

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2016



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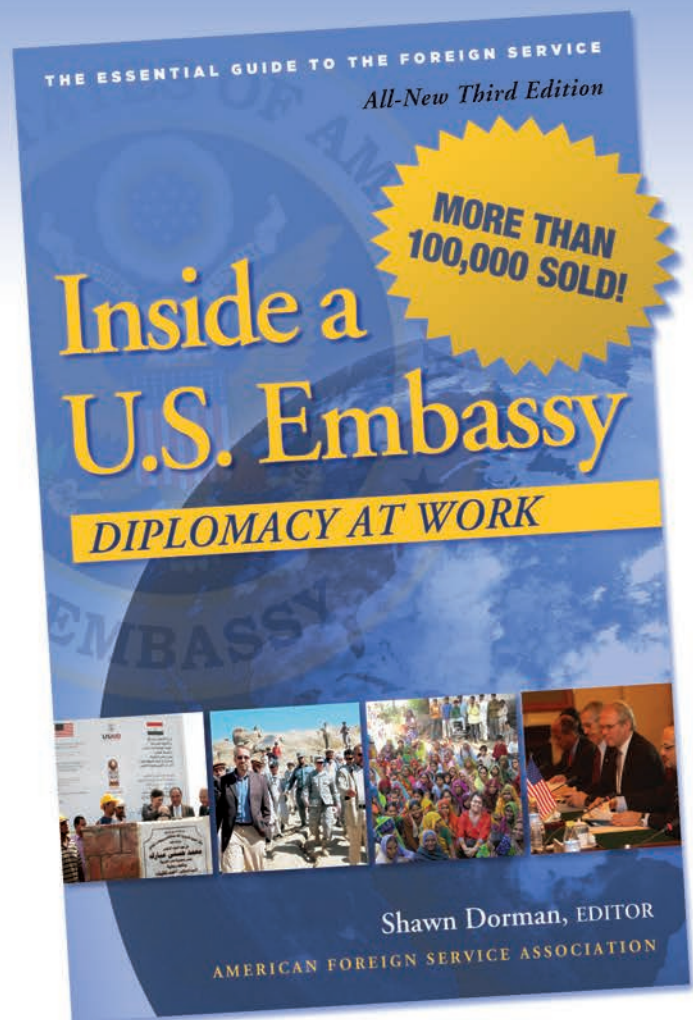
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Protecting the Career Path

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

My last few columns have focused on outreach—AFSA's work, as the voice of the Foreign Service, to refine a compelling message to convey the proud story of the Foreign Service to the American people. That work continues and is gaining momentum.

This month, I focus on our commitment to work for a healthy, attractive Foreign Service career path. I am increasingly convinced that one of AFSA's most important roles is to serve as the principal advocate for the long-term health of the career Foreign Service.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980—which begins, "The Congress finds that a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest"—provides both the legal foundation for the Foreign Service and a stirring reminder of its importance to the well-being of the nation we serve.

I begin from the conviction that strong American leadership is essential, perhaps now more than ever, or at least since the defining moments following World War II. I believe America is the indispensable nation and must remain so, even as the global landscape shifts and power becomes more diffuse.



I believe just as deeply that a strong, effective American foreign policy rests on the shoulders of a strong Foreign

A strong, effective American foreign policy rests on the shoulders of a strong Foreign Service.

Service comprised of career professionals who deploy abroad to protect and serve American interests, often by making common cause with the people and leaders of other countries.

This is, as I have acknowledged before, extraordinarily demanding work. It requires us to move at least every three years, to cope with unhealthy and dangerous environments, to master foreign languages, cultures and political systems—and to master the intricate interagency dynamics of our own system.

This extraordinarily demanding career requires America's best and brightest, and the good news is that they are still applying in droves to join the Foreign Service. More than 17,000 people applied to take the Foreign Service officer test last year, competing for a shot at the fewer than 400 entry-level officer positions available. Many Foreign Service specialist tracks are also oversubscribed and entry is highly competitive. We must ensure that 15 years from now, America's best and brightest continue to sign up in equally high numbers to join the Foreign Service.

I believe that the rigorous and impartial process by which we enter the Service is central not only to ensuring that we attract top talent, but also to sustaining esprit de corps over the long haul. I know how much strength I have drawn over the years from knowing that I—from a rural town in Florida, the first in my extended family

ever to go to college—had passed the tests and made it into the Foreign Service.

When I talk to some of the Service's most respected leaders, I find I am not alone in this. When times get tough, part of what keeps us going is knowing that we made it through the rigorous selection process Congress mandated in the Foreign Service Act. If we did not have the right stuff, we would not have been chosen.

As AFSA president, I am committed to protecting the Foreign Service from anything that erodes this unique competitive advantage. We want to ensure that the Service continues to attract a large and diverse pool of exceptionally qualified applicants, and ensure that those who join find a sustaining career path.

Over the coming months we will be grappling with significant challenges that could, if not handled with great care, undermine the long-term attractiveness of the Foreign Service as a career choice. These challenges vary from one foreign affairs agency to another, as AFSA vice presidents have explained in recent columns.

As we weigh these challenges—mid-level shortfalls at USAID and FAS, the growing visa adjudicator gap at State—you can count on me to use my voice to insist that we keep the long-term well-being of the career Foreign Service front and center in our deliberations. My voice will be stronger if you join me. ■

Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE ACT OF 1980

Public Law 96-465, Oct. 17, 1980

Title I—The Foreign Service of the United States

Chapter 1—General Provisions

Section 101. Findings and Objectives

(a) The Congress finds that—

(1) a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States;

(2) the scope and complexity of the foreign affairs of the Nation have heightened the need for a professional foreign service that will serve the foreign affairs interests of the United States in an integrated fashion and that can provide a resource of qualified personnel for the President, the Secretary of State, and the agencies concerned with foreign affairs;

(3) the Foreign Service of the United States, established under the Act of May 24, 1924 (commonly known as the Rogers Act), and continued by the Foreign Service Act of 1946, must be preserved, strengthened, and improved in order to carry out its mission effectively in response to the complex challenges of modern diplomacy and international relations;

(4) the members of the Foreign Service should be representative of the American people, aware of the principles and history of the United States and informed of current concerns and trends in American life, knowledgeable of the affairs, cultures, and languages of other countries, and available to serve in assignments throughout the world; and

(5) the Foreign Service should be operated on the basis of merit principles.

(b) The objective of this chapter is to strengthen and improve the Foreign Service of the United States by—

(1) assuring, in accordance with merit principles, admission through impartial and rigorous examination, acquisition of career status only by those who have demonstrated their fitness through successful completion of probationary assignments, effective career development, advancement and retention of the ablest, and separation of those who do not meet the requisite standards of performance;

(2) fostering the development and vigorous imple-

mentation of policies and procedures, including affirmative action programs, which will facilitate and encourage (A) entry into and advancement in the Foreign Service by persons from all segments of American society, and (B) equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition;

(3) providing for more efficient, economical, and equitable personnel administration through a simplified structure of Foreign Service personnel categories and salaries;

(4) establishing a statutory basis for participation by the members of the Foreign Service, through their elected representatives, in the formulation of personnel policies and procedures which affect their conditions of employment, and maintaining a fair and effective system for the resolution of individual grievances that will ensure the fullest measure of due process for the members of the Foreign Service;

(5) minimizing the impact of the hardships, disruptions, and other unusual conditions of service abroad upon the members of the Foreign Service, and mitigating the special impact of such conditions upon their families;

(6) providing salaries, allowances, and benefits that will permit the Foreign Service to attract and retain qualified personnel as well as a system of incentive payments and awards to encourage and reward outstanding performance;

(7) establishing a Senior Foreign Service which is characterized by strong policy formulation capabilities, outstanding executive leadership qualities, and highly developed functional, foreign language, and area expertise;

(8) improving Foreign Service managerial flexibility and effectiveness;

(9) increasing efficiency and economy by promoting maximum compatibility among the agencies authorized by law to utilize the Foreign Service personnel system, as well as compatibility between the Foreign Service personnel system and other personnel systems of the Government; and

(10) otherwise enabling the Foreign Service to serve effectively the interests of the United States and to provide the highest caliber of representation in the conduct of foreign affairs.

Source: <http://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=94&page=2074#>

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No More Old Boys' Club

BY SHAWN DORMAN

A couple years ago I was invited to talk about women in diplomacy with middle and high schoolers at an all-girls school in Manhattan during a special “women in the world”-themed day. The more I thought about what to say to these very young women—most of whom had never heard of the Foreign Service—the more I “leaned in” to the realization that the Foreign Service offers a pretty darn great career for women.

Progress over the past 50 years has been dramatic. The early decades of the Foreign Service were very white and very male, with rare exceptions. Until 1972, women who did make it into the Service had to resign if they married. This left few women to climb the ranks.

When I joined in 1993, my A-100 class of 44 included just 10 women. And yet I didn't perceive gender bias, neither in training nor out at post. I felt that opportunity and promotion were equally available to me and to my male colleagues. In fact, I found that being a woman in the Foreign Service was particularly useful in putting people at ease, encouraging them to speak freely.

Today's gender mix in A-100 classes is much more balanced, as it is at the entry-level for the other foreign affairs agencies. State specialist entry classes do tend to

have more men than women because Diplomatic Security and IT still attract more men than women.

But gender biases

in hiring, pay and benefits have largely been wiped away (thank you, Alison Palmer, the Women's Action Organization and other pioneers); and women are out leading teams, USAID missions and embassies around the world.

Is the Foreign Service truly equal and representative of America? Not yet. Do problems for women persist? Absolutely. Are there still more men than women in top positions? Yes.

This month we consider women in the Foreign Service with a look back, a look ahead and a few ideas for keeping a positive trend going.

In “Foreign Service Women Today: The Palmer Case and Beyond,” former FSO Andrea Strano takes a look at the legacy of the women who led the charge to advance the status of women, which gathered momentum during the 1970s.

FSOs Thao Anh Tran and Kristin Stewart at Embassy Panama City share a model for using the Federal Women's Program at post for career networking and mentoring. And former USAID Senior Foreign Service Officer Erin Soto shares “Ten Leadership Tips for Aspiring Women.”

We take a jump into the past with stories of female diplomats during different decades. Retired FSO Andrea Farsakh shares her experience as “A Pioneer in Saudi Arabia” in the 1970s and 1980s. And we travel back to the 1940s and 1950s “On Assignment with Maxine Desilet,” whose letters home and efficiency reports from Berlin, Caracas and Rangoon illustrate the times as no

second-hand narrative can.

In “Challenging Tradition,” we offer first-person accounts—based on oral history interviews conducted by the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training—of three female Foreign Service officers breaking barriers from the 1950s through the 1980s: Elinor Constable, Phyllis Oakley and Mary Olmsted.

And in FS Heritage, Nicholas Willis traces the evolution of State personnel evaluations as reflected in the dossier of his aunt, Frances Elizabeth Willis—the third woman to join the Foreign Service (in 1927), the first career woman to be appointed ambassador (1953), and the first to attain the rank of Career Minister (1955) and then Career Ambassador (1962).

We can't publish this focus without a nod to the American Foreign Service Association of today. AFSA represents—and is the voice of—the Foreign Service. Throughout its 92-year history, AFSA's membership, and leadership, has generally looked like the Foreign Service. So it is worth noting that women have held the post of AFSA president during five of the last seven years. AFSA vice presidents for the two largest constituencies—State and USAID—are women: Angie Bryan and Sharon Wayne.

Our current president, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, represents the best of today's FS leaders: she's looking out for those behind her on the FS career path and recognizes the importance of striving for a Foreign Service that looks like America. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

Measuring PD's Impact

In the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, we read with interest James Rider's December Speaking Out, "Proving Public Diplomacy Works." Mr. Rider made some excellent observations about the challenges of evaluating the impact of public diplomacy efforts, and the necessity of so doing.

To further the discussion, I want to provide information about R/PPR's work to help PD practitioners and policymakers assess the impact of public diplomacy programming.

PD practitioners have long known that there is a dearth of data to analyze and shape decision-making in public diplomacy, leaving practitioners to "go with their gut," while providing scant evidence of effectiveness.

R/PPR is working to remedy that situation by developing a modern suite of tools to create strategies, set objectives and plan, track and evaluate public diplomacy programs carried out across the world.

This initiative includes: (1) the global rollout in FY 2016 of the Public Diplomacy Implementation Planning tool, which ties planned PD programming to the Integrated Country Strategy in a searchable cloud-based platform; (2) the October 2015 launch of the Mission Activity Tracker 4.0 (MAT), with improvements designed to gather information on activities, audiences reached and notable outcomes; and (3) the expansion of R/PPR's Evaluation and Measurement Unit to coordinate PD evaluations throughout the "R family" and prepare research and guidance for PD practitioners to use in defining objectives and



evaluating programs at the post and bureau levels.

R/PPR believes it is essential—and possible—to acquire greater insight into the impact of public diplomacy programming. We have increased our audience research capacity, producing reports that provide actionable

guidance on target audiences, relevant messages and other topics to help maximize the effectiveness of a post's limited PD resources.

A key component for the success of R/PPR's efforts is training American and local staff on the importance of reporting PD activities and demonstrating how they link to mission goals. Clarifying and articulating objectives at the outset of a program, initiative or policy is a core challenge that policymakers and implementers must also address together.

But creating the tools is only part of the effort. The under secretary has requested additional resources to ensure that we are able to undertake rigorous evaluations of the impact of PD programs, and to conduct the outreach necessary within the PD profession to develop a culture that understands and values evaluation.

We heartily agree with Mr. Rider's recommendation to shift from focusing on the quantity of programs to their quality, conceived strategically and evaluated for effectiveness in cultivating the relationships and conditions necessary to achieve American foreign policy objectives.

We welcome suggestions, ideas and comments from our colleagues and critics. Write to us at RPPREvaluation@state.gov.

Elizabeth Detmeister

FSO

Acting Director, R/PPR Evaluation and Measurement Unit

Washington, D.C.

Intangibles of Public Diplomacy

I retired from the Foreign Service in 1986 but have remained active in AFSA ever since, including four years on the Governing Board.

When word came out back in 1999 that the U.S. Information Agency would disappear, I was quite concerned. I felt there was a significant underappreciation (including from many of my State colleagues) of what USIA was doing throughout the world.

I began my Foreign Service career in 1957 as a disbursing officer in Vientiane, but I was able to pitch in with the U.S. Information Service (as USIA was known at overseas posts) during my free time. At my next post, Paris, I lived a few meters down the street from the often-overflowing USIS library. (I have never understood why those libraries were later closed.) And I played various low-key public diplomacy roles throughout the rest of my career.

James Rider's article was very enlightening and not surprising. Are our public diplomacy programs overall doing better in this post-USIA period? This is obviously tricky to evaluate, as Mr. Rider notes. Yet there can be no doubt of the importance of such "intangibles."

All FS personnel are, in effect, or at least should be occasional public diplomacy officers, no matter their specific jobs. PD is indeed a valuable role for all of us.

Gilbert H. Sheinbaum

FSO, retired

Vienna, Virginia

USAID and Operational Stress

As the authors of the report titled "Stress and Resilience Issues Affecting USAID Personnel in High Operational Stress Environments" (<http://bit.ly/>

USAIDStressResilience), we were heartened to see it covered in the *FSJ*'s January-February issue (Talking Points). Along with the *FSJ* editorial staff, we believe the well-being of the frontline civilian community merits serious consideration.

However, to fully appreciate the report's findings, it is essential to understand the wider context. It would be inaccurate to find fault in any one organization's handling of operational and deployment stress.

In a 2010 report, "Army Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, Suicide Prevention," the former vice chief of staff of the Army, General Peter Chiarelli, went on record stating: "No one could have foreseen the impact of nine years of war on our leaders and soldiers. As a result of the protracted and intense operational tempo, the Army has lost its former situational awareness. ... We now must face the unintended consequences of leading an expeditionary Army that included involuntary enlistment extensions, accelerated promotions, extended deployment rotations. ..."

USAID's workforce faces strikingly similar circumstances: an unprecedented expeditionary focus, intense operational tempo, accelerated promotions and multiple assignments in demanding environments. But our study shows that USAID faces another pincer arm—the post-9/11 difficulties that all relief and development partner organizations are suffering.

Anyone seeking to comprehend this dual layer of strain for USAID should consider the following conditions (often beyond the agency's control):

1) After the 9/11 attacks, USAID has been tasked in unprecedented ways to

respond programmatically to a new set of security-related foreign policy priorities, amplifying objectives such as crisis response and stabilization. Precipitous shifts in budgetary imperatives and strategic focus have necessitated surges in staffing to meet urgent and often unanticipated needs, creating significant internal stress.

2) Numerous mandatory regulations governing USAID operations are based on the stable-state programming assumptions in which traditional development interventions thrive. While USAID staff have shown grit in meeting the challenges of the "new normal" programming in unstable operating environments (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen), this has taken a human toll.

3) Other agencies and Congress impose constraints on USAID that often inhibit effective management or achievement of its objectives. Budgetary and other critical decisions are often made over which USAID has no influence or control. Along with the massive amounts of foreign assistance funding for crises and stabilization operations come increased oversight and political scrutiny. Yet staff complements are not necessarily increased to meet these operational demands; instead, personnel are asked to "step up."

The crisis among frontline civilians is real, and it has critical implications. As detailed in our report, it is part of a larger problem for all organizations operating in this delicate space. Solutions require sensitive and nuanced policies on USAID's part and thoughtful collaboration its from partners. The agency has begun work on its share of that task, but the road ahead will require a commitment at senior levels across government to support all those who



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Toxic Workplaces

As I read through the “Foreign Service Members Weigh In” section of the *Journal’s* January-February “Mental Health” issue, I chuckled—but the mirth was bitter.

Throughout the litany of uncaring and suspicious bureaucrats, toxic workplaces and vicious bosses, I recognized all too clearly the Foreign Service in which I—and a vast majority of my colleagues—worked. “Stress and anxiety” were as common as breathing and about as healthy as a winter’s worth of air in 1970s Ankara, when the sidewalks sizzled in the dilute sulfuric acid falling from the sky.

The problem is that the Foreign Service seems to see itself as a collegial service of intelligent, creative people working together to advance the national interest and to protect our citizens. But it is nothing of the sort. Most higher-ranking supervisors wouldn’t recognize “collegiality” if it walked up and smacked them across the face with a mackerel.

But they—and their lower-level colleagues destined to rise—would be perfectly familiar with other interpersonal behaviors: shameless self-promotion, bootlicking, backstabbing for fun and profit, and whispering campaigns appropriate to a gaggle of 15-year-old Valley Girls. All of this takes place in a climate of frenzied competition through a lottery of supervisors able to write well and sufficiently interested to do so, presided over by a charmed circle of those with connections, family ties or education at the proper schools.

A more perfect recipe to brew madness I cannot imagine. In my 26 years in the Foreign Service, I saw five years’ worth of supervisors who functionally understood “collegial.” They were the jewels that made the rest bearable.

I see one way to fix the problem: each morning, supervisors should look in the mirror and ask, “What will I do today to show those working for me that I appreciate what they do? How can I help them achieve their goals?”

The level of self-examination being what it is in the Foreign Service, I look forward to the *Journal* revisiting the problem of mental health care in a future issue. In the meantime, Prozac and Johnny Walker all around.

Morgan Liddick

FSO, retired

Stuarts Draft, Virginia

An FS Reserve Still Needed

Thank you for the great review of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 in the September issue (“The Foreign Service Act of 1980 Turns 35”). One unfortunate result of the act was to eliminate the Foreign Service Reserve corps.

At the time it probably made sense to consolidate, either allowing corps members to convert to the Foreign Service proper or revert to the Civil Service. However, practice has shown that the State Department cannot do without such employees brought into the Foreign Service for limited appointments. The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in particular, is leading the way with creative programs to fill vital adjudicator slots that cannot all be filled by incoming entry-level FSO classes.

