that the people wanted, that the audience wanted. Well, that night there was a demonstration in Old Town Square, and some Czechs were arrested. This fact was mentioned briefly in the paper. This was one of the interesting things. It never would have been printed in the paper in the bad days of Novotny. What the arrested demonstrators said was:

"We were arrested because we said the Soviets didn't bring their tanks to Stockholm and so we beat them."

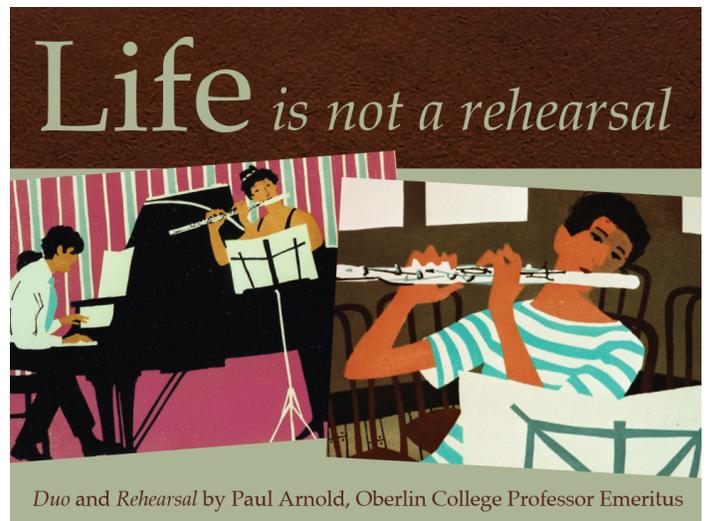
## Continued from page 7

You could read in the paper what the defendant was saying. Well, that let any intelligent person know that there had been a demonstration.

The Czechs had to play the Russians a second time...and the Czechs beat them again. And this time I, like any observant Czech, knew what was going to happen. As soon as the last strains of the Czech national anthem being played in Stockholm were over, my television set was off, and I was running for the downtown area. Extra streetcars had been laid on for this for some reason.

Everyone came to the heart of Prague. The score was [4]-3, and this was shouted over and over, with someone pounding out the numbers on buckets. People were shouting, "[4]-3" everywhere. What it meant was "The hell with the Russians!" You had to know it. It wasn't a sports demonstration; it was a demonstration of national pride by over one hundred thousand people, and it went on for hours. In Vaclavski Namesti [Square], you could hardly move.

[The Czechs would end up with the bronze medal.]



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