Originally created as the Foreign Service Auxiliary during World War II to bring additional employees on board quickly outside of the FS examination process, the Foreign Service Reserve was codified

under the 1946 Foreign Service Act but eliminated in 1980. Perhaps it is time to consider its reinstatement.

The department currently has disparate programs that would be best unified under a single reserve corps: the Civil Service “hard to fill” program, the Overseas Development Program (for civil servants), limited non-career appointment (LNA) consular adjudicators, A-EFM consular adjudicators, EFM professional associates, WAE (“While Actually Employed”) FS retirees, flyaway teams (e.g., a civil servant who provides three weeks of press support leading up to a Secretary of State visit, or supports a post during a consular evacuation) and technical experts brought from outside of the State Department to assist in post-conflict stabilization situations.

A revived reserve corps could be a single cadre with a common entry program and its own esprit de corps. It would serve the combined goals of filling unmet needs in the Foreign Service and providing career development for qualified civil servants. It could incorporate all those civil servants who pass an examination and have worldwide availability; but like current LNAs and WAEs, the appointments would be for a limited duration. (LNAs are limited to no more than 5 years continuous overseas service.)

At the end of this period, the employee could compete for entry into the Foreign Service officer or specialist corps, or return to the Civil Service.

The newly constituted Foreign Service Reserve could incorporate a registry, creating a common pool centrally managed by the Bureau of Human Resources, of the hitherto separately maintained groups. The registry would include information on skills, training, language ability and medical clearance. All reservists would possess a diplomatic passport to allow travel on short notice.

Rather than trying to merge the Civil Service and Foreign Service (as was the goal of “Wristonization” back in the 1950s) or the more recent efforts under Secretary of State Colin Powell to soften the distinctions between the two entities, maybe we need to recognize the need for a third path, one that helps bridge the two services.

Stuart Denyer

FSO

U.S. Embassy Algiers

Mutual Understanding

The *FSJ* continues to play a vital role in exploring sensitive issues that benefit from airing. Publishing Larry Roeder Jr.’s October Speaking Out column (“Seeking Parity Between the Civil and Foreign

Services”) is a particularly timely case in point.

Two letters to the editor responding to Mr. Roeder’s views in the December issue (“Civil and Foreign Service Relations” and “Parity Is Not Equality”) reflect the intense sentiments on the topic. As they note, seeking parity among the services does not make sense: we sign up from the start for different duty. Complementary, but different.

“One team” is the mantra. But resentment bubbles close to the surface. In the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, for example, FSOs are generally seen as waltzing in for two years and moving on while experienced program officers have nowhere to go—a situation that is exacerbated by a hiring freeze.

ECA is also a bureau that has had *only* political-appointee assistant secretaries. While they may be qualified in other areas, political appointees are unlikely to address intra- and inter-service (Civil Service-Foreign Service) problems about which they themselves know little.

It seems ironic that a bureau dedicated to promoting mutual understanding shows little regard for the problems and misunderstanding between and among the various parts of the bureaucracy. Civil servants view FSOs as arrogant and shallow. They aren’t all wrong (it’s been a longtime dream that the A-100 orientation course would include a segment on humility). But there is another side to the story, too.

This was brought home to me over

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brunch with an FS friend serving in an Africa post. Before coffee was poured, I learned that at her post electricity goes out many times a day, her child's special needs are getting barely adequate attention, dust storms infiltrate her home and lungs, and work duties bleed deep into the night and all across weekends. She mentioned these things casually, as if she were ordering eggs over easy.

The picture could not contrast more with what Civil Service colleagues count on: keeping children in excellent local schools; swapping telework days to accommodate a plumber; negotiating comp time for attending anything outside work hours; and, certainly, not dealing with dust storms—much less Ebola or Beijing-style air pollution. Another challenge, maintaining a spouse's career, is also clearly easier if based in Washington, D.C.

But members of the Foreign Service expect and accept difficulties living abroad—pollution and disease; weeknight and weekend events (plus the stress of being duty officer!); poor schools; weak infrastructure (roads, electricity, water); maybe a coup, attack or evacuation. It is the price we pay, willingly, to live in a country and seek to understand it deeply—to be good diplomats who build enduring ties.

Civil servants don't sign up for this same duty. What they do every day to support the department, largely here in Washington, is irreplaceable. We bring different experience and different expertise to the work of the State Department. And we sign up for different systems and rules.

Instead of parity, let's focus on complementarity.

Kit Norland

FSO, retired

Arlington, Virginia

Young at the United Nations

Did Cecile Shea pull a punch in the introduction to her *FSJ* interview ("The Usefulness of Cookie-Pushing," December) with Richard Longworth?

Ms. Shea cited undiplomatic statements U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Andrew Young made before and in the first six months of his two-year tenure. (His initial misstatements of policy prompted Mr. Longworth to write the "Primer for Diplomats.")

However, Ms. Shea failed to mention why Young was fired by President Jimmy Carter: He had met with the Palestine Liberation Organization representative to the United Nations, despite the administration's having assured the Israelis that U.S. diplomats would not do so as long as the PLO refused to recognize Israel.

Richard McKee

FSO, retired

Arlington, Virginia

Hispanic Firsts in Diplomacy

It was interesting to see the October AFSA News featuring Hispanics at State and in Congress. I remember John Jova, who must have entered the career Foreign Service about the same time as my late husband, Leon B. Poullada.

My husband was the first Hispanic career FSO to be named a U.S. ambassador. In fact, he was the first resident American ambassador to the Republic of Togo from 1961 to 1964, when he retired.

Born in New Mexico in 1913, Leon Poullada grew up in Los Angeles. He joined the Foreign Service in 1948 after commissioned U.S. Army service, including as a lawyer in the war crimes trials following the end of World War II.

Quite a few fellow officers with small-town backgrounds joined the

Service soon after the war, thus changing its stereotypical east coast, Ivy League demographics.

On a different note, I am glad the *Journal* continues to speak out, recognize dissent and raise issues such as the militarization of our foreign affairs since 1945, which has so limited the anticipated effectiveness of the United Nations.

Leila D.J. Poullada

*Foreign Service family member
St. Paul, Minnesota*

OPM Data Breach

We are all highly concerned about the Office of Personnel Management data breach and want to know more about ID Experts services.

I recently heard this from Representa-

tive Gerry Connolly (R-Va.) in response to my inquiry: "Since you have received a notification, you are automatically covered by identity theft insurance and restoration services. No additional action is needed unless you want to also enroll yourself and your family for additional services."

In a follow-up conversation with his district director in the Annandale office, I was given additional confirmation that no further actions are required to get coverage under the OPM/ID Experts contract.

If you go to the OPM Cybersecurity Internet site and complete the My ID Care registration, you are only confirming to OPM that you received their notification. Though a bit confusing, that is the way OPM is managing this effort.

Further, I was told that if federal employees or retirees are experiencing "real" problems with this contractor or not receiving needed coverage, they should contact their congressional representative. OPM has set up a private "Hill" hot line to assist legislators with constituent issues on the data breach.

I hope this added information is helpful.

James Meenan

FSO, retired

Fairfax, Virginia

Remembering Basil Wentworth

Recently reading through January's *DACOR Bulletin*, I read the obituary of John "Basil" Wentworth, and was



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reminded of what happened to him, and the impact it had on my own career and views of how the Service cares for its members. The story helps illustrate some of my concerns about how we “professionals” look out for our people.

In 1958, I was a new FS-8 on assignment in the Economic Bureau when I met Wentworth and learned his story. On Cyprus the year before, in the garden with his daughter, he had opened the gate when the bell rang, and a Greek terrorist put four bullets and five holes in him. He was rushed to a Defense Department hospital in Greece and operated on; he developed peritonitis, was operated

on again and slowly recovered.

He was put on Sick Leave until that ran out, then on Annual Leave until that ran out and then—wait for it—on Leave Without Pay! The department finally brought him home, and sent a car to bring him into the E Bureau every day, where he sat hunched over a desk for a few hours so they could pay him. Now that is truly compassionate care and concern for your people.

Wentworth told me he had met a Navy pilot in the hospital who had suffered a compound leg fracture skiing in Germany, and when he got out would get 30 days of Convalescent Leave—not charge-

able as Leave. (Note that Bowe Berghdal, the soldier who may be charged with desertion in Afghanistan, was promoted to sergeant during his absence. I assume he got all that back pay.)

I ran all around, naively trying to correct what I was convinced was an oversight or an error, only to learn the terrible truth. That was—and maybe still is—how we dealt with those kinds of issues, including cases of FS members contracting a serious disease while serving in an area where it is endemic.

Ed Peck

Ambassador, retired

Chevy Chase, Maryland

Longest-Serving U.S. Ambassador to Israel

I greatly enjoyed reading Yoav Tenenbaum’s article about Sam Lewis’ tenure as the U.S. ambassador to Israel in the January-February *Journal* (“Samuel Lewis in Israel, 1977-1985”).

For the record, however, I would note that Sam Lewis was not the longest-serving U.S. diplomatic representative to Israel. That distinction belongs to the career FSO, Ambassador Walworth Barbour, who served some 12 years under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon (1961-1973). On my first tour I was fortunate to serve as Amb. Barbour’s aide for 18 months—a truly memorable experience.

Edward Gibson Lanpher

Ambassador, retired

Washington, D.C.

Correction

Our apologies to Yoav Tenenbaum and thanks to Amb. Lanpher for correcting the record. We regret the inadvertent omission of the qualifier: Lewis was the *second*-longest-serving U.S. envoy to Tel Aviv. ■



Facebook Feedback

A few of the Facebook postings in response to “A Foreign Service Officer’s Alzheimer’s Journey,” by John Collinge (January-February *FSJ*)

From the AFSA Facebook page—

Mari Dietrich Tolliver: Grateful to Mr. Collinge for sharing his and his wife’s story—his grace and love for his wife are in every line, as is his generosity in sharing lessons learned with the rest of us.

Gloria Nelli Lloyd: Such a very heartbreaking, compassionate and, finally, practical article. I’m keeping this one in our own files, should the time ever come when one of us needs the guidance offered here.

Roger Moran: A sad but informative account. I have watched my mother, father-in-law and mother-in-law as Alzheimer’s gradually overtook them.

From the FSJ Facebook page—

Kim Kelly: This is a heartbreaking story but so very informative. Thank you for sharing your story.

Eileen Malloy: Zandra was a valued colleague of mine in our work for the inspector general. She is very lucky to have had the support of her loving husband, and we are indebted to him for sharing his insights.

Cathy Hurst: I had no idea the wonderful, vibrant Zandra was ill. Thanks for posting this.

Climate Breakthrough in Paris

After more than two decades of on-again, off-again negotiations, failed treaties and international discord, the world witnessed the near-impossible become reality on Dec. 12. The United States and 194 other countries reached the first-ever deal on a way forward for limiting global warming.

Most scientists agree that warming beyond 2 degrees Celsius will result in catastrophic weather events such as droughts, floods, heat waves and sea level rises, causing irreversible damage.

With the world already nearly halfway toward that 2-degree mark, negotiators representing all 195 countries descended on Paris in December for the United Nation's 21st Conference of the Parties—a two-week session that many believed would be the last real opportunity to tackle climate change at the international level.

Prior to the COP, countries submitted individual pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions—known as intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)—but only enough to limit warming to 2.7 degrees Celsius, at best. Nonetheless, these INDCs are a critical starting point toward an agreement that represents a truly global pact.

For the first time, parts of the pact are legally binding, including a requirement that countries come together every five years to set more ambitious targets as dictated by science. Experts believe that the roadmap adopted in Paris may limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Countries also agreed to report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement the targets in their respective INDCs. Developed countries pledged to mobilize \$100

billion annually for adaptation and resilience measures and to help reduce emissions in developing countries.

The ultimate goal is to limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to the same levels that trees, soil and oceans can absorb naturally, hopefully by some time between 2050 and 2100.

While there is much to pick apart in the fine print of this agreement (e.g., provisions for voluntary withdrawal of parties, no legal requirements for caps on emissions, etc.), it's hard to dispute the significance of this diplomatic achievement. Secretary of State John Kerry called it "a remarkable global commitment"; *The Guardian* deemed it "the world's greatest diplomatic success."

The Paris Agreement will enter into force after 55 countries accounting for at least 55 percent of global emissions ratify it.

—*Maria C. Livingston,*
Associate Editor

American Hostages Held in Iran Finally Compensated

Fifty-two American Foreign Service and military personnel were taken hostage at Embassy Tehran on Nov. 4, 1979, and were not released until Jan. 20, 1981. Now, 35 years later, Congress has finally approved compensation for the physical and psychological hardships they endured during those 444 days.

Their reparation was included as a line item in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2016, under the Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund.

For decades, many of the former hostages had pursued legal proceedings to secure collective compensation from the U.S. or Iranian government. Much of their case emphasized adverse effects on their post-crisis quality of life: some of the hostages have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological disturbances leading, in some cases, to suicide, substance abuse, mental illness

Contemporary Quote

“I've always felt that we are better off trying diplomacy first, and if we don't succeed we can always resort, if necessary, to the use of force. It will not be easy for [Iran] to cheat and trim on this deal—they may try, but the world is going to be watching as they do that. We're going to have the support of our European allies, of the Russians and Chinese, of most of the Arab countries.

But the problem we are going to have is that when we implement the nuclear deal we're also going to have to contend with a very aggressive, very negative Iran in the region. ... I think that Secretary Kerry has been right to say, 'Look, we'll challenge Iran to work more productively and constructively on the Syrian civil war or on Yemen, but we'll have our guard up to defend against Iran in the region.' I think that's the only proper thing for the U.S. to do.

—*Former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, now a professor of diplomacy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, in a Jan. 18 interview with Robin Burr on "Here & Now," a program on WBUR, Boston's NPR station.*

and family break-ups.

In the mid-1980s, each hostage received \$22,000 from the U.S. government, or roughly \$50 per day of captivity, per contemporary Civil Service regulations. These figures were not consistent with what journalists and other non-federal American employees who had been taken hostage by foreign powers received for their ordeals.

The Algiers Accords, negotiated in 1981 to free the hostages, proved to be one of the main barriers to winning compensation directly from the government of Iran because it expressly forbade lawsuits against Iran as a condition for their release.

When civil litigation failed, the hostages appealed to Congress. Both the 107th and 111th Congresses attempted unsuccessfully to enact legislation that would repeal the Algiers Accords.

The new legislation will award up to \$4.4 million, or about \$10,000 per day of captivity (an amount in line with what other hostages and victims of state-sponsored terrorism have received from the U.S. government). Funding will come mainly from financial penalties paid to settle violations of international sanctions. Only 38 of the 53 original hostages are still alive.

The new law will also compensate other victims of terrorist attacks, including

family members of Americans killed in the August 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

Reflecting on the new law, Iran expert Ambassador John Limbert—a former Iran hostage himself and current AFSA Governing Board member—offers the following comment:

“The appalling episode of 1979-1981 remains one of the ‘ghosts of history’ that haunt U.S.-Iranian relations. As an unresolved grievance, it still casts its shadow over efforts to change 35 years of Iranian-American futility into something more productive for both sides.

“Anyone who doubted the power of this particular ghost had only to listen to

50 Years Ago

Searching for Gold in Them Consular Hills

Statutory consular work is substantive in nature. It requires an extraordinarily high degree of intelligence, resourcefulness, persistence, imagination, compassion and sheer hard work. This is a specialty requiring every bit as much general ability and technical competence as political or economic reporting. ... But few, very, very few officers join the Foreign Service with the goal of doing visa, citizenship or protection work.

The overwhelming majority of newly appointed FSOs have for years come in with the clear expectation of forging a career in political work, interrupted only by occasional broadening in an economic section. Thus, assignment to a consular section carries with it from the very beginning an aura of exile.

The new FSO, by and large, accepts the consular assignment as a necessary evil and, for a while at least, is willing to believe that “there is gold to be mined in the consular hills.” Some few find the discretionary powers of a consular officer much to their liking and encounter true and lasting satisfaction with reasonableness and prudence. Most, however, looking toward their ultimate



goal, find that the point of diminishing returns is reached after four to six months.

Pressure to turn out more and more “cases” in less and less time virtually eliminates any meaningful person-to-person contact between the consular officer and his clients. The standardized interviews necessary for efficient operation limit one’s use of the local language to a few key sentences, endlessly repeated. Despite these pressures, most officers at the working level would willingly sacrifice production figures to obtain political or economic intelligence. ...

Most officers in the senior and upper-middle grades, when asked to expound on the value of consular experience to a political (or economic) career, respond firmly, affirmatively and automatically, rather as if they were reciting the creed at High Mass. But ask any established political officer how many consular assignments he wants in the coming years. Without exception they feel they have “served their time,” gained their experience and have nothing more to learn in a consular job.

—John J. St. John, from his article, “The Consular Assignment: A Minority View,” in the March 1966 FSJ.

the recent American debate over the Iran nuclear deal—a debate in which speakers ignored the actual agreement and preferred to make brave proclamations of indignation about the few virtues and many vices of the Islamic Republic.

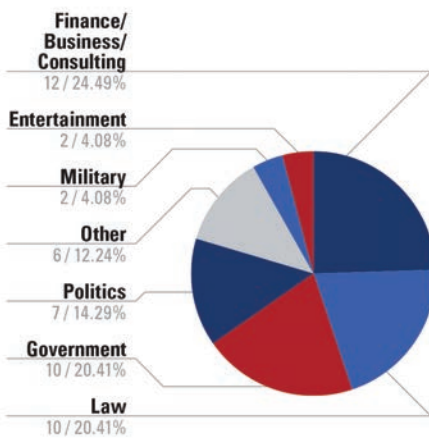
“This compensation provision will not end the mistrust and hostility. For me personally, it will not open that long-sought ‘road back to Tehran’ on which we one day hope to take our grandchildren for a voyage of self-discovery. For our shrinking group of former hostages, however, it was definitely good news and a huge step forward after decades of frustration, losing court battles and stubborn opposition.”

—Shannon Mizzi,
Editorial Assistant

Political Appointee Ambassadors: Where Do They Come From?

Longtime readers know that AFSA remains concerned about the high number of political-appointee ambassadors. For close to 50 years, the balance in our ambassadorial ranks has been

CURRENT POLITICAL APPOINTEE AMBASSADORS



Data as of January 1, 2016

AFSA/JEFF LAU

approximately 30- to 35-percent political and 65- to 70-percent career Foreign Service.

Political appointees are often painted with the same broad brush—bundlers and political hacks lacking relevant experience and competence for the job. This isn’t necessarily always the case.

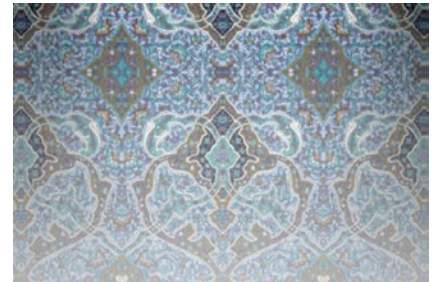
We thought it might be interesting to look at President Barack Obama’s list of political-appointee ambassadors and their backgrounds. By the end of 2015, the president had appointed 135 individuals from outside the career Foreign Service to chief-of-mission spots—representing 32.4 percent of all his ambassadorial nominations since 2009.

To compare their backgrounds, we divided them into seven distinct categories: law, finance/business/consulting, government, entertainment, military, politics and other. That last category encompasses a variety of experiences, including academia, advocacy, education, engineering, journalism, fashion and professional sports.

The range of backgrounds is noteworthy: one is a former longtime senator from Montana (Max Baucus, China); another is a former producer of the television series “Alias” (Crystal Nix-Hines, UNESCO); a third is a former professional baseball player (Mark Gilbert, New Zealand and Samoa); and yet another is a former associate justice on California’s Supreme Court (Carlos Moreno, Belize).

We also have the daughter of a president (Caroline Kennedy, Japan) and—notoriously—a producer of the long-running soap opera “The Bold and the Beautiful” (Colleen Bell, Hungary).

And where do these individuals serve? Fifteen serve in Western Europe; 14 in international organizations; four in East Asia; three each in the Middle East and North/Central America; two each in East-



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ern Europe, Africa, South/Central Asia and the Caribbean; and one individual each in Oceania and South America.

At the end of 2015, eight political appointees were awaiting confirmation by the Senate—three headed for Western

Europe, two each to the Caribbean and international organizations, and one to Latin America.

Not a bad job if you can get it.

—Devon Fitzgerald,
Communications Intern

SITE OF THE MONTH: *Extreme Possibilities: USAID Stories* (<https://stories.usaid.gov>)

With personal stories, we gain insight and connection. We step out of our own shoes and, for just a moment, experience what it would be like to be someone else. By contrast with much news coverage, where surface facts and events are often skimmed, personal stories show how individuals, through their own words, are affected.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's new website, *Extreme Possibilities: USAID Stories*, uses the personal testimony of those from whom we seldom hear—project beneficiaries—to inspire support for the critical work that the aid agency performs.

From fighting against stigmatization of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community in Colombia, to preventing sexual violence against young girls and assisting survivors of sexual violence against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the site tells the stories of incredibly brave individuals across the planet. Their words are accompanied by a background narrative and stunning



photos. Each story shows how USAID has been helping through programs and advocacy.

Visitors to the site may view stories by country or program “priorities” (e.g.,

Power Africa, Let Girls Learn, Feed the Future). An interactive map helps browsers visualize USAID's reach, offering the option to click on colorful pins to read a personal story. In addition, the map illustrates examples of quantifiable results stemming from USAID's work. For example, one “results” pin highlights the fact that USAID has helped improve the diagnostic performance of 70 percent of Ukraine's tuberculosis labs.

Extreme Possibilities offers a visually compelling way to become more informed about the extreme poverty issues that affect so many. The new site is eye-catching and easy to use, which will surely result in readers who are more aware and empathetic.

—Dastan Sadykov,
Editorial Intern

CFR Compares Candidates on Foreign Policy

The Council on Foreign Relations has added a valuable new section to its website: “Campaign 2016: The Candidates & The World.” Its stated goal is to provide the public with a comprehensive guide to the foreign policy views of the men and women currently vying for the presidency—a place where voters can track and compare where the candidates stand.

In organizing the information, CFR first identified the foreign policy issues with the most potential to decide candidates' electoral fates: China, Cuba, defense policy, energy and climate change, immigration, Iran, the Islamic State, national security, North Korea, Russia and trade.

There is a page for each issue containing a collection of useful background materials and interactive presentations created by CFR experts that readers can use to develop their own opinions before moving on to the candidates' views.

The China page, for example, contains primers on the Chinese Communist Party, religious freedom, media censorship and maritime disputes. Candidates' views on each issue are presented without commentary.

In addition to the Campaign 2016 site, CFR offers a handy election guide, “Candidates In Their Own Words”—a regularly updated repository of transcripts of each presidential candidate's speeches, interviews and op-eds on foreign affairs topics. Full transcripts of each televised presidential debate are also available. ■

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Assistant*

More Hemingway, Less Kafka, Please

BY MATTHEW KEENE

Last November, the blogger known as “Diplopundit” published a story about the assignment of a well-connected FS-1 as principal officer in a European Bureau post, a Senior Foreign Service position.

Since the candidate was below grade for the position, this was a “stretch assignment,” which requires the division in the Bureau of Human Resources responsible for the career development and assignment of officers who are FS-1 or higher (HR/CDA/SL) to cede the position to the division responsible for mid-level officers (HR/CDA/ML) after canvassing its clients to gauge interest in the position by currently unassigned officers.

That no qualified Senior FSO bid on a position as prominent as this one frankly strains credulity. The episode underscores a serious perception problem when it comes to Foreign Service assignments. For all the State Department’s carefully crafted standard operating procedures, as well as the Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance—to say nothing of the attention paid to precedent and the needs of the Service—when push comes to shove, getting the best jobs depends far more

Most of the frustration leveled at HR over assignments reflects the fact that so few members of the Foreign Service know who in HR is responsible for doing what.

on who you know than what.

Indeed, if you are fortunate enough to breathe the rarefied air in the front office of a highly regarded assistant secretary or another sixth- or seventh-floor denizen, there is almost no position to which you cannot aspire.

FS Assignments 101

I had two stints in the Bureau of Human Resources in recent years: first as a special assistant in HR/CDA (the front office) and then as an assignments officer in HR/CDA/AD (the Assignments Division). I find that most of the frustration leveled at HR over assignments reflects the fact that so few members of the Foreign Service know who in HR is responsible for doing what. So here is a quick guide to the process.

If you’re a mid-level officer, your career development officer (CDO) provides guidance on your career and

through the bidding process. Once you’ve secured a handshake on a position, your CDO hands you off to an assignments officer (AO) in HR/CDA/AD. This individual works with your losing and gaining posts and bureaus to resolve any timing issues, arranges any needed training and brings your assignment to panel. Once you are paneled and your Assignment Notification (TM-1) goes out, your assignments technician deals with the logistics: orders, allowances and so on.

The biggest takeaway from my time in HR/CDA (under different Directors General) is this: Despite all the grumbling I routinely hear about unresponsive CDOs and AOs and all the kvetching about the perceived inflexibility of the system and HR’s dogged adherence to regulation—which often makes it seem unreasonable—the vast majority of HR employees at State are hard-working, well-meaning and determined to keep the system transparent, fair and equitable. They work to meet the needs of the Service, and their individual clients, as fully as possible.

Now, you may snicker at my naiveté. But the tenacity with which many CDOs and AOs argue at panel on behalf of their clients and their bureaus was a pleasant



Matthew Keene joined the Foreign Service in 1999 as a consular-coned officer, and is currently in Arabic-language training in preparation for a tour as deputy political counselor in Baghdad. His previous overseas assignments include Sofia, Dubai, Jerusalem and, most recently, Cairo, where he was deputy consul general. He has also worked in the Office of Career Development and Assignments in the Bureau of Human Resources as a special assistant and an assignments officer, and as deputy director of the Office of Maghreb Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.



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revelation to me. These people care about you and the organization, and they are fiercely protective of the integrity of the assignments process.

Explaining the Inexplicable

So when a story emerges about the stretch assignment of a below-grade officer to a coveted position, implying a degree of elasticity at which even Mr. Fantastic would marvel, it disturbs the rank and file in HR.

First of all, it is entirely possible that the officer in question was the best-qualified bidder, his lack of seniority notwithstanding. But even if that was not the case, we should bear in mind that the assignment was probably jammed down the bureau's throat after someone on the seventh floor spoke to the Director General and said, "Make this happen."

So the panel either holds its nose and votes to approve the assignment, or it stands on principle and then watches helplessly as the decision is overturned by the DG's office.

HR types often complain that only the bad-news stories ever get publicity, while the solid work HR does on behalf of its clients day in and day out garners scant attention. Aware that that is largely true, the current DG has rightly focused on strategic communication, informing the Foreign Service about the work HR does, what it is accomplishing and how it is addressing current staffing challenges. I think that is commendable.

The problem, though, is this: In any endeavor, no matter how much you have accomplished, no matter how much good you have done, it only takes one mistake, one indiscretion, one bad call to destroy it. Politicians know better than anyone how fragile image and perception are. All the fantastic legislation you passed, all the assistance you secured for veterans

and senior citizens, all the victories to establish equality for minorities—all of it goes out the window if you are caught cheating on your wife.

So how *do* ridiculous stretch assignments happen, then? Why do positions mysteriously vanish off one bid list only to reappear days later on the list of a future cycle—or on the *now* list? Why are inquiries on jobs that are ostensibly open in FS Bid dismissed or unanswered? Why was some employee allowed to extend for a fourth year in a non-differential post when no one else was permitted to do the same? And how on earth did that officer get a language waiver, when the FS is filled with officers who speak that language?

These anomalies are more likely to happen when HR is run by senior officers insufficiently committed to overseeing a system that is fair, just and above reproach. The fact is that far too often, those in the most important positions, the gatekeepers, aren't serving out of any great love of personnel management work. Some are serving a domestic tour while awaiting a plum overseas deputy chief of mission or principal officer gig. Others find themselves serving domestically for personal reasons, and believe HR provides a convenient landing spot.

Restoring Faith in the System

Fortunately, there are those who enjoy the work and are committed to it. But for some, the bureaucratically dense nature of the work, sometimes coupled with a deep frustration over not being able to make everything happen that everyone wants—due to pesky devotion to precedent, past practice and established procedures by subordinates who can't seem to see the "big picture"—makes dealing with Foreign Service assignments

and HR policy maddening.

A few can't be bothered to develop even a modicum of mastery over it. Draft a recommendation denying an absurd request from a regional bureau asking for a stretch assignment to a negotiated tour of duty, and you may not just be overruled. You might be asked to draft a revised memo recommending approval, because senior management needs a fig leaf to justify giving a department principal what he or she wants.

Ironically, HR has always done a terrible job of attracting bidders to its own ranks. HR should make a concerted effort to explain just how useful a tour in the bureau can be to rising FSOs. It should explain how working in HR makes one a stronger and more well-rounded officer and leader.

In fact, no officer should be able to serve as a deputy chief of mission or principal officer without having served in HR, if you ask me. That might also help obviate the problem of unrealistic expectations among senior officers about staffing options that are permissible under the relevant regulations.

HR must do a far better job of recruiting senior leaders uncompromising in their commitment to an FS assignments system that sets an example for the rest of the Service in terms of integrity and transparency, that meets the needs of the Service, and that upholds core values even when it is uncomfortable or may disappoint someone further up the food chain.

When assignments officers do their job right, operating a process that is transparent and equitable, and meets the challenges of an increasingly complicated world by placing the right officers in the right positions, telling the story of the great work HR does will become much easier—and more convincing. ■

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Foreign Service Women Today: The Palmer Case and Beyond

Women have made great strides, but more effort is needed to fulfill the legal mandate for a Foreign Service that is “truly representative of the American people throughout all levels.”

BY ANDREA STRANO

The struggle for equality of opportunity for Foreign Service women has been long and lively. Ignited by legal challenges by Alison Palmer in 1968, it continues today.

Tremendous progress has been made. Fifty years after the first female member of the Foreign Service, Lucile Atcherson, was admitted in 1922, women still made up less than 10 percent of the diplomatic corps and faced systematic discrimination at the State Department. Today, women comprise 35 percent of the overall Foreign Service (including officers and specialists) at all foreign affairs agencies and 40 percent of the Foreign Service officer corps. Starting with the requirement for female FSOs to resign when they get married, most of the institutionalized discrimination in

hiring, pay, promotion and other personnel policies has been overturned.

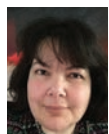
Yet there remains a lingering bias against women that is more subtle, more difficult to get at. Often reported anecdotally, that bias is also concretely reflected in such metrics as the male-female gender breakdown by rank—as ranks increase, female representation decreases. And though 40 percent of FSOs are women, they hold only one-third of the chief-of-mission positions, for example.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 mandates a diplomatic service that is “truly representative of the American people throughout all levels of the Foreign Service.” State Department leadership has acknowledged the benefits of a diverse workforce and demonstrating U.S. values to other countries through its people. However, true representation remains elusive, including for women.

The result is a Foreign Service that is not yet benefiting from the full strength of the country that it represents.

Standard Bearer and Firebrand

Alison Palmer, who joined the State Department in 1955, launched the legal battle for female equality at the State Department in 1968 with the first equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint ever heard from the Foreign Service. She followed



Andrea Strano retired on disability from the Foreign Service in 2015. Before becoming an FSO in 2004, she worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Red Cross in New York and Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Geneva, Switzerland. She lives with her husband in Nutley, New Jersey, where she writes, works as a voiceover artist and does volunteer work. She can be reached at a_strano@msn.com.

her 1971 victory in that case with a class-action suit on behalf of all women in the U.S. Foreign Service in 1976. Today's impartial entrance criteria, evaluation and promotion policies, and assignments processes all stem in large part from "the Palmer Case," which was fought in various phases over more than 30 years.

During the same period, Palmer's spiritual journey led to her collaboration with other women to enter the Episcopal Church priesthood, and she was "irregularly" ordained in 1975. When she retired in 1981, after a 26-year career in the Foreign Service, Palmer was an FS-3. In her autobiography, *Diplomat and Priest: One Woman's Challenge to State and Church* (CreateSpace, 2015) and in a series of interviews with the author, Palmer describes her experience.

After three written rejections from ambassadors in Africa, Palmer, an African affairs specialist, had tried for a position in Addis Ababa in 1966. As she put it in the interview, her assignments officer wrote the ambassador that, though he might be "surprised that we would consider sending a girl to Addis," he could be assured that "given her superb record and qualifications, we believe she will fill the job splendidly." The ambassador permitted Palmer a position at post in Ethiopia—as social secretary to his wife.

Two years later, Palmer showed up for her first day in an FS-4 position in Washington, D.C., only to be told she would instead assume a position two grades lower because a lower-ranking male colleague needed the position as a path to promotion. "I used to tell women to not join the Foreign Service because their talents wouldn't be used," Palmer says.

Palmer's 1968 EEO complaint charged the three ambassadors with discrimination, yet the four-page memo submitted by the State Department investigator did not name them. In 1969, the State Department found in her favor, but Palmer demanded a change in personnel policies, a retroactive promotion and a review of State's EEO Office.

With the help of the American Federation of Government Employees, Palmer appealed to the board of the Civil Service Commission, the federal employment entity that was later replaced by the Office of Personnel Management, the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Federal Labor Relations Author-

ity. After hearings in the summer of 1971, the board decided in her favor. She received the promotion and retroactive pay, which she used to fund the class-action lawsuit she filed in 1976.

Parallel Strides

Meanwhile, Palmer and other members of an "ad hoc committee to improve the status of women" (which would later become the Women's Action Organization) continued to work separately and together for Foreign Service equality on a number of fronts.

In 1968 the ad hoc committee demanded that State appoint a women's coordinator to monitor and implement the Federal

Women's Program the Johnson administration had established to promote female employment in the federal government. The department complied, naming Elizabeth Harper as a part-time coordinator and establishing an official committee that included Jean Joyce, a founder of the WAO; Alison Palmer; and Barbara Good, an American Foreign

Implicit and explicit bias in the performance evaluation and promotion system was one of WAO's primary targets.

Service Association board member and a founder and president of the WAO. "The timing of this mandated program greatly facilitated WAO's effort to press for change," Good wrote in the January 1981 *Foreign Service Journal* ("Women in the Foreign Service: A Quiet Revolution").

At its official formation in 1970, WAO resolved to be an independent, voluntary organization that would work, in the words of Good, "not by confrontation or militancy, but by dealing directly with management to bring about reform" that would serve all categories of women in the three foreign affairs agencies—State, USAID and the U.S. Information Agency. The organization worked closely with AFSA to eliminate the policy banning married women from the Foreign Service and secure reappointment for those who had resigned—a goal that was achieved in 1971.

According to Good, WAO members disagreed with Palmer's "militant" approach. After her EEO victory in 1971, which benefited all Foreign Service women, the group split over support for the class-action suit. "After long discussion," Good notes in her *FSJ* article, WAO became "a somewhat silent partner" in that suit and, at the same time, continued to work "within the system,

using sustained pressure to achieve our aims.”

Implicit and explicit bias in the performance evaluation and promotion system was one of WAO’s primary targets. In 1980, the group circulated Lois W. Roth’s research paper, “Nice Girl or Pushy Bitch: Two Roads to Nonpromotion,” charging that performance ratings often institutionalized discrimination against women and remained crucial obstacles to equal opportunity and promotion. It is necessary to “help men understand,” Roth states, “that their ‘kind and supportive’ remarks about women officers often perpetuate myths and values that get read in the promotion process as weakness, and that in calling us ‘pushy’ or ‘abrasive’ when we are properly ambitious, they are using a double standard that does us great disservice and, ultimately, does them dishonor.”

WAO achievements include a reduction in the inequity in overseas living arrangements, increased recruitment of women into the Foreign Service, increased representation of women on promotion boards, elimination of references to gender and marital status in performance evaluations and establishment of the spouses’ “skills bank”—the precursor of today’s Family Liaison Office.

The Palmer Case Makes Progress

In 1985, the U.S. District Court decided the class-action suit in favor of the State Department, but two years later the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned that decision in favor of the plaintiffs. Having been found to have discriminatory personnel practices (e.g., women were assigned more often to consular work than political; women were disproportionately refused assignment as deputy chief of mission; and women’s nominations for “superior” awards were downgraded to “meritorious” awards), State agreed to make changes.

Foreign Service hiring practices had yet to be examined, however, and in 1989 the Foreign Service entrance examination process came under scrutiny. In a court order that year the U.S. District Court found that “the Department of State had discriminated against women in the administration of a written examination that applicants for positions in the Foreign Service were obliged to take.” The court mandated that State not use Foreign Service Officer Test results from 1985 to 1987. State was ordered to grade the 1988 exams to eliminate discrimination against women, and the 1989 exam was canceled.

In 1991, the same court again found discrimination in the FSOT. As restitution, 390 women who had the highest non-passing scores for the 1991–1994 Foreign Service written examination were invited to participate in the oral phase of the application

Women at Work

Women comprise:

- 50.8%** of the U.S. population
- 47%** of the U.S. workforce
- 40%** of Foreign Service officers
- 35%** of Foreign Service members, including officers and specialists at all Foreign Service agencies
- 33%** of U.S. ambassadors
- 31%** of senior State Department positions

Sources: U.S. Census, 2010; Department of Labor, 2010; Department of State, Office of the Director General.

process in 2002. Of those who participated, 11 were admitted to the Foreign Service with back pay plus interest and credited years of service toward retirement.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, State worked to improve personnel procedures and processes as mandated by the court. In 2007, the court ordered State and Palmer to begin to settle the suit, which was finally dismissed in 2010—34 years after it had been filed and 42 years after Palmer’s first EEO complaint. In the end, State had either ceased the unfair practice or made progress on such problems as unfair out-of-cone and initial cone assignments and underassigning of women to stretch and DCM assignments; disproportionate promotions; discriminatory hiring practices and processes; and reclassification of awards. State also introduced an improved performance evaluation form and instituted a high-level Council for Equality in the Workplace, which is now the Secretary’s Office of Civil Rights.

None of those named in the case, nor anyone in a leadership position at the State Department, was ever held accountable for the systematic discrimination the court found.

The Scant 33 Percent

In September 2015, Foreign Service Director General Arnold Chacón trumpeted on his Twitter feed that one in three chiefs of mission is a woman. The figure shows progress from the past, no doubt, but is less impressive in light of the fact that 40 percent of Foreign Service officers are women. The current cohort of female ambassadors also includes a large number of political appointees, rather than women promoted from within the Foreign Service.

“Currently EW@S’s challenge is to demonstrate to State

Department leaders—many of whom are female political appointees—that there is a problem,” wrote Executive Women @ State’s Susan Stevenson in the June 2015 *Foreign Service Journal*. During an October 2015 open forum that Secretary of State John Kerry cohosted with EW@S and S/OCS, the Secretary promised exit interviews, to begin early this year, as a means to understand reasons for separation.

According to the Office of the Director General, State bureaus and other Foreign Service agencies will ask all Foreign Service and limited non-career appointment employees to complete the exit survey as part of the check-out process. Those who leave State’s Civil Service will be interviewed, as well.

While important to track, women’s rate of attrition—their departure from the Service—will not fully explain the lower number of female leaders. According to the Office of the Director General, men and women both leave at a rate of 3.5 percent, “as has been the case for many years.”

Attention has turned to promotion biases, the topic of a series of focus groups S/OCS conducted in 2015. There, the majority of more than 60 participants reported that caregiver bias still affects female advancement. Women asked for more flexibility from promotion deadlines, known colloquially as “up or out.”

Senior Foreign Service Officer Margot Carrington, who examined both female retention and promotion during her Una Chapman Cox Foundation fellowship from 2010 to 2011, reviewed private-sector solutions to problems in these areas (see her “How Are FS Women at State Faring?” in the May 2013 *FSJ*.)

One company’s assumption, that women left the firm during caregiving years to work part-time or not at all, was upended when research showed that women were, in fact, continuing their careers; but they were doing so elsewhere, where they found more flexible work situations. The company then changed its promotion model and successfully retained more of its talent. Carrington recommends examination of the “up or out” deadlines, and asks whether the series of linear and progressively more challenging positions is ultimately discriminating against family caregivers, no matter the gender.

Recently, high-profile opinions have surfaced about whether

women can “have it all” or whether they should “lean in” at strategic times of life. Though these debates among women about their own life choices and paths are separate from the particular questions of hiring and promotion, they are relevant to attracting and retaining a diverse Foreign Service.

The Great Promotion Taper

In a 2010 study, the organization Women in International Security found “a pronounced and persistent gender gap in the Senior Foreign Service.” While some statistics indicate improvement in women’s representation in higher-ranking roles, others show otherwise.

In a study of the data from 1994 to 2014, State’s Bureau of Human Resources found that women’s promotion has been proportionate to their percentage when they entered the Foreign Service. “Female cohorts are moving from entry level to senior level in proportion to their hiring,” the HR report states. “The senior level of today is the entry level of 20

While important to track, women’s rate of attrition—their departure from the Service—will not fully explain the lower number of female leaders.

years ago.”

However, according to a more detailed breakdown of promotion statistics for 2014, confirmed by the Office of the Director General, the disparity in the rate of promotion in the higher ranks was significant. Of the women who competed for promotion from Counselor (FE-OC) to Minister Counselor (FE-MC) that year, 23.9 percent were promoted. Of the men who were eligible for the same rank, 30.3 percent were promoted. As the rank increases, the proportion of eligible women who compete decreases: Of the 379 officers who competed for promotion from FS-1 to FE-OC, 33.5 percent (127) were women; of the 161 who competed for FE-MC to Career Minister (FE-CM), 27.3 percent (44) were women.

Are fewer women promoted to leadership roles because they choose not to compete for higher rank, or are additional training and professional development required to aid in their quest? Additional research can help to answer that question.

Ambassador Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, who has served in Asia, South Asia, Europe and Washington, D.C., beats the drum for women stepping up for senior promotion. “When women put themselves forward, they compete well at all ranks of the Foreign

Service,” Galt said in an interview. “I would like to see more senior women mentoring younger female officers and guiding them to bid on senior positions.” At an open forum in October, DG Arnold Chacón announced his approval of a Cox Foundation study to identify gaps in, and make recommendations for, mentoring opportunities at the department. Also, senior-ranked women plan to discuss ways to promote women’s mentorship at the March Chiefs of Mission conference, but on the margins rather than as part of the main agenda.

Not all embrace mentoring. Palmer, for instance, stated during an interview that she believes mentoring programs are a means to cope with and, in effect, enable inherent problems in an organization. “If you have to mentor a group, it means they’re already not getting fair treatment. They’re the result of a poor personnel system that is not based on merit.”

Situational Sexism

There is another phenomenon within the Foreign Service that can perhaps best be described as situational sexism, in which circumstances are sometimes used to justify biases against women in the name of cultural sensitivity and practicality. The societal gender restrictions of the Middle East and parts of South Asia have offered a particularly fertile environment for this phenomenon historically.

Admittedly, along with the Bureau of African Affairs, the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs have the highest percentages of female leaders in Washington and at posts today. Department leadership in both bureaus is 28 percent and 33 percent female, respectively, including both assistant secretaries. Female chiefs of mission lead 33 percent of the NEA posts and 44 percent of SCA posts.

Yet in reaching out to 15 female FSOs who have worked in these regions, six mentioned that they’ve seen some male colleagues slip into discrimination once they are surrounded by a sexist culture, in the name of working effectively in the country.

Ironically, as the women point out, they are, in fact, accepted by local male leaders as “a diplomat” or “a third gender” and can therefore meet and report as successfully as men. “We can meet with the local men in their majlis (meeting rooms) and the women in their own groups,” says one female FSO, who prefers to remain anonymous. She voices frustration with what she calls the current practice of treating women as a specialty population to consider solely for women’s issues reporting.

When officers meet with women, she says, they can provide fuller reports of the political, economic and security situation. She routinely asks, for instance, about the welfare of the chil-

dren, whether they attend school and, finally, whether they walk to school. “That one answer tells me something about security on the ground,” she says. “If it’s safe, the kids can walk to school.” At times, this subject has led to more pointed intelligence: “I’ve been told, ‘We don’t like the kids walking past that house over there because there are these strange guys who moved in last month.’ And suddenly, we would have new suspicious actors to watch.”

Joanne Cummings, who served as the first Foreign Service refugee coordinator in Iraq in 2004, makes a similar point, citing her meetings with displaced families. One group of men asked her for a generator, but the women indicated they needed a water tank: The girls of the village had been attacked while walking miles to the nearest water source. When told of the men’s request for a generator, she says, “The women started laughing. ‘Oh, they want to watch TV!’” Cummings adds: “Now, if I’d been a well-prepared male FSO, I would’ve provided the generator. And I would have been doing my job. But how often have we gotten things seriously wrong because we’ve restricted ourselves to talking to half the people in a country to get the whole picture?”

Representative Representation

Many have observed that a Foreign Service that better represents the United States will improve policymaking, reporting and analysis. Contributions that women bring to senior ranks are informed by diverse experiences that men do not share. The examples from posts in the Middle East support this claim.

In a November 2014 interview for the Public Broadcasting System’s “To the Contrary,” Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield said, “It is important for the world to see the face of America. They need to understand that we are a diverse society and that diversity is our strength.”

The exit interviews that Secretary Kerry promised may help identify lingering barriers. There has long been a need to hear from female FSOs on their way out the door, but no one asked. Those women who remain in the Foreign Service—officers and specialists from State and the other foreign affairs agencies—should all continue to be tapped for more data, as well.

Continued investigation is needed to make appropriate, relevant personnel policy adjustments. “When the final settlement was made in 2010, I felt glad that I had accomplished something,” Palmer writes in her autobiography. “But I knew full well that many more decades would pass before women FSOs achieved the equality that is required by law.”

With shrewd effort, today’s discussions can turn good intentions into constructive action. ■

Federal Women's Program for the Future

Foreign Service women in Panama are rejuvenating the Federal Women's Program as a platform for career development.

BY THAO ANH TRAN AND KRISTIN STEWART



On International Day of the Girl last October, Thao Anh Tran (front, second from right) visited the Instituto Nuestra Señora de la Merced high school to highlight the importance of adolescent girls' education and empowerment in shaping a stronger Panamanian society.

COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS/U.S. EMBASSY IN PANAMA

When the Federal Women's Program coordinator vacancy was advertised this past fall in Panama, three women applied: a second-tour officer, an FS-2 and an FS-1. The management counselor, also a woman, consulted the applicants,

and an innovative assignment resulted. The second-tour officer was appointed as the official FWP coordinator, with specific mentoring and support offered by more senior officers to bolster the program.

The result has been a robust interagency effort that may serve as a model for the kind of infrastructure needed to help support female members of the Foreign Service in pursuing successful careers.

Seizing the Opportunity

The FWP's roots go back to 1961 when President John F. Kennedy created the Commission on the Status of Women to examine barriers facing women in the federal government and to enhance employment opportunities for women in every area of federal service. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson established



Thao Anh Tran (at left) is a political officer, and Kristin Stewart is the public affairs counselor at Embassy Panama City. The views expressed in this article are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Department of State.



Kristin Stewart, second from left, engages with Panamanian leaders during the political counselor's welcome reception in October. From left, activist Irasema de Ahumada; Ileana Molo, former IVLP grantee and president of Afro-Panameña Soy; Paliwitur Sapibe, director of indigenous affairs; and Gladys de Fossati, director of the Panamanian Institute of Labor Studies.

the FWP, based on the commission's recommendation to make the status of women an integral part of the larger equal employment opportunity (EEO) effort. He also signed an executive order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender.

At the State Department, the FWP helps ensure that women receive equal opportunity in recruitment, selection, training and advancement in the Foreign and Civil Services. Posts with six or more female U.S. citizen employees are required to designate a coordinator and notify the Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR).

Yet very few posts seem to be aware of the program, much less use it as an empowerment platform for women. When the department sent out a cable asking FWP coordinators to sign up for a website containing resources to use at post and a space to share best practices, advice and concerns with other coordinators and with S/OCR, for example, Ms. Tran found that she was the sole coordinator to have done so!

The FWP initiative in Panama includes personnel from many different agencies at post, as well as eligible family members (EFMs)—many of whom are potential future members of the Foreign Service. The group meets monthly for the purposes of:

Ultimately, the FWP
is what you make of it
at the post level.

- (1) providing women at post a safe forum in which to express their career concerns and goals, and bring related issues to the attention of the front office, as necessary;
- (2) mentoring women starting out in federal government service; and
- (3) reaching beyond post, when

possible, to serve girls and women in the local Panamanian community.

Issues to Address

Embassy Panama City currently has female section heads for the consular, management, public affairs, regional affairs, Transportation Security Agency, Customs and Border Protection, and Peace Corps offices. Until recently, the political counselor and Department of Justice attaché were also female. While it is encouraging to have seven senior females at post, this representation falls well below the ideal 50 percent, given that Panama, as a regional hub, has 28 different sections and agencies represented on the country team.

Furthermore, this summer's transfer cycle will replace the management and public affairs heads with male officers, leaving only four women on the country team, two of whom travel exten-

sively due to regional responsibilities. Newer female officers and EFMs have expressed concern about such a sharp decline in female leadership at post. For State Department FSOs, this will leave only one female section head as an adviser.

To address these and other issues, FWP Coordinator Tran began a series of informal monthly meetings in Panama that rotate between the offices of the senior female section heads. This allows newer employees, particularly EFMs, to learn about the functions of a variety of sections and agencies at post. It also helps integrate the interagency team and keeps everyone informed of management issues, career opportunities and other trends. Recently, the group held an informational brown-bag lunch with the visiting EEO trainer from State's Office of Civil Rights. We also organized a women's career panel at a local high school in honor of the International Day of the Girl Child in October 2015.

Yes, when needed, we share tips on the best electric breast pump for return to work. But, more importantly, we share advice and strategies for everything from completing office tasks and navigating the Foreign Affairs Manual to bidding for onward assignments.

Mentoring

One potential best-practice that stemmed from rejuvenation of the FWP in Panama is the establishment of a mentoring program at post. Ms. Tran and Ms. Stewart, for example, have formed a formal mentee-mentor relationship. In addition, they help pair other mentees and mentors who request support at post. While men are encouraged to serve as career mentors, our group has found that there is a unique synergy created when senior women share their experiences with those just starting out.

There are, of course, other formal mentoring programs available for FSOs, but they generally entail a long-distance relationship and are designed to match like-coned FSOs. By contrast, we have found it very beneficial for mentees to be able to reach out to a more senior officer at post for real-time advice and guidance, without having to explain the context of the country, culture or post.

In the overseas context, it is also important to take advantage of the interagency team and learn from female role models in the military, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal government agencies. These women have much to share in terms of balancing family and work, career advancement, time management strategies and more.

According to the 2014 Foreign Service promotion statistics—the latest statistics available with a breakdown by gender—only



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three women were promoted from FE-MC to FE-CM, 21 from FE-OC to FE-MC and 37 from FS-1 to FE-OC. Given the dearth of female leadership at the highest levels of the Foreign Service, it is essential that we do all we can to recruit and retain female officers and specialists at the entry- and mid-levels to ensure there is a critical mass of women who are eligible to compete for promotions in the Senior Foreign Service.

A Good Starting Point

Based on our experience in successfully rejuvenating the FWP in Mission Panama—a medium-sized post with a relatively small Department of State presence—we would like to encourage other posts to take advantage of this valuable resource for active engagement with and direct advocacy for female officers, specialists and EFMs with the front office and the department. When coupled with other initiatives, the FWP can serve as a good starting point. Other posts will, of course, face different challenges and opportunities, but we hope these simple tips will help other posts seeking to replicate our effort:

- **Assign an entry-level officer to serve as the FWP coordinator, but appoint more senior officers to serve as advisers to the FWP coordinator.** This arrangement enables the entry-level officer to acquire managerial and leadership experience that she can use in her future assignments while the more senior officers, with more knowledge of departmental and Foreign Service regulations, can provide appropriate guidance and mentor the entry-level officer throughout their tenure as members of the FWP.

- **Organize regular meetings with female officers, specialists and EFMs at post.** Since our first meeting as a group in the fall, the Panama FWP has held monthly meetings focused on concerns highlighted by our members during the initial gathering. Senior female officers take turns hosting and facilitating the sessions. By regularizing our schedule, the group has slowly attracted



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In September, Thao Anh Tran, third from right, joined young Panamanian leaders from varied backgrounds who are members of the embassy's Youth Advisory Council to celebrate U.S. Hispanic Heritage Month.

the attendance of more women at post, and the increased membership has enabled us to expand our goals and initiatives.

- **Document meetings and ensure follow-up prior to the next meeting.** One way to ensure we hold ourselves accountable as a group is by taking notes and assigning ourselves tasks at the end of each meeting. Before each upcoming meeting, we remind ourselves of items still pending on the agenda.

- **Create and maintain an updated listserv to facilitate communication and to disseminate information and opportunities that benefit group members.** The FWP has brought together women from diverse backgrounds, offices and agencies within Mission Panama who otherwise would not have the opportunity to interact and exchange their knowledge and expertise with one another. Our listserv has given us an effective means to share and distribute information such as employment opportunities and has helped create a cohesive network of women within the mission.

- **Look for opportunities to facilitate meetings between FWP and State Department visitors.** Whether it is the attorney adviser from the Office of Civil Rights or an office director, the FWP takes advantage of every opportunity to ensure our visitors get a chance to hear directly from our officers, specialists and EFMs regarding their concerns. Through these interactions, group members are able to obtain accurate information first-hand while our Washington visitors can take note of issues at post.

- **Solicit support for the FWP from the front office.** In

Panama, we have been fortunate in this regard because the more senior members of the FWP have been active in bringing our collective concerns to the attention of the front office, whose occupant has been responsive to the group's needs. For example, following our request for establishment of a mentoring program, our chargé immediately expressed his support and asked how the front office could be of assistance. Currently, formal training is available only for EEO counselors at post. This is helpful, but is limited to resolving problem situations for female employees and does nothing to mentor, equip and empower the next generation of females for leadership.

It's Up to You

Ultimately, the FWP is what you make of it at the post level. Until Foreign Service demographics more closely match the gender makeup of the U.S. population, there will continue to be a distinct need for initiatives such as the Federal Women's Program. By creating a local embassy-level forum for women to communicate their needs and goals, we can more effectively communicate and plan with the front office to support them.

Our hope is that more posts will adopt similar models of a robust FWP working group, the front offices at other embassies will encourage and support the FWP and the State Department will consider hosting either regional or global conferences for FWP coordinators to share best practices. ■

Ten Leadership Tips for Aspiring Women

Here is a set of practical recommendations drawn from the experience of an accomplished USAID Senior Foreign Service officer.

BY ERIN SOTO

Four out of every 10 first-time executives or executives in new positions fail or drop out within the first 18 months. In the Foreign Service, there is no one clear path to leadership success. In this article I offer my top 10 recommendations for professional advancement. While they are not only for Foreign Service women, I offer them with FS women in mind, and with the hope that sharing practical suggestions based on what I've learned about leadership during the course of a Foreign Service career and beyond will help set you on the path of a rewarding life and successful career.

The Foreign Service is a great place for women to become leaders. Here's how.



Erin Soto is a former USAID Senior Foreign Service officer, who served in Latin America, Africa and Asia during a 30-year career. She is the owner of TLC Solutions and the author of Sharing Secrets: A Conversation on the Counter-intuitive Nature of Executive Leadership (2014). She can be reached at erin.soto@gmail.com.

1. Assert your expectations. Leaders communicate with intent. It is important to let the system and the people in the system know what your career expectations are. Let your supervisors, their supervisors, the personnel system, the promotion boards and those around you know what you want, your career ambitions and your expectations. How else would they know? Occasionally, as a junior officer, I would ask to meet with senior officers to seek career advice. I would use those meetings to communicate my desire for a particular position, post or assignment. I also used the personal statement in the annual performance evaluation to let the system know I desired more responsibility. Once your supervisors and the system understand your expectations, your ambitions and how you think of yourself, they respond accordingly with suggestions, assignments and opportunities.

2. Know your job and exceed performance expectations. Expressions of ambition must be accompanied by a track record of exceeding work performance expectations and progressive achievement. The higher one ascends, the more one focuses on systems alignment and intractable issues and their long-term consequences. If you aren't crystal

clear about what is and isn't your responsibility, you may feel like you need to do everything, meet with everyone, read everything and know everything to do a good job. This is not the case. It leads inevitably to burnout.

Define excellence and establish performance expectations with your supervisor, and then focus on achieving those expectations. Being clear about what your job is and how you should spend your time will help you weed out the less important from the most important because, of course, everything is important. In terms of per-

formance, I posted my three work objectives and corresponding performance measures next to my computer. This served as a reminder of my priorities. In daily decisions about how to spend my time, whether to attend a meeting or review a document, I compared the relevance of the task to my work objectives. If the task didn't get me closer to my objectives, I didn't give it priority.

The exception to this rule of thumb is when the task was a time-sensitive contribution to a high-priority institutional goal. In demarking these higher priority institutional goals, one is able to demonstrate the flexibility to respond to unforeseen or emergent challenges that executive leaders regularly confront. This simple method kept me focused on exceeding my work objectives.

3. Reframe the "no." If I listened to everyone who told me "no" in my career and my life, I probably wouldn't have made it to the Senior Foreign Service, written and published a book, or started and led a business. People may tell you, "you aren't ready" or "it's not a good match" or "you lack (fill in the blank)." Everyone experiences these kinds of nos. It is easy to get discouraged, internalize the no and allow self-doubt to seep in. I've seen this self-doubt inhibit women more than men. You can choose to listen to people who tell you "no" or you can reframe it as one step closer to "yes." You can view the no as a single person's opinion. You can learn from it, adjust and move on. Whatever you do, don't eliminate yourself from contention by not applying for the position you want. Figure out what you want to do, make a plan to do it and execute it by making tactical shifts as needed.

In daily decisions about how to spend my time, whether to attend a meeting or review a document, I compared the relevance of the task to my work objectives.

4. Embrace vulnerability and master emotional control. First, vulnerability is not the same as "being emotional," which connotes a lack of emotional control. Exhibiting controlled emotions can be an invaluable asset in

demonstrating the kind of vulnerability all great leaders possess. Sociologist Brene Brown explains: "We need to feel trust to be vulnerable, and we need to be vulnerable in order to trust." You may associate being vulnerable with showing weakness; but, in fact, it is a strength that leads to greater trust. Women tend to possess this strength.

Building trust requires a level of maturity and experience that often means putting others before yourself. Trust conveys "I care about you" and "I am here for you." Trust is the foundation of everything an effective leader does, and it is an aspect of leadership that most women are particularly good at expressing. So embrace your vulnerability, master emotional control and express it in the workplace.

5. Open a "trust account" and make daily deposits. Establishing trust is critical to creating an ideal workplace environment. It is absolutely essential to the development of your team and to obtaining your unit's goals. Many struggle to earn, build and maintain trust with their staff, their supervisors or with interagency collaborators. Believe me, I've been there. It takes time to build trust because it happens in small, often intimate moments—the kind women are particularly attuned to. Here is the thing: your performance depends on your ability to gain the confidence and respect of all with whom you must collaborate as part of your job. It is the key to building a strong high-performing team and having a comfortable work environment. You are responsible for building trust and maintaining it. You can't skip it. Everything else relies upon it—communication, change, alignment, decisions and execution. If your foundation is shaky, then everything built on top of it is also unstable.

6. Master the process of change. Bringing about change—which has five critical elements: new policies, new systems, new approaches, new procedures and reorganizations—will be a significant part of your job as a

leader. Your efforts will be more successful if you understand how staff members react to change and the reasons for the typically high rates of failure. Change initiatives have derailed many accomplished officers, and are perhaps the most difficult part of a leader's job. They require: (1) knowledge and understanding of the change process and the key role of trust as a catalyst for change; (2) awareness of the emotional impact of change on staff and an ability to communicate to the different emotional stages as staff members accept and implement the change.

Women seem to be able to do this easily; and, (3) awareness of the five elements of successful change. Missing any one of these will leave you short of the change you hope to achieve and, therefore, short of your vision and goals.

7. Strike a work-life balance. Balance between your work priorities and ambition and your personal life and happiness is possible. It is a matter of knowing your job, creating boundaries and executing. It sounds simple, but it is not. Women tend to be very conscientious. Conscientiousness is usually a good thing, but too much of a good thing can be detrimental. How much you work is *your* choice.

The key to work-life balance is an ability to prioritize and say “no” to everything else. We all know people who can't say “no.” They may view it as a sign of weakness. They may be afraid that if they say “no” to a request, they are saying “no” to the next promotion or opportunity for advancement. Others may not even see no as an option. The people who can't say “no” are often the people who have a disproportionate amount of work. They fall into what Marshall Goldsmith calls the “overcommitment trap”—trying to do too many things and, as a result, not doing any as well as they could.

People who do a few things well are not only happier and have more balance, but they tend to get promoted sooner than the “utility infielders” who take everything that comes their way. Those who are likely to get promoted are those with the highest-quality work, not those with the largest quantity of work. Saying “no” and setting clear boundaries not only helps with establishing a balance, but it better positions you for promotions.

8. Be yourself. There is no mold one must fit to be a good leader. Leaders come in all varieties. Pretending to be someone you aren't, however, can be off-putting to others and exhausting for you. Leaders who act differently at

work than they do at home are disingenuous and will quickly turn people off. It is taxing to stay in character and be constantly on guard for fear of exposing your weaknesses or doubts. It is a lot easier and more effective to simply be yourself. Embrace your strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears, triumphs and failures.

We all have them. If you accept yourself, so will your staff and your stakeholders. You will be more effective if you expose your whole self, and through this kind of vulnerability you will gain the trust so essential to being a great leader. The bottom line is, if you do nothing else, be yourself.

9. Don't be so hard on yourself. Resilience is a byproduct of learning. It allows you to get back up and lead and perform when you have been knocked down. Everyone, without exception, gets knocked down, suffers setbacks and is disappointed as a leader. I don't know anyone who hasn't felt beaten up by the system, the people in the system or those around them at one time or another. You are not alone! Disappointments and missteps can come in many forms (a less than stellar performance evaluation, a home-life setback, or even a harsh reaction from the boss). I've seen women allow a cross word or blunt comment from a supervisor to visibly upset them. Most people don't talk about these episodes because it's risky: it can hurt your image or reputation, your promotion potential or your employability. When a misstep happens, good leaders don't beat themselves up. Instead they have an honest conversation with themselves, acknowledge that improvement is needed and learn to do better. They don't just bounce back; they bounce forward. It's not that they sweep their failures or missteps under the carpet, but they have an ability to learn from mistakes and summon the self-confidence to lead again.

10. Invest in your staff. A delayed return on investment, coupled with the relatively short tenure of Foreign Service tours, can cause staff development to fall to the

It takes time to build trust
because it happens in small,
often intimate moments—the
kind women are particularly
attuned to.

bottom of your priority list. But developing “your people” is your responsibility, and without such investment truly impressive institutional results will not be achieved. In addition, perhaps the best recruiting tactic is your leadership practice, how you lead. Word gets out. If you are known as a leader who develops and invests in staff, provides opportunities for growth and allows people space to create, you will attract followers. If you consciously create a work environment that values both work-life balance and teamwork, these elements will be powerful recruitment tools. People yearn to work for good leaders. Your leadership and investment in staff will be important factors in both recruiting and retaining talent you’ll need as you rise.

Conscientiousness is usually a good thing, but too much of a good thing can be detrimental.

Go out of your way to look for qualified women to usher up the career ladder. In all likelihood, someone helped you. I worked with women who believed in me, who gave me a chance to prove myself and guided me through stretch assignments.

The best way to say thank you is to help open doors for other women. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Encourage them to advance. Share your secrets of success. Tell them how smart and strong they are. Offer them opportunities or assignments to learn and grow. And when they say

thank you, ask these women to repay you by investing in other women.

There you have it. These are my top 10 recommendations for advancing your career and balancing it with a rewarding life. ■



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A Pioneer in Saudi Arabia

In the Middle East, one female officer found embassy management a greater obstacle than the conservative local culture.

BY ANDREA FARSAKH

In December 1978, I found myself back in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Bored with the circumscribed life on a Saudi university campus where my husband taught from 1972 to 1975, I had discovered that the nearby consulate general was offering the Foreign Service written exam in December 1974. I took the test and passed. With the enthusiastic support and encouragement of my husband, I joined the Foreign Service in July 1976.

After a tour in Washington, D.C., I found that there were only a couple of off-cycle job openings: general services officer in Damascus and consular officer in Dhahran. The latter offered job possibilities for my husband and boarding school for our son, as well as schooling at post for our daughter.

There was just one wrinkle: the consul general did not want a female officer. Fortune smiled, however; he was curtailed (nothing to do with me), and the new CG, Ralph Lindstrom, and Ambassador John West enthusiastically welcomed my assignment. But would the Saudis accept me? That was another question.



Andrea Morel Farsakh joined the Foreign Service in 1976. After an assignment in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, she was posted to Dhahran, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Alexandria and Tunis. In addition, she served in Washington, D.C., in the bureaus of International Organizations, Intelligence and Research and Human Resources, and the Office of the Inspector General. She did a second tour in NEA. She retired in 2001 and has since worked as a rehired annuitant on the Future of Iraq Project, in the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs and on the Iraq desk in NEA, and on the Afghan desk in the Bureau of South Asian Affairs.

Would the Saudis Accept Me?

My Arabic-language ability did the trick, neutralizing the negative of my gender with Saudi officialdom. The fact that I was married to a Palestinian-American, had spent time in the region and was familiar with the culture, was of considerable help, as well, easing my relationships with Saudis. I was able to visit just about every prison in the Eastern Province, which were filled with American citizens who worked for ARAMCO and other U.S. companies. Most had been involved in graft, drugs, pornography and, by far the most common “crime” of all, alcohol offenses.

While everyone was hyperaware of Saudi laws against possession and sale of alcohol, the desire for it was unquenchable. One poignant example of the alcohol ban involved the case of a young man in his late teens caught with a bottle of cough medicine bought legally in a Saudi pharmacy—but it contained alcohol! He had the misfortune of being the first U.S. citizen sentenced to be flogged in the Kingdom. One small comfort: the flogging was done in the prison courtyard and not in public. The ambassador was naturally deeply concerned; but nothing could be done, and the sentence was carried out—an unfortunate precedent thereafter regularly imposed on American citizens there.

The prison commanders were always extremely polite and cooperative with me. While I flattered myself that it was my language ability that eased my path, my husband theorized that their courtliness and seeming cooperativeness were only tactics to get rid of me more quickly!

My gender and language skills gave me entrée into the strictly segregated world of Saudi women, which provided an opportunity for me to do political reporting on female life behind the walls. I was encouraged by the consul general to do this, drawing

kudos from male colleagues in the Kingdom and in other Persian Gulf countries. I visited homes and female institutions, and called on women who were much less likely than men to speak English.

I developed a friendly relationship with the emir of the Eastern Province, Abd al-Muhsin Bin Jiluwi, whose father had helped King Abd al-Aziz conquer Riyadh in the early 20th century. The emir spoke no English, but because I was able to converse with him, he always received me most graciously and even invited me to lunch with him a few times. Our cordial relationship motivated him to arrange for me to call on his wife, which I did. The emir liked to talk about space travel! I also met with the emir of Al Hasa Province a few times and lunched with him. One time we were regaled with Bedouin poetry by an authentic Bedouin—I did not understand a word, but neither did my Saudi colleague from the consulate.

Management's View of Propriety

Meanwhile, my husband had found a job with ARAMCO and did not want to move when my assignment was over in summer 1981. So to stay fairly close to Dhahran I bid on a new position: political officer in Abu Dhabi. Again my gender became an issue—the ambassador and deputy chief of mission did not want a female officer. And again, luck smiled on me. The embassy, then in Jeddah, asked me to bid, and I was assigned as an external relations political officer there. My portfolio signified that most of my business was with the Foreign Ministry. The Saudis who worked there had served abroad and were cosmopolitan in their outlook, so I was always treated with great courtesy.

I was the only female political officer in Jeddah, but was fortunate to have a most supportive and wonderful boss, David Newton, and a great deputy chief of mission, Jim Placke. And all of my international colleagues were most welcoming. I was, of course, the only one in the group who was not allowed to drive, so after our monthly evening meetings they always made sure my transportation needs were met without having to call—and wait for—an embassy driver.

Problems sometimes arose with embassy management, all the same. On one occasion during my second year, I was visiting my husband in Dhahran when the political counselor asked me

to return to Jeddah because Secretary of State George Shultz and Ambassador Philip Habib were coming to see the king to discuss the civil war in Lebanon. I was to be a “site officer” (a sort of visit monitor in the royal palace). However, when I got back to Jeddah, I was informed that embassy management did not think it proper for a female officer to be in the palace. So after crossing the country to be Mrs. Shultz’s control officer, I found that my

sole duty was to escort her to her hotel room.

On another occasion, as control officer for a congressional delegation in Riyadh, I was instructed to arrange a luncheon at the Equestrian Club. I dealt directly with the prince in charge of the visit, who emphasized that while spouses were not invited, I was definitely on the guest list. A couple of hours

before the event, however, I was advised that I was not to attend because, once again, embassy management deemed it improper. A male officer went in my place. I briefly considered protesting, but the event was imminent, and I felt that creating an incident would not benefit anyone.

Given all the restrictions on women in the Kingdom, and aware of my very unusual—and pioneering—position, I believed that I had mostly succeeded in doing the job to which I had been assigned. The support that I received from the ambassador, the DCM in my first year, my boss and most of my colleagues made up for the occasional slights that occurred.

A Seat at the Table

My tour in Jeddah had a pleasant conclusion in the summer of 1983. Ambassador Richard Murphy’s tour was ending, and the Saudi Foreign Ministry was giving him a farewell dinner. The deputy chief of protocol, with whom I had dealt frequently, made sure that all female officers in the embassy (economic, budget & fiscal and personnel, as well as myself) received invitations and insisted that we attend. So on my last night in Jeddah, I went to the ambassador’s dinner, and then to the airport. My onward assignment was as a political officer in Abu Dhabi, where there was a new ambassador and DCM.

Abu Dhabi seemed wildly free after Saudi Arabia. I could call on and attend meetings with virtually any official—with one exception. I was informed that UAE President Shaykh Zayed

So after crossing the country to be Mrs. Shultz’s control officer, I found that my sole duty was to escort her to her hotel room.



In Tunis, after the signing of the Oslo Agreements in September 1993, FSO Andrea Farsakh was the designated embassy contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Here she greets Yasser Arafat.

Al-Nahayyan loved to tell off-color jokes, so my presence in his company—and comprehension of Arabic—would be embarrassing! Ambassador Quincey Lumsden and DCM David Ransom were 100-percent supportive of my work.

The economic officer and I traveled to all the emirates, called on rulers and key people, drank camel's milk and had a great time. Iranair had two flights a week to Dubai, and with the bloody Iran-Iraq war in full swing, the first stop for many Iranians was the U.S. consulate general. Many Iranians had relatives in the United States, and parents were fearful of their sons being drafted into fighting in a brutal war. The junior consular officer there, Michael Matera, and I decided to question successful visa applicants to try to find out what was happening inside Iran, as the department at that time had very little information. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs was so pleased with our initiative that they sent a cable with the questions we should ask. We sent in a series of reports that were very gratefully received.

As the years passed, and increasing numbers of female officers joined the Service, the problems that I had experienced diminished. However, one issue still dogged me. I had always

at the time the agreements seemed full of promise. I helped arrange and participated in the first meeting between a U.S. Secretary of State—Warren Christopher—and Yasser Arafat.

wanted to work on Israel-Palestine issues, so at one point I bid on a political position in Amman. I later heard from a friend that the DCM there declared in a staff meeting that he did not want a woman with a Palestinian husband in the political section.

In 1992, I was assigned to Tunis as political counselor. At that time, U.S. officials were not permitted to have any substantive contact with Palestine Liberation Organization officials then based in Tunis. With the signing of the Oslo Agreements in September 1993, everything changed: Embassy Tunis was instructed to initiate significant relationships with key officials, including PLO leader Yasser Arafat. This was the pinnacle of my FS career. My deep familiarity with the issues and Arabic-language capability made me the designated principal embassy contact with the PLO. While Oslo ultimately was a failure,

My gender and language skills gave me entree into the strictly segregated world of Saudi women.

On Reflection

During my career I had the good fortune to serve in the most conservative Middle Eastern country for women, Saudi Arabia, and in the most progressive one, Tunisia, and I have witnessed significant change.

By now, every country in the Arab world except Saudi Arabia has had a female U.S. ambassador. Female officers are accepted everywhere, and that is a real victory for women in the U.S. Foreign Service.

In reflecting on my experience, two thoughts come to mind. First, I would very much like to see a career woman—with Arabic ability—nominated as U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia. At this time of great ferment in the Arab and Islamic world, such a move would serve as a beacon to all progressives in the region.

Second, as my career experience illustrates, language capability is extremely important, indeed critical. Without this, the officer walks in a bubble, restricted to English-speaking elites and cut off from the society in which she is trying to function. ■

On Assignment with Maxine Desilet, 1949-1955

Maxine Desilet's letters home, accented by excerpts from her efficiency reports, paint a vivid picture of life in the postwar Foreign Service.

BY SUZANNE COFER



Maxine Desilet in Berlin, 1949.

Maxine Desilet (1918-2000) applied for the U.S. Foreign Service in August 1945. For various reasons, including hiring freezes, it was four years before she joined. She applied in Philadelphia, where she had been working during World War II as an administrative assistant with the U.S. Signal Corps. After the war, she returned home to Lewiston, Idaho.

On Feb. 16, 1949, Desilet received a telegram from the Foreign Service offering her a stenographer position. She was reminded that she would need to meet standards in clerical tests when she arrived in Washington, D.C. She would have to demonstrate a shorthand speed of 100 words per minute and a typing speed of at least 50 words per minute.

After resigning her existing position and attending to personal affairs, she reported to Washington, D.C., on April 1, 1949. She considered herself lucky, because during the postwar years thousands were applying to join the U.S. Foreign Service. Her first posting was to Berlin. What follows are excerpts from her letters home and her efficiency reports.



Suzanne Cofer is a retired public school teacher and a former local elected official who lives in Lacey, Washington, with her husband. Since her 2010 retirement, she has undertaken various writing projects. Maxine Desilet Dickerson, who served in the Foreign Service from 1949 to 1955, was Cofer's godmother and paternal aunt. As a young woman, Cofer discovered a collection of her aunt's letters from 1936 to 1956 stored in a large box at her grandmother's home. The story the letters told inspired Cofer to accept a teaching position in Australia and see the world. Dickerson's son Jeff gave the letters to Cofer, knowing she loved them and would help share them with a wider audience. Photos and images are courtesy of Suzanne Cofer.

Assignment Berlin: 1949-1951

Secretary to the consul general

May 5 and May 8, 1949, aboard the *Queen Mary*

We have a beautiful stateroom. It all reminds me of a first class hotel...you can hardly tell we're on the ocean—so smooth. The dining room is luxurious and we just finished a huge lunch.

I know now what happens to the gowns and fur stoles and capes in Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. I feel adequately dressed during daytime, but egad—at night it's nothing to see ermine, mink and sable wraps over original creations, which are gorgeous. The evening dress is really breathtaking. Last night we danced uphill then downhill as the ship rocked.

May 14, 1949

And so here I am in Berlin [the Berlin Airlift crisis has just been resolved]. ... I arrived via bucket seat from Frankfurt. ... I've heard enough about it, but it still was a shock to fly over the city and see the mass of ruins. It's very large and extends as far as I could see on all sides. ... Everyone here is jubilant, and also everyone here is gone! At long last they are now able to leave the city and most everyone took advantage of this one great weekend to get out of town.

May 18, 1949

Today is my first day at work. I will be the secretary to the Consul General. ... The building itself is a big white place with marble stairs and three floors. My office looks out across the street to endless gardens. We can walk through them during lunch hour. ... Berlin is, or rather, was, a beautiful city. It must be huge as the only part we see is the American sector. ...

I've heard enough about it, but it still was a shock to fly over the city and see the mass of ruins. It's very large and extends as far as I could see on all sides.

We drove down and around Saturday to the Brandenburg Gate, which is one of the boundaries into the Russian Zone. Past the huge buildings of the German government, the Chancellery, the embassies of foreign governments, all of which are now just shells.

It must be a dreadful feeling to these people who've lived here always to see their city like this, as it is so bad in the central part of the town, I don't see how it can ever be repaired. We also walked down part of the shopping district where the streets were packed as Saturday displayed the first shipments of all kinds of food, etc., they haven't had since before the blockade.

There were queues of people lined up in front of the fish stores, and crowds gathered in front of the pastries shops, all of them just looking. They look so poor and are wearing pre-war clothes that are patched and worn away. ... I didn't see one decently dressed woman. We felt quite self-conscious wearing our stateside outfits and received many stares.

July 12, 1949

Last week I was invited over for lunch at the home of the United States Political Adviser for Germany [James W. Riddleberger]. He and his wife had six of us over to greet us to Berlin. It was very cozy, and we chatted and ate a fancy lunch with wine and had demi tasse in the library afterwards. I am beginning to get used to the high standard of living over here now, and don't jump when a maid shoves a platter of food over my left shoulder.

My boss's cocktail party for the elite was carried off to a fine finish on Saturday. After much telephoning and writing invites, etc., he invited me to attend and asked me to



Maxine Desilet with her mother, Irene, during a home visit in the early 1950s.

come over early to help with any last minute details as he doesn't have a wife.

I stood at the door and received while he ran around the guests and kept an eye on the canapés platters and glasses to see that everyone was well taken care of. The house itself is a huge place and very lovely. ... Some of the windows are stained glass, the walls are tapestried, and I lost count of the rooms.

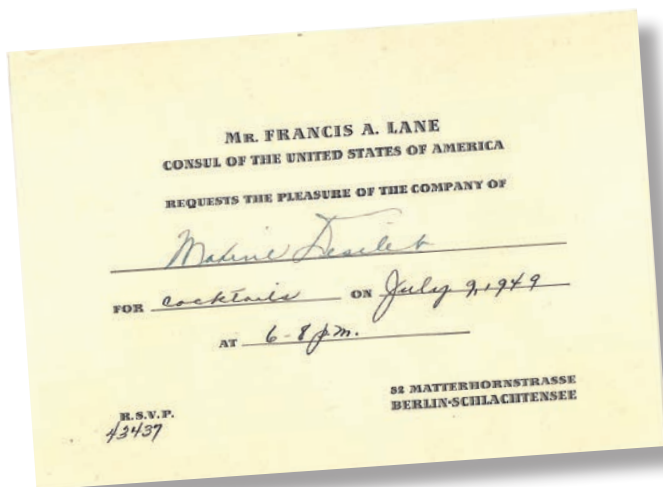
About 200 were present from all the foreign missions, and I understand it is the party of the year. Even the Russian consul and vice consul showed up, even though they hadn't sense enough to acknowledge the invitation.

Assignment Caracas: 1952-1954

Secretary to the chiefs of the political section and petroleum section, then secretary to the counselor for economic affairs

March 4, 1954

The city here is in the throes of the big conference [the Tenth Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States]. ... I will be able to go over this afternoon to hear [Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles give his speech. We also can listen to other international delegates speak with earphones, which is fascinating. Interpreters sit in booths above the speaker and each booth is marked "English-2," "French-3" so if you want English you turn a little knob in the arm of the chair to No. 2 and presto, you get it in English! The interpreters listen with earphones and speak at the same time into microphones in the language of their country, and I still don't see how they do it.



EFFICIENCY REPORT: July 22, 1949

Miss Desilet dresses well and always presents a neat appearance. She has a pleasing and cheerful personality.

—Marshall M. Vance, Supervising Consul General, Berlin

Foreign Service Annual Efficiency Report
Clerical, Technical, and Professional Personnel Other Than Officers of Career
(See FSR 1-3, Notes 10 & 11)

Name: Maxine V. Desilet, Position: Secretary, Post: Berlin, Germany
Title of position: Secretary, Position No.: , Basic salary: \$2850.00 per annum.
Local or Department appointee: Department: , Temporary increase (if any): ,
Date entered on duty at present post: May 13, 1949, Effective date of present salary: July 22, 1949
Previous posts in the Foreign Service: None
Date of birth: Aug. 28, 1918, Place of birth: Cloquet, Minn., Sex: Female
Legal residence (if American): 323 - 7th Avenue, Lewiston, Idaho
Describe the employee's proficiency in English and foreign languages:
English: ,
Special qualifications along professional, technical, or administrative lines (consular routine, coding, administration of accounts, passport, visa, protection, commercial, or economic reporting, et cetera):
Secretarial, accounting of fees, notarial desk
Special clerical qualifications (stenography, typing, accounting, reception, translator, interpreter, depositions, statistical compilations, et cetera):
Stenography, typing, accounting, reception, depositions
Physical condition:
Excellent
Describe in detail his present duties. Just what does he do? Secretary to principal officer of Consular Branch; takes dictation from Chief of Notarial & Welfare Unit; assists accountant of fees; assists in routine matters at notarial desk.
Marital status: Single, Nationality of (husband) by birth: Not applicable
Present nationality of spouse: Not applicable, Languages (he/she) speaks: Not applicable
If spouse is employed or in business or profession, give particulars: Not applicable
Number, sex, and date of birth of children and/or other dependents and whether residing 'at post': Not applicable
Name, address, and relationship of nearest relative in the United States:
A. J. Desilet (Father)
323 - 7th Avenue,
Lewiston, Idaho

EFFICIENCY REPORT: Jan 9, 1950

Miss Desilet has an average build, with pleasant facial characteristics. She dresses neatly and appropriately at all times, and presents a general cheerful attitude about the office.

—Frances Lane, American Consul

March 22, 1954

Friday night the ambassador had a reception for the delegates to the conference. They expect to be finished the end of the week. They have all decided, except Guatemala, that communism does not pay and to gang up together to be rid of it.

People in these parts think little or nothing of McCarthy—what is the general idea in Idaho? We think he is carrying the thing just quite a bit too far, and the propaganda in other countries makes us look as though we hadn't a thought for many serious things, but the worry of communism.

July 7, 1954

Was I ever flabbergasted. ... They have in mind transferring me after home leave to Rangoon, Burma. I've read the post report, and it sounds fascinating. The thought of a trip halfway around the world is stimulating as hell after three years waiting for it! There are three girls stationed here now who have been to Bangkok, and loved it and say they'd give anything for my assignment. Naturally, I've never even given Burma the slightest thought before, so it is all new to me.

Assignment Rangoon: 1955 Secretary to the ambassador

January 19, 1955

I don't think I'd be able to ever keep a job in an office like some people do for years and years as the only thing that keeps me interested in working is the traveling around to different spots. ...

I do have the sweetest boss [Ambassador Joseph C. Satterthwaite] right now—he looks like Mr. Peepers on TV—and it is always a pleasure to work for someone with brains—so many have none.

February 25, 1955

[Secretary] Dulles arrives tomorrow and I'm on duty all day. Have to go out to the plane to meet him and record all his pearls of wisdom. Then press conference. I have an engraved invitation from the President of Burma to a Garden Party also. My first

I find that people who travel around a lot—and this has helped me considerably—can take people as they come and appreciate the good things in them instead of always tearing them apart and being critical.

FORM FS-200E (REV. 3-1-52) 12-16

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
EFFICIENCY REPORT
FOREIGN SERVICE STAFF EMPLOYEES CLASSES 10 - 22

F. P. FILES

EMPLOYEE NAMED	CLASS	CLASSIFICATION TITLE OF POSITION	CLASS
DESILET, Maxine V.	S-12	Secretary	FSS-12
POST	DATE OF ARRIVAL	PERIOD COVERED BY REPORT	DATE SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT
Caracas	9/26/51	FROM: 10/1/52 TO: 11/30/52	December 1, 1952
RATED BY		REVIEWED BY	
Franklin W. Wolf (Full Signature of Rating Official)		Edwin S. Coleman (Full Signature of Reviewing Official)	
Economic Counselor (Functional Title of Rating Official)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - I CONCUR FULLY <input type="checkbox"/> - I CONCUR WITH EXCEPTIONS DISCUSSED IN ATTACHED MEMORANDUM	

READ PERSONNEL CIRCULAR NO. 98 WITH SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS

PART I - GENERAL DUTIES OF POSITION

PURPOSE: To provide the Department with a clear understanding of the type of duty actually performed by the employee including any unusual or different aspects not normally found in similar positions.

INSTRUCTIONS: List in the space below the functional title of the assignment or assignments held by the employee during the rating period and indicate whether employee served in a supervisory or subordinate position.

If the employee held more than one assignment during the rating period, indicate the number of months spent in each. If the employee had a combination of assignments, indicate the per cent of time spent on each.

ASSIGNMENT	NO. OF MONTHS OR PER CENT OF TIME	SUPERVISORY	SUBORDINATE
Secretary to Counselor for Economic Affairs	2 months		X

If the duties and responsibilities of the position indicated above were different from those normally found in such positions, describe them in a brief factual statement:--

EFFICIENCY REPORT: December 1, 1952

The conduct and deportment of this employee is outstanding and fully representative of the highest standards of the Foreign Service. She represents the best type of American young lady: sensible, stable, cheerful and loyal. Her devotion and dependability to her job is one of the strongest supports to her superior. ...

Miss Desilet could fill any position of a secretarial nature or as a competent assistant to an officer at any post. She has initiative, judgment and foresight of a high degree, which enables her to adapt herself intelligently to any problem. ... She is mature, competent in her work, stable and devoted. Her conduct within and outside the embassy shows her to be a young lady of fine background, high moral standards and sound character. Her constant cheerfulness and good humor, even under trying conditions, makes it a pleasure to work with her and to have to depend upon. She would do well in a secretarial position requiring a high degree of competence, loyalty and understanding of the basic ideals of the Foreign Service.

—Franklin W. Wolf, Economic Counselor,
Embassy Caracas

Chief of State invite. All is bedlam here in preparedness. On top of that [Member of Congress] Chester Bowles is here and Senator Margaret Chase Smith arrives Monday.

[From April 14, 2000, Cofer interview with Desilet] I went with other embassy officials to the airport to greet Dulles. He descended the stairs of the plane with 7 or 8 men, and "they were all drunk." He brought his own secretary, Phyllis. Dulles held a press conference. During that time, his secretary informed me she was in Burma as a tourist. I had no previous experience of taking

notation at meetings of this level, but me and another secretary at the embassy who had worked at an international conference in Geneva agreed to work together to handle whatever was required, without Phyllis.

It was 100 degrees outside. The meetings began with Dulles and President Ba U and many other officials set up in a large school auditorium somewhere in Rangoon. There was no air-conditioning. I took notes with a pencil and remember the sweat running off my hand. At the conclusion of the meeting, we went to the embassy to type our notes. Dulles came to the embassy as well and was walking up and down near my desk, asking about every five minutes, "Are you finished yet, girls?"

Dulles wanted to take the typed notes with him to the president's reception. I finally told Dulles we could type a lot faster if he would stop interrupting. I told him I would bring the typed notes to him at the reception. So Dulles left. We managed to finish the typing and, after freshening ourselves, we went to the reception to present the notes to Dulles. He reviewed them, nodded his approval with a smile, and shared a copy with the international press corps waiting nearby.

May 17, 1955

Last night I went to a reception and saw Helen Keller. It was quite a moving incident, and we were all thrilled to finally see someone we'd heard about all of our lives. She sat on the stage with her companion, Miss Thomson, and gave a speech. Her voice is clear enough if you were talking with her alone, but over the mike it is not effective, so Miss Thomson repeated after her. Miss Thomson herself is a wonder, and how they do it is beyond me. They both looked quite trim, and while the mayor gave a welcoming speech, Miss Thomson gave it to Miss Keller by tapping her hand. It was really a moving sight to see them, and Keller told the government people here that it was appalling the little that

Dulles wanted to take the typed notes with him to the president's reception. I finally told Dulles we could type a lot faster if he would stop interrupting.

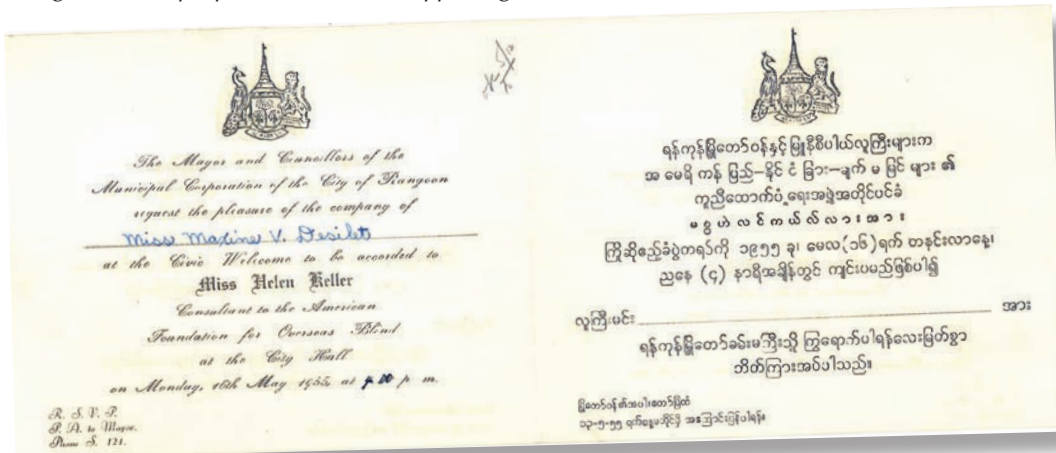
has been done to aid the blind in Burma, and after her scolding, [Prime Minister] U Nu invited her to stay in his guest house, which they are doing, with the rented air-conditioner breaking down every three hours or so.

June 2, 1955

I have found a very interesting male companion—newspaperman from Nevada—who will only be here a short time [Denver Dickerson, her future husband]. He's going back home and run for the Senate! His father used to be governor of the state. We play a lot of Scrabble, and I must say I'm no match and must pick up on my vocabulary immediately.

September 26, 1955

I find that people who travel around a lot—and this has helped me considerably—can take people as they come and appreciate the good things in them instead of always tearing them apart and being critical. Everyone doesn't have to be American, a Democrat, or Catholic, just because we are.



Resignation from the Foreign Service

In late 1955 Maxine Desilet resigned from the Foreign Service and returned to America via India, Egypt, the Holy Land, Italy and France, and then on to New York City and Washington, D.C., before arriving at her parents' home in Lewiston, Idaho. In 1956 she married Denver Dickerson. ■

Challenging Tradition

Female members of the Foreign Service of the 1950s through the 1990s break through barriers at the Department of State.

This selection of excerpts from the oral histories of three retired female Foreign Service officers—Elinor Constable, Phyllis Oakley and Mary Olmsted—brings to life the atmosphere of the Foreign Service in the second half of the 20th century. These are but a few voices from that era, but they convey the spirit and determination of the generation that witnessed and

helped open the way for women in the career Foreign Service.

We are indebted to the oral history collection developed and maintained by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (www.adst.org).

—The Editors

‘Show Me the Law...!’

ELINOR CONSTABLE

I had no particular career ambitions. My idea was to work at something that was interesting and fun. I didn’t want to be a secretary. That was the other thing women were supposed to be [in the 1950s]. ... And the notion that this was what every woman was destined to be, was nuts. I passed the written exam with flying colors. ... I would describe the process as extremely patronizing, particularly towards a woman, and subjective. ...

A month or so before we were married [her fiancé was also in the Foreign Service], I was summoned to the executive direc-

tor’s office in the Economic Bureau. The executive director in those days was a legendary figure by the name of Frances Wilson. We were all terrified of Frances, but she congratulated me on my engagement, and I was touched. My goodness, how nice.

And then she said, “When do you plan to resign, Miss Greer?”

And I said, “I don’t plan to resign.” ... No woman had ever done this in the history of the Foreign Service. I said, “You can’t force me to resign. If you want me out, you have to fire me.”

She said, “Miss Greer, you are required to resign.”

I said, “Show me the regulation. Show me the law. Where is it?”

Well, there wasn’t one. This came as a shock. I was quite prepared for her to pull out a book, and show me some regulation, and at that point I would fight it as far as I could.

There was none! It was custom, plain old custom, buttressed by two practical limitations. One, you did not have to grant maternity leave to women in those days. ... And second, there was a restriction on the books about family members working together at the same post. But we were in Washington, and I said, “This makes no sense. I am not going to be a different person after I am married. Nothing is going to change. And I am going to continue to do this job.”

We started our family right away and there was no such thing as maternity leave, so at that point I did resign. ...

[Some years later, in 1973], we returned to D.C. and I went back to work. ... Peter came home with a pink copy of a message describing the new policy about women in the Foreign Service, inviting women who had been forced out to reapply. ...

When I rejoined the Foreign Service, I had been in the Civil

Service at the GS-13 level, which in those days translated to FS-4. I was brought back as an FSR-5, and I complained about it. Not because I expected a 4, but because I'm not a doormat. I wrote a memo to the director of personnel and said, "I don't think it's appropriate; I should be a 4."

He was furious, and was reliably quoted as saying 'If she didn't want the 5, why the hell did she come back in?' ...

The first thing I did when I came back was sit on the files project. And one of the things I did on the files project was check the files of anyone who had come in laterally. And guess what? The men came in at 4 if they had been a GS-13, and I came in as a 5. ...

When the women sued the State Department back in the mid-70s—this is a hard story for me to tell, but let's be truthful for history. I don't believe in suing the State Department. I didn't like the style of the people who were in charge of the suit. ... There is a statistical pattern of discrimination which is, I think, clear and well established. And I think, by and large, it is not just unconscious, but maybe even subconscious. And we need to work on it. But I don't like the suits.

My husband urged me to join it. ... As a whole the department was doing what was comfortable. It was because these women had taken risks. You shouldn't just leave them out there to take all the flak. It was a class action suit which was filed by female Foreign Service officers led by Alison Palmer and others. The claim in the suit was that the department had discriminated against women in hiring, assigning, promoting, giving incentive awards, every step of the way. ...

I was promoted as fast as anybody in the Foreign Service. I became an ambassador, I became an assistant secretary. I was the first woman to be a principal deputy assistant secretary in EB. I was the first woman to run the international finance and development portfolio in the EB. So for me to argue that the department was discriminating against me as an individual was ridiculous. ... [Constable did join the suit, but was not eligible for the remedies the department was ultimately required to offer.]

Elinor Constable joined the State Department Foreign Service in 1957 and resigned in 1959, after her marriage to FSO Peter Consta-

ble. She rejoined the Foreign Service and served not only as ambassador to Kenya (1986-1989) but also as the first female principal deputy assistant secretary of the Economic Bureau and as assistant secretary in the Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. She retired in 1993. These excerpts are taken from interviews by Charles Stuart Kennedy beginning in 1996.

It Was the Early 1970s, and America Was Changing

PHYLLIS OAKLEY

We had decided to get married [in 1957], and it was a very complicated situation. I knew that I had to resign. I must say that at the time my consciousness was very low. Women in the Foreign Service knew that if they married they would have to resign, and we accepted that discrimination without batting an eyelash.

At the time, there weren't many vacancies for junior officers; if the department had offered me something potentially interesting and challenging, I might have felt differently about resignation. My decision to get married was undoubtedly greeted by the Personnel Office with relief because it was just one less person it had to place. ...

I never asked to see the regulations about married women; I did not object or demand a job when I got to Khartoum. I just accepted

life as it was generally lived. In fact, the department operated by custom, and not because of legal limitations; but no woman thought of challenging those customs—our consciousness was very low indeed. ... I was deeply in love, ready for marriage. I did not see myself as a victim in marrying Bob; it was the beginning of a new phase in my life.

Sometime during our tour in Beirut [1974], we began to hear that the State Department was changing in regard to women. The issue of married women in the Foreign Service had been revisited, and policies were changing—for example, women were no longer required to resign when they married. So I went to see the embassy's personnel officer and told her that in light of the policy changes being implemented and in

**Officials were striving
to advance women and to
demonstrate that they were
moving with the times.**

—Phyllis Oakley

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

PER 1

Original to be Filed in _____ Decentralized Files. FILE DESIGNATION A-728

PRIORITY UNCLASSIFIED

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : ALL FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS

FROM : JOINT STATE/AID/USIA MESSAGE DATE: JAN 22 9 05 AM '72

SUBJECT: Policy on Wives of Foreign Service Employees

REF :

The Department believes that the tradition of husband and wife teams and of wives' participation in the representational activities of a post has been one of the major strengths of the Foreign Service. It is convinced that the great majority of married couples in the Foreign Service have welcomed this unique opportunity to work together and to contribute together towards the attainment of the objectives of the Service and of the U.S. Government.

If this tradition is to continue and be strengthened there must be a recognition that participation by a Foreign Service wife in the work of a post is a voluntary act of a private person, not a legal obligation which can be imposed by any Foreign Service official or his wife.

4. Although membership in a diplomatic community and the requirements of protocol inevitably involve considerations of rank and precedence in dealing with people outside the post, this does not grant to any wife authority over, or responsibility for, the wives of other employees. The American tradition of neighborliness, personal courtesy and mutual concern is the appropriate way to be helpful and friendly without assuming a superior-subordinate relationship.

5. Mention of wives' participation or lack thereof in the types of activities discussed in this instruction may not be made in performance evaluation reports, Inspectors' efficiency reports, or training evaluations. Every rating and reviewing officer has the responsibility of insuring that employees' ratings are not affected by such considerations. However, should violations of this policy occur, remedial action will be taken.

6. The Department, USIA, and AID are instituting careful reviews of their regulations and guidelines to insure that they conform with these principles. Posts are instructed to review their own programs and guidelines to

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Until the 1970s, the evaluations for male FSOs included an assessment of their wives' involvement in representational activities and general comportment. On Jan. 22, 1972, in response to growing protest, the Department of State sent an airgram clarifying that participation by a Foreign Service spouse in the work of a post is a voluntary act and "not a legal obligation which can be imposed by any Foreign Service official or his wife."

the required social life was a full-time job. ... So I didn't reenter the workforce because I looked down on the role of a Foreign Service wife. ...

It was the early 1970s, and America was changing. There was a sexual revolution, a feminist revolution and a political revolution—thanks to Vietnam. Even the State Department changed. I found it a great advantage to be a woman at that time. Officials were striving to advance women and to demonstrate that they were moving with the times. I became the first female staff assistant on the seventh floor, where the highest-level State officials work. I was the first spouse permitted to work in her husband's embassy (in Kinshasa), and the first spokeswoman in the State Department. It was a rewarding path—pro-

viding both time for my children when they were young and a fulfilling career.

I hope young officers starting careers today will remember that most of the changes for women at the State Department would not have come about without lawsuits and a fair amount of pushing. And both men and women in the Foreign Service today should know that the tension between career and parenthood still exists, especially for women.

Would I recommend the Foreign Service career to young women today? You bet I would. In spite of the danger, sharp shards left in the breached glass ceiling and complexities of family life, I still see the Foreign Service as the most interest-

the likely event of a next assignment to Washington, D.C., I would want to apply for a return to the Foreign Service. ...

At this point, I felt I could do it—our daughter was going to enter high school and our son was going into junior high, and we would probably be in Washington for a while. So the timing for reentry was quite propitious, and soon after our return to Washington, I "came back in."

I should say one other thing about my decision. I have never denigrated the role of women in the Foreign Service; I was "wife of" for 16 years and know how difficult it is to manage a family under very trying circumstances and many moves. The management of children and a household and

ing and worthwhile career in the world.

Phyllis Oakley joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and resigned one year later to marry FSO Robert Oakley. In 1974, she rejoined the Foreign Service and rose through the ranks quickly, beginning in the Bureau of International Organizations. She retired in 1999, having served as the assistant secretary for intelligence and research. These excerpts are taken from interviews by Charles Stuart

Kennedy between 2000 and 2004 and from her essay, "Paving the Way for Women" (Inside a U.S. Embassy, Second Edition, 2005).

A Female Ambassador: What Could This Mean?

MARY OLMSTED

I had been in Washington for a long time and I was looking for an onward assignment and was getting nowhere with it when one day [in 1974] there crossed my desk a big fat memorandum asking for permission to open a new post in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. As I thumbed through the memo I thought to myself, "I wonder what poor devil we will send to the jungles of New Guinea?" But somehow it stuck in my mind. ... I began to think, "Wouldn't it be fun to open up a new post?"

So I wrote a memorandum to the Director General and sent copies of it to the director of personnel, the head of assignments, and everybody else I could think of, and said I would like to be considered to open the post, which would open as a consulate general in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Well, dead silence ensued. And several days later the Director General came into my office with my memo in hand, and he said, "You really mean this?" And I said, "Yes, I do."

So indeed he delivered. There was some protest from the desk level in the geographic bureau, but I weathered that

The government of Papua New Guinea, the people who were running the country were very puzzled when the United States sent a woman there as their first representative; they didn't know how to take it.

—Mary Olmsted

storm. The desk thought it was nonsense to send a woman to Papua New Guinea. ... That point was made very clear, and in writing, and when I got that memo I had to laugh a little bit. I said they won't dare cancel this assignment now that there is written evidence that cancellation would be on the basis of discrimination. ...

I learned considerably later, toward the end of my tour there, that the government of Papua New Guinea, the people who

were running the country, were very puzzled when the United States sent a woman there as their first representative, and they didn't know how to take it until the United States named Anne Armstrong as ambassador to the United Kingdom. They read about that in *Time* magazine, and they thought, "Well, the United States sent a woman to London, and they sent one to Port Moresby." And they felt that kind of put them in the same league as the United Kingdom, and they felt very pleased.

Then they began to say, "We, too, should have women who are able to take high positions in our government. We should train them and bring them along and give them appointments." And I think my appointment there had something to do with improving the status of women in Papua New Guinea. Their ambassador here [in 2004] was a woman.

Mary Olmsted joined the Foreign Service in 1945 and was posted to Consulate General Montreal as a junior economic analyst. During a more than 30-year career she also served in Amsterdam, Reykjavik, Vienna and New Delhi, as well as in Washington, D.C. She was assigned as the first consul general to Papua New Guinea in early 1975 and was promoted to become the first U.S. ambassador to the country after its independence from Australia in September 1975. Ms. Olmsted was the first president of the Women's Action Organization and the 1972 winner of AFSA's Christian Herter Award for intellectual courage and constructive dissent. She retired in 1979. These excerpts are taken from interviews conducted by Ann Miller Morin in 1985 and Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992. ■

Two Decades of Volunteer Support: Kirby Simon's Legacy

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is uniquely committed to expanding the opportunities for community service to people associated with U.S. embassies and consulates.

BY KATHLEEN SHEEHAN AND LIISA ECOLA

How far can \$4,395 go toward helping others? At an orphanage in Haiti, it saved lives.

Over the past two decades, the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust has given out small but valuable grants for projects all over the world. The Haitian grant, made in 2009, helped enclose and waterproof two rooms of an orphanage, and build a third. The two existing rooms had been open to the elements, and heavy rains made them useless as classrooms. When Hurricane Sandy struck Haiti

in 2012, the children in the orphanage weathered the storm in a literal sense, taking shelter in the newly constructed rooms. They all survived in the midst of terrible destruction.

The application was submitted by an Embassy Port-au-Prince team of nine people, led by a husband and wife, Cecilia and Jerome Oetgen, who volunteered at the orphanage, teaching the children and sponsoring Christmas parties. Even though the Oetgens were no longer at post by this point, their impact lived on.

Stories like this—not all so dramatic, but all meaningful—are why the J. Kirby Simon Trust persists in its mission: issuing grants to members of the extended Foreign Service community so they can give back to the places where they serve. Nobody else does what we do.

What Is the J. Kirby Simon Trust?

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust was started by John and Claire Simon in 1996 as a memorial to their son (see sidebar). Kirby Simon, a first-tour FSO, died of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning while serving at the American Institute in Taiwan in 1995. He was only 33. Anyone who knew him remembers that he had a quick wit, was wise beyond his years and had an immense interest in the demands and challenges of being an FSO.



Liisa Ecola (at left) and Kathleen Sheehan are former FSOs who served with Kirby Simon at the American Institute in Taiwan. Ms. Ecola's first tour was in Warsaw from

1992 to 1994. She currently lives in Washington, D.C., where she works at a public policy research institute. Ms. Sheehan left the State Department in 2007 after tours in three bureaus: East Asia and Pacific Affairs, European Affairs, and Population, Refugees, and Migration. She currently lives in Washington, D.C. Both are board members of the J. Kirby Simon Trust.

Each year, the trust puts out a call for applications from members of the Foreign Service community who are volunteering overseas and who could use a small grant to bolster their efforts. Ten trustees meet annually to review the grant applications. Almost all of us knew Kirby Simon personally; some of us worked with him overseas, while others knew him through John and Claire. We all have some personal appreciation for what it is to serve as a diplomat overseas. Serving on the board of trustees is truly a labor of love; we have no full-time staff and rely entirely on donations.

Dan Morris, a trustee, explains our commitment this way: “A bit of idealism, a service orientation, and a desire to make a difference in people’s lives are big motivations for most of us joining the Foreign Service. Often that attitude is hard to maintain as one faces the magnitude and reality of the problems we’re presented and the difficulty of addressing them. Kirby embodied the best of that idealism and joy of life in serving others, and it is fitting that the trust in his name has been able to do so much for so many.”

In any given year, we receive from 35 to 100 applications, and fund between one-half to two-thirds of them. We look for people who are committed to their projects through volunteering on their own time, not simply raising funds. We focus on projects that would be difficult to fund any other way—too large for the applicant to pay for themselves, but too small for most established charities.

What Has It Done?

Since making our first grants in 1997, we have disbursed \$1.4 million to 666 projects in countries around the world. Successful applicants usually request small amounts, typically under \$4,500. Some grants are for as little as \$500.

During those 19 years, the trust has funded a wide variety of projects. In just one year, we provided computers for a soup kitchen in Argentina, greenhouses for a war-torn village in Bosnia, wells for a village hit hard by a cyclone in Myanmar (Burma), personal hygiene supplies for a homeless shelter in China and lighting for a youth basketball program in Cote d’Ivoire. And that’s just A through C.

The authors of this piece have reviewed many hundreds of applications. Some are from groups of embassy or consulate staff members who want to conduct a medical outreach event, build a house or install new equipment at an orphanage where they volunteer. Other individuals use their unique talents to make a difference coaching a sports team or giving music lessons, or fill a specific need such as providing coats to the



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN AND CLAIRE SIMON

Kirby Simon in Paris in 1981.

Each year, the trust puts out a call for applications from members of the Foreign Service community who are volunteering overseas and who could use a small grant to bolster their efforts.

ON THE INSPIRATION FOR THE TRUST

Kirby started the thinking that ultimately led to the creation of the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust. During his last holiday at home in late 1994, Kirby, who had taught English as a second language in Spain after graduating from college, told us about the pro bono English-language class he was offering employees of the American Institute in Taiwan.

One day he casually mentioned that the students might find a tape recorder helpful. At the next session, each of his six students brought one. Kirby had been surprised and delighted by the response, because, as he explained, tape recorders made language teaching both easier and more effective.

He pointed out, however, that Taiwan was a developed country. In other parts of the world even simple gadgets, no matter how worthwhile, would be out of reach. Although we didn't know it at the time, that conversation was the spark for the idea that small donations could make a difference.

We had hoped that a memorial to Kirby would have an international dimension. He loved foreign languages and travel, and almost any engagement with the wider world. But without the resources of a large foundation, what could we do?

A dear friend, Herbert Hansell (who would serve on

the board until his death in May 2015), offered to help us explore the problem. Herb, who had served as legal adviser to the State Department, was then a senior partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Jones Day, which has a distinguished international practice. Herb and his wife Jeanne invited us to dinner with some of their close friends—all retired ambassadors and their spouses—to discuss the great need for help in so many areas abroad, and the endless pitfalls for the inexperienced and ignorant in the effort to give such help.

The takeaway from their very candid views was clear: corruption in many of the neediest countries was hard for “do-gooders” to avoid. The pitfalls and possibilities for missteps were as likely as a pessimistic imagination would suggest.

But Herb's guests also spoke with admiration of the volunteer activities performed by many at post. Those people spoke the language of the country and knew the turf. Obviously, they didn't give their time to causes unless they believed in them. They might not be able to cure river blindness or malaria, but they could improve the local school, clinic, women's shelter, orphanage or playground.

That became our answer, as well. Help to the helpers!

—John and Claire Simon

elderly. We have conferred awards on ambassadors and entry-level officers, specialists and nurses, employees and spouses, American and local employees.

These grants have helped both our applicants and, more importantly, the groups with which they work. One of our 2015 grants funded an embassy group in Abuja, composed of both Americans and Nigerians, that provides English lessons to children and adults who have left their homes due to persecution and poverty, as well as to those who have fled Boko Haram's destruction. Their lack of English relegates them to very menial jobs, if any, so the grant funds simple items: tables to sit at and books about topics relevant to the students' lives.

FSO Althea Cawley-Murphee sums up her experience with the trust like this: “Teaching English classes was one of the most

important parts of my experience in Abuja. Serving at a high-threat post can be difficult, and our time away from the office can be rather monotonous. Getting off compound and working with people far outside the social classes I typically interacted with at work made a huge difference in giving my experience in Abuja a strong sense of purpose.”

Dana Cunliffe, an assistant community liaison officer, explains how volunteering with the same group affected her: “English teaching has allowed me to interact with and learn from Nigerians who have experienced great suffering. This experience has expanded my view of the world, and I am not the same person I was before I began teaching.”

We made another grant in 2015 to Quito Cares, a highly regarded community action group that was founded in 2008 by

Since making our first grants in 1997, we have disbursed \$1.4 million to 666 projects in countries around the world.



MERCEDES PALACIOS

The J. Kirby Simon Fund awarded \$820 for the project English for Children and Young At-Risk People in Rivas, Nicaragua. Funds were used to purchase English teaching materials. Shown here are students with an injured dog adopted by the class. Students in the program learn English and serve their community.

several Foreign Service spouses. At the group's request, the trust provided \$4,200 to the Fundación Jonathan, which provides medical support and food for low-income people. The grant allowed the local organization to purchase an industrial oven to bake bread on a daily basis for people in need of sustenance. As grant writer Erzsebet Best-Pitlu explains, "The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust helped me continue sharing our values in the world that is contributing to the human spirit; and it made possible not only doing my part, but doing my best."

Why Does It Matter?

This trust is unique: It is the only organization of its kind committed to expanding the opportunities for professional fulfillment and community service to people associated with U.S. embassies and consulates. We support individuals and groups who are already willing to use part of their own time and energy to extend their reach. We help foster cooperation among post staff to increase the numbers of people who volunteer, whether they are members of the Foreign Service, other American and local staff, or family members. In many cases, these grants have facilitated long-term relationships between embassies and consulates and local charitable organizations—relationships that might otherwise end when the lead volunteer leaves post.

As trustees, we are reminded over and over of the hardships so many endure around the globe. Many of the applications are heartbreaking, addressing the combined effects of grinding poverty with attitudes that disadvantage the most vulnerable people—the disabled, unwed mothers, children and refugees. One

poignant phrase came from an applicant several years ago in describing the project she hoped to fund: "I assure you, the need is real."

The reminder that such small amounts of funding can make such big differences is like an annual injection against cynicism. None of us can fully solve these problems, but each of us can do something, however small.

What Can We Do?

As the trust looks forward, we are making changes that we hope will continue our work into the next generation. We now have a Facebook page and are updating our website, www.kirbysimontrust.org.

Given that we can accomplish so much with so little, donations of any size are graciously welcomed. We are always happy to answer questions about the work of the trust via emails sent to kirbysimontrust@gmail.com.

Applications for our 20th grant cycle are due on April 1. Guidelines for applicants are available at www.kirbysimontrust.org.

We are honored to be part of an organization that has created something meaningful from an untimely death. As trustee Colette Marcellin puts it, "The Simons found the wisdom and strength to respond to their tragedy with this beautiful gift of a trust. This gift—both their legacy and Kirby's legacy—continues to help so many people throughout the world." ■

Extending the American Revolution Overseas: Foreign Aid, 1789–1850

Foreign assistance is part of America's cultural DNA, fostered by the country's revolutionary heritage of a commitment to human rights and individual liberties.

BY JOHN SANBRAILO

Modern analyses of U.S. foreign assistance typically describe it as a post-World War II innovation that began with the Marshall Plan and President Harry Truman's Point Four aid program in the late 1940s. Following the lead of international relations theorist Hans Morgenthau, many practitioners believe that foreign aid arose as an instrument of Cold War diplomacy, and that aid as we know it might not now exist without the Cold War.

This article presents an alternative view, expanding on an article by Glenn Rogers, "A Long-Term Perspective on U.S. Foreign Development Cooperation" (May 2010 *FSJ*). Foreign aid is deeply rooted in American history, and has evolved over more than 200 years to improve the lives of hundreds of millions of people throughout the globe while also supporting vital U.S. interests.



John Sanbrailo is executive director of the Pan American Development Foundation, an affiliate of the Organization of American States. A former FSO with USAID, he served as mission director in Ecuador, Peru, Honduras and El Salvador, retiring with the rank of Career Minister in 1997. Mr. Sanbrailo is currently working on a history of foreign assistance.

Foreign assistance reflects what historian Gordon Wood identifies in his book *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (Penguin, 2011) as a fundamental element of the country's revolutionary tradition: the desire to spread democracy and development overseas. It is part of the country's cultural DNA, fostered by its unique revolutionary heritage of a commitment to human rights and individual liberties. Aid expresses the nation's sense of a universal mission to nurture freedom and prosperity in other countries, a mission that has regularly been an integral part of U.S. foreign policy purposes.

The desire to share the principles of the American Revolution with other countries was driven not only by diplomats and government officials, but by missionaries, traders, educators, scientists, agriculturalists, academics, progressive reformers, civil society groups, business leaders and the military. These early undertakings were similar to aid programs in recent decades, offering useful comparisons.

Earliest Initiatives

The Founding Fathers were, above all, what we might call "development philosophers." The writings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton explore how societies move toward greater liberty and progress. Franklin's *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind and Peopling of Countries*, etc., published in 1751, outlined one of the first comprehensive development theories. In it, he describes how

the interests of rich countries are enhanced by promoting progress in their poorer territories. These ideas have endured to this day as a central pillar of foreign aid policy.

Works such as Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* and *Autobiography*, Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* embody fundamental principles that have shaped U.S. approaches to the world for more than two centuries. They are often incorporated in modern foreign assistance legislation without anyone ever realizing their origins. The founders established institutions to advance liberty, equality, representative government and the pursuit of happiness that continue to influence how Americans view international development and their role in the world.

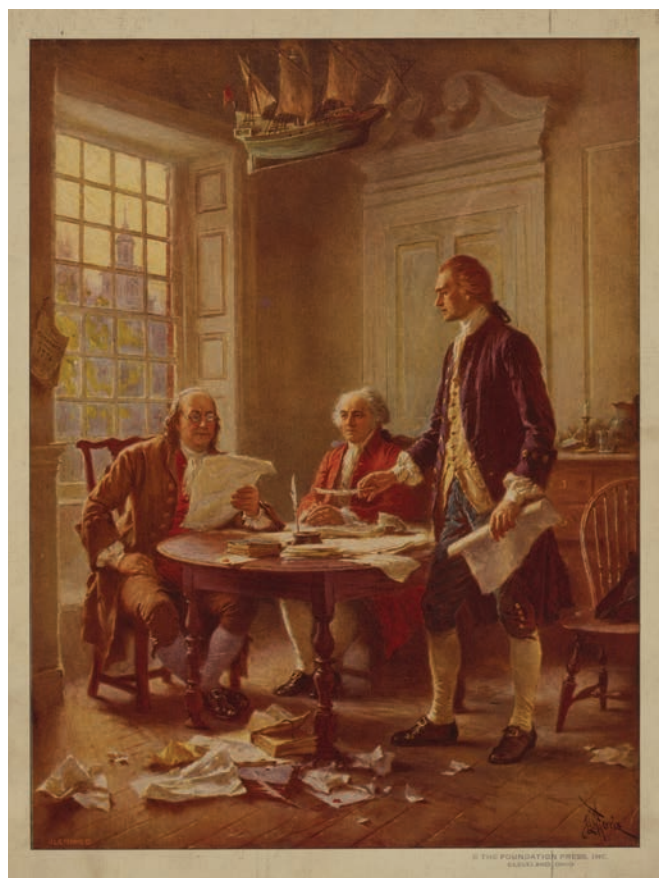
One of the earliest examples of American promotion of democracy overseas was the collaboration in Paris between Jefferson and General Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, in drafting the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in 1789. This historic document marked the beginnings of the French Revolution and was greatly influenced by the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the American Declaration of Independence. Jefferson's belief that "this ball of liberty will roll round the world" was reflected in his proposals to spread "republican principles" to Russia, Poland, Greece and the emerging Latin American nations. In more recent years, they are seen in U.S. support for the Arab Spring and democratic transitions throughout the world.

From his first encounters with Native Americans in what were then sovereign nations in the western region of North America, Jefferson advised: "We desire above all things, brother, to instruct you in whatever we know ourselves. We wish you to learn all our arts and to make you wise and wealthy." He instructed his secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to arrange smallpox vaccinations for Indian tribes along the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition, expressing attitudes toward traditional people that would evolve into foreign assistance over the decades to come.

Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton supported aid to Saint Domingue (now Haiti) to address the consequences of the struggle for independence of that Caribbean island. Thousands of refugees fled to the United States in 1792 and 1793. Their plight led the U.S. Congress to establish a relief fund, thereby setting one of the earliest precedents for aid to foreign citizens. Today the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration carries out similar initiatives to ease the suffering of uprooted people around the world and integrate humanitarian principles into U.S. foreign policy.

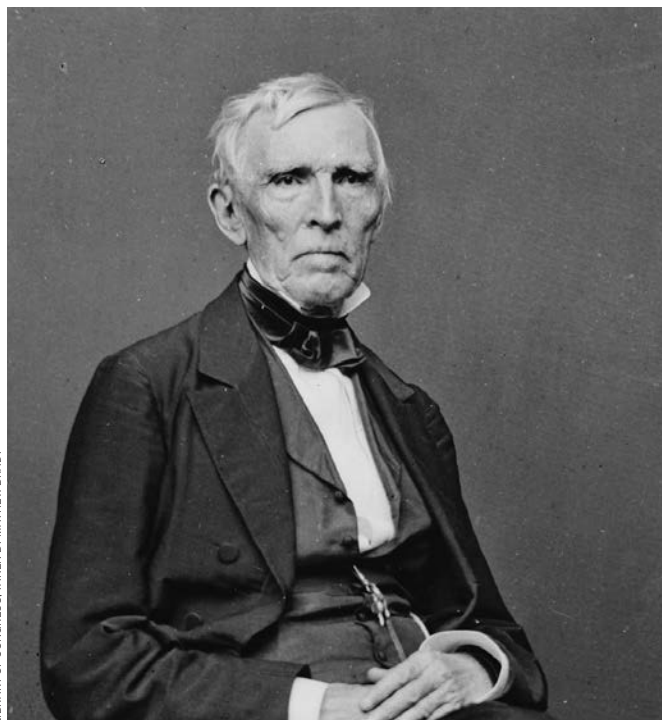
From 1798 to 1801, President John Adams and Haitian leader

Jefferson's belief that "this ball of liberty will roll round the world" was reflected in his proposals to spread "republican principles" to Russia, Poland, Greece and the emerging South American nations.



Benjamin Franklin (at left), John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (standing) review a draft of the Declaration of Independence.

Toussaint L'Ouverture forged diplomatic ties that allowed Americans to support the creation of the world's first Black Republic. As detailed in *Diplomacy in Black and White* (University of Georgia Press, 2014), the United States provided the revolutionaries with economic assistance, arms and naval backing. As the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat dispatched to Saint Domingue,



John J. Crittenden (1787-1863) was the 17th governor of Kentucky and served twice as U.S. Attorney General. He represented the state in the U.S. Congress and strongly supported an "Appeal to the People of the Nation" to contribute to the relief effort following the Great Potato Famine in Ireland.

Dr. Edward Stevens played a crucial role in advising L'Ouverture and mobilizing aid from the Adams administration. This cooperation was of great strategic importance in bringing forth the new nation of Haiti, upholding American democratic ideals and slowly altering the Atlantic region's discourse on slavery and race. It also opened markets for U.S. trade and undermined French interests, leading to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

Seeds planted around the world by the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and its Bill of Rights would slowly grow throughout the 19th century. Numerous Americans conspired with Latin American rebels in their plans to liberate South America as a means of developing the continent and expanding commercial opportunities. Foreign writers pointed to Benjamin Franklin and George Washington as models for promoting economic progress and democratic leadership. They regularly cited Franklin's declaration that America's cause "is the cause of all mankind."

Extending the American Revolution Overseas

Even during the initial decades of the 19th century, when U.S. attention focused largely on continental expansion and consolidation of the federal system of government, foreign technical assistance that is similar to what we know today was undertaken. For example, one of the wealthiest, most cosmopolitan figures of the period, Joel Poinsett from Charleston, South Carolina, traveled to Russia in 1806 and 1807, advising Czar Alexander I on economic

and agricultural improvements, assessing that country's natural resources and advocating freedom for the serfs. In 1811, President James Madison called for an "enlarged philanthropy" in dealing with the revolutionary events "developing themselves among the great communities which occupy the southern portion of our hemisphere and extending into our own neighborhood."

As the first U.S. diplomat to serve in Chile (1810-1814), Poinsett helped that country prepare its constitution and develop plans for its national government. He conducted training courses on the Bill of Rights and promoted agricultural production, while leading local troops fighting for Chile's independence from Spain. As minister to Mexico (1825-1829), Poinsett used Masonic lodges to build greater awareness of democratic practices and governance, activity comparable to civil society development programs supported today by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy. Admittedly, Poinsett exceeded his instructions to promote U.S. goodwill and trade relations which demonstrates the tension between the idealist and realist approaches to American foreign policy that continues to this day.

Other Americans traveled to South America to aid its wars of independence, encourage trade and render humanitarian assistance, often remaining there afterward to advance national progress. In 1812, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to ship flour to earthquake victims in Venezuela. The flour was delivered by diplomat Alexander Scott, who was instructed to highlight that this aid was "strong proof of the friendship and interest which the United States...has in their welfare...and to explain the mutual

advantages of commerce with the United States."

In 1819, at the request of President James Monroe, Congress appropriated funds for an even more ambitious overseas nation-building effort, providing \$100,000 to the American Colonization Society for settlement of freed blacks to Liberia. Historian Daniel Walker Howe considers this "one of the most grandiose schemes of social engineering ever entertained in the United States." Led



J. R. Poinsett

Joel R. Poinsett (1779-1851) was Secretary of War and America's first diplomat to serve in Chile.

by Bushrod Washington, the nephew of President George Washington and a Supreme Court justice, and other prominent figures like Henry Clay, the ACS obtained funds from private donors and later from the Virginia legislature and other states to establish Liberia, which led to its independence in 1847 and to Africa's first democratic republic.

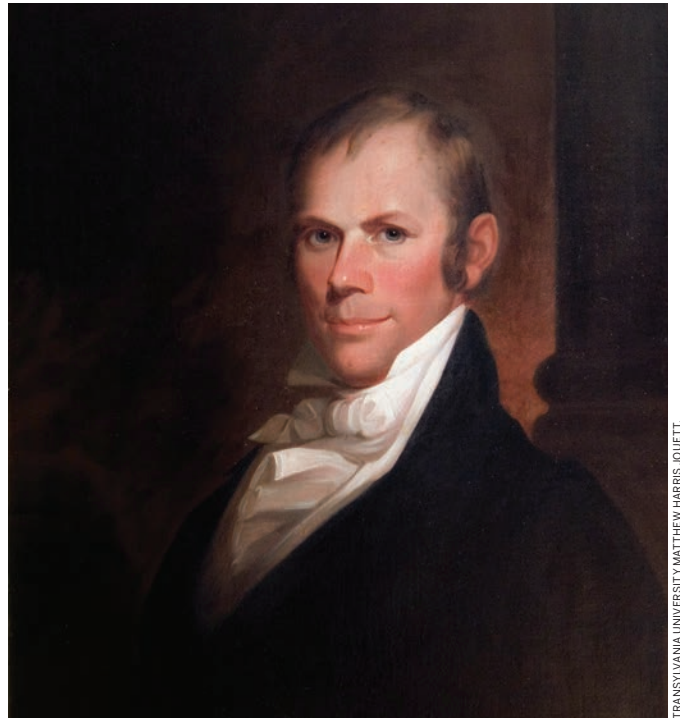
Liberia and Haiti were unique in the 19th century, and U.S. assistance played a crucial role in helping to create both countries. Although both were largely ignored in subsequent policies, these republics contributed to weakening the institution of slavery and slowly changing the debate on race relations by demonstrating that blacks were capable of self-government, setting the stage for 20th-century African independence movements. Such examples illustrate that foreign assistance can often have unintended outcomes.

The first nongovernmental organizations to work overseas were incorporated in the 1810s, spurred in part by the patriotic fervor that followed the War of 1812. Among them was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the aforementioned ACS and the American Bible Society, all three early precedents for private actions to transfer democratic ideals and new knowledge to other lands. While their primary aims were evangelizing and promoting Bible studies, they also encouraged democratic values, education reforms, community development and health projects. Peter Parker in China, Isaac Wheelwright in Ecuador and Charles Jefferson Harrah in Brazil all carried out such activities. To cite just one example: in the 1830s and 1840s, Parker introduced Western medicine into China, trained hundreds of doctors and developed the Medical Missionary Society of China—while also serving as *chargé d'affaires* of the U.S. legation and facilitating treaty negotiations with the Qing Dynasty.

Some of the first translations into Spanish of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights entered Latin America thanks to New England merchants and missionaries, through instruction they provided on democratic practices. Together with local leaders, they translated the *Federalist Papers* and the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* into Spanish to use in newly established public schools. These teachers were not unlike today's Peace Corps Volunteers, symbolizing the strong spirit of solidarity and shared humanity that has influenced foreign assistance from its inception.

A Pan-American Vision

In the 1820s, Representative Henry Clay became one of the most ardent champions of United States cooperation with the newly emerging countries of South America. In his speeches



TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY/MATTHEW HARRIS JOUETT.

Henry Clay (1777-1852) was renowned in the Western Hemisphere as a strong proponent of pan-Americanism.

advocating diplomatic recognition of these new nations, Clay proposed an “American System” of independent, democratic nations peacefully interconnected by trade and mutual cooperation, which he saw as important for national growth and prosperity. Historians see Clay as articulating the first comprehensive vision of international development that would later be seen in the creation of the Inter-American System, the Pan American Union, the Good Neighbor Policy, the Organization of American States, the Alliance for Progress and similar regional initiatives.

Most presentations of the period highlight the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, often discussing it as the birth of American imperialism. Clay's positive vision of hemispheric integration and his proposal of a policy of “good neighborhood” are often overlooked or dismissed as self-serving moves to support his political ambitions. His statements on the “spiritual links and great destiny the two Americas could share by building together” are similarly positive, even though they were motivated, at least in part, by a desire to end Spanish trade restrictions and hasten U.S. expansion into Texas. While his plan for hemispheric cooperation is not well known, Clay is one of the very few among the pantheon of leaders of the Americas who is honored with a bust in the historic OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Inspired by Clay's pan-Americanism, William Wheelwright from Newburyport, Massachusetts, was the first U.S. diplomat in Guayaquil, Ecuador (1825-1829), importing the country's first steam engine and helping develop local industries. He later became the leading steamship and railroad pioneer in South America, implementing the earliest regional integration projects.



A United Nations peacekeeper helps locals move American food aid in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

principal U.S. cities, dubbed “hellenophiles” and led by figures like Edward Everett and Mathew Carey, raised funds to send food, supplies, volunteers and cash to the distressed Greek population. This assistance included agricultural tools and support for rebuilding homes and schools, not unlike similar modern responses for other causes.

He launched steamship travel along the Pacific coast, introduced the telegraph, built a transcontinental railroad connecting Chile and Argentina in the 1850s, and initiated mining projects and community improvements.

Wheelwright’s brother Isaac was an education adviser in Ecuador and Chile, establishing the first public schools for girls there. These technical assistance and investment initiatives began a process of translating Clay’s vision into action and were forerunners of modern cooperation programs. William Wheelwright is unique among American diplomats and entrepreneurs in being honored by a statue in Valparaíso that was erected and paid for by contributions from the Chilean people.

Humanitarian Assistance & Technical Advice

Building on the precedents of aiding Haitian refugees and Venezuelan earthquake victims, individuals and the private sector contributed generously to alleviate the suffering caused by humanitarian crises, famines and natural disasters in other lands. During the 1820s, “Greek Fever” seized the American public, which mobilized to aid that country’s struggle for freedom from the Ottoman Turks. Citizens’ committees in

No event in the first half of the 19th century led to such widespread American giving as the Great Potato Famine in Ireland. In *American Philanthropy Abroad* (Rutgers University

Press, 1963), Merle Curti cites this relief effort as “the first truly national organized campaign for helping the distressed in foreign lands.” Even President James Polk made a personal contribution, although he did not favor federal aid. Other prominent Americans such as Vice President George Mifflin Dallas and Senator John J. Crittenden, and business leaders like Amos Lawrence, strongly supported an “Appeal to the People of the Nation” to contribute.

In 1847-1848 alone, more than a million dollars was raised, including \$800 from the Cherokee and Choctaw nations, to ship emergency food and other relief to Ireland. With great fanfare vessels regularly departed from major U.S. ports, with the government providing some naval shipping support—an early example of a public-private partnership.

As noted in Kendall Birr and Merle Curti’s *Prelude to Point Four: American Technical Missions Overseas* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), the U.S. government began responding to a growing number of technical assistance requests from foreign

The first nongovernmental organizations to work overseas were incorporated in the 1810s, spurred in part by the patriotic fervor that followed the War of 1812.

countries starting in the 1830s. International visitors regularly traveled to the United States to observe the accomplishments of the self-taught engineers who constructed the Erie Canal and other infrastructure projects. The development of steamboats and railroads, and the newly invented telegraph (the Internet of its day), attracted increasing attention. By the late 1840s, Americans were already building railroads and telegraph lines in foreign lands, such as George Washington Whistler in Russia and the initiation of the Panama Railroad, an engineering marvel of the era. Rapidly increasing agricultural production and the machinery of Cyrus McCormick were generating frequent requests for agricultural experts.

In addition, foreigners viewed with great interest the American public school system and recruited advisers who could replicate it overseas. They traveled here to observe new ideas about penology, care for the insane and abused women, and creation of voluntary associations. Many were intrigued by the American experiment in representative democracy and wondered how it might be established elsewhere. By 1850, Minister George Bancroft was reporting from London that the U.S. had surpassed Britain in commerce, manufacturing and wealth. World leaders saw the U.S. as a growing center of discovery and as a provider of knowledge and techniques that would accelerate economic and social progress. Such initiatives would further expand after the Civil War.

History Matters

Modern aid programs are part of a tradition that dates back to the founding of the republic. During the six decades following independence, Americans advocated international engagement and wrote about how it would benefit the United States and other nations. They encouraged initiatives to share with the world the fruits of the American Revolution, although trade expansion and other national interests were also fundamental concerns. While many have forgotten Henry Clay's proposal for Western Hemisphere collaboration, his vision lived on to inspire



The USAID logo we know today bears a distinct resemblance to the Jefferson Peace Medal, as shown here. Peace and friendship medals minted in silver by the U.S. government were an aspect of diplomacy with Native Americans and others during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Secretary of State James G. Blaine to help create the Inter-American System in 1890. That led, in turn, to the establishment of the Pan-American Union, the first modern multilateral organization for regional cooperation and development and a model for the future League of Nations, United Nations and Organization of American States.

Indeed, many of the elements that we recognize as modern foreign aid emerged during this period: congressionally appropriated funds; humanitarian assistance and food shipments for victims of

conflict, famine and natural disasters; support to revolutionary regimes and new nations; technical advice for improving education, medical care and agriculture; the establishment of NGOs operating overseas; the dispatch of volunteers to foreign lands; support for industrial and infrastructure development; public-private partnerships; and promotion of democracy and what we now call “nation-building.”

Such a perspective may help to explain how President George W. Bush could enter office opposed to overseas nation-building, yet subsequently embark on the most ambitious such efforts in American history in Iraq and Afghanistan while achieving the largest increase in foreign assistance since the Marshall Plan. Or why President Barack Obama, in his Second Inaugural Address in January 2013, echoed Thomas Jefferson in proclaiming: “We will support democracy from Asia to Africa; from the Americas to the Middle East; because our interests and our conscience compel us to act on behalf of those who long for freedom. We must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of injustice. Our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth.”

As Abraham Lincoln famously observed, “We cannot escape history.” Foreign assistance is not merely a temporary aberration or a response to immediate international crises. It has been a fundamental part of U.S. engagement with the world and defines who we are as a people. If Americans stopped trying to improve and democratize the world, they would stop being American. ■

FS PERSONNEL EVALUATIONS, 1925-1955: A Unique View

The evolution of personnel evaluations at State is reflected in the dossier of Frances Elizabeth Willis, the first woman to make a career of the Foreign Service.

BY NICHOLAS J. WILLIS

As most *Foreign Service Journal* readers know, Employee Evaluation Reports for all U.S. Foreign Service personnel are signed by the rating officer, the rated employee, a reviewing officer and the panel chairperson. Further, the EER program has been vetted and fine-tuned by the Government Accountability Office in 2010 and again in 2013.

But as the career of Frances Elizabeth Willis, the third woman to join the Foreign Service—and my aunt—illustrates, the process wasn't always so transparent and objective. Frances Willis entered the Service in 1927, serving for 37 years until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 65 in 1964.

Her personnel evaluations started in 1927 with grades and



Nicholas J. Willis is the author of Frances Elizabeth Willis (2013), a self-published biography of his aunt, the first woman to make a career of the U.S. Foreign Service. After retirement from a career working with military radar systems and their countermeasures, he devoted himself to

collecting her papers and relevant material to document her life. This article is an outgrowth of that effort. Frances Willis' biography is available by emailing ncwillis@msn.com.

comments from instructors in the Foreign Service School (now the Foreign Service Institute), and ended in 1955 when she was evaluated for the last time, one month before she was promoted to Career Minister. Data for Lucile Atcherson, the first woman to enter the Foreign Service, has also become available for 1925 and 1926, so this article covers those two additional years, as well.

As H. L. Calkin documents in his 1978 book, *Women in the Department of State*, these female pioneers were actively discouraged from entering or staying in the Service. Just six women were accepted between 1922 and 1941, and only two stayed. Frances Willis was the first of these, and the evaluations in her dossier illustrate the gender-biased procedures used to hold her back professionally. More positively, they also remind us of the extent to which the State Department personnel evaluation system has evolved since then.

While many sources in the Foreign Service and Department of State generated personnel evaluations during this period, one element of the system remained constant: the Annual Efficiency Report submitted to the department by the employee's onsite supervisor. Eventually the AER evolved into the EER, the paramount metric in the current system, but between 1925 and 1946 it was only one of many inputs considered. It became significantly more important after World War II.

Personnel evaluations generated during this period changed

frequently and took various forms: narrative, numerical and even multiple-choice. Here is a chronology of their evolution.

Foreign Service School, circa 1928

The school instructed all newly commissioned Foreign Service officers, rated “FSO (unclassified),” in the elements of consular work: passports, visas, accounts, indexes, invoices, etc. The instructors conducted a written exam in each area, and then numerically rated the student on mental keenness, practical judgment, effectiveness and general attitude. They then attached comments to their rating, and the chief instructor ranked members of each class. This process was not unlike public school grading in the first half of the 20th century.

Gender bias reared its ugly head here, at the very beginning of Frances Willis’ career. Her passports instructor stated: “Miss Willis showed excellent judgment and other qualities, which in a man would have called for a higher rating.”

Informal Period, 1925–1933

Four personnel evaluation reports appeared during this period: the Annual Efficiency Report, a special Inspection Report, an Efficiency Rating and a department-generated report. The AER was a one-page, narrative report generated by the onsite supervisor, describing the officer’s duties and performance. It usually ended with a comment about the officer’s suitability for retention, reassignment, promotion, etc. But occasionally it consisted of a simple, handwritten note, especially if the supervisor was a political appointee.

The American Foreign Service Inspection Report was the only structured format of the four. And despite its title, it was only used to evaluate consular officers. A multiple-topic, multiple-page, narrative document, it was written by a consul general who had been detailed as a Foreign Service inspector to evaluate a consular employee at post. Sections of the document addressed personality, mode of living, contacts, cooperation, standing and professional attributes, the last taking up two pages. It ended with the inspector’s opinion about the officer’s suitability to continue in the consular service or transfer into the diplomatic service.

The third format, the annual Efficiency Rating, was also generated by the department’s Consular Service. But it could hardly be called a report, since it consisted of short, unsigned comments—sometimes just one word each—about the officer’s performance in assigned duties: passports, shipping, notariats, etc., as viewed from the department. Following the comments were a date and rating—average, high average, good, very good and none.

In my aunt’s case, these comments appeared at random places

The annual Efficiency Rating could hardly be called a report, since it consisted of short, unsigned comments—sometimes just one word each—about the officer’s performance.

in her dossier, including handwritten notations on the bottom and back of her 1928 Foreign Service School record. But perhaps it didn’t make any difference where the reports were filed, because none of these pioneering women were expected to last very long. Fortunately, these haphazard evaluations faded away in the early 1930s, though they were later resurrected in a more structured format. None of these reports indicated whether the officer had read them.

Little is known about the fourth State Department-generated report, in this case about Lucile Atcherson, the first woman to join the Foreign Service. Although Marilyn Greenwald, Lucile’s granddaughter, obtained Atcherson’s dossier and quoted narrative evaluations of her performance as a third secretary in the first chapter of a biography of Lucile’s daughter, she did not cite the actual documents. One quotation appears to have resembled the AER, while the department-generated quotation seems to have been an early version of a Rating Sheet—the next stage in the evolution of personnel evaluations.

Rating Sheet Era, 1933–1946

The State Department adopted a two-year promotion process, using a selection board consisting of officers senior to the rated officer. After the board convened, it updated a Rating Sheet, the essential document for promotion, and permanently filed it in the officer’s dossier. This consisted of a one-paragraph summary of material in the dossier for the current, two-year period under review.

The material consisted of memos, letters, notes, newspaper articles and evaluation reports from the department and the onsite supervisor. Apparently, the one-paragraph summary was generated by a member of the current board, but no description of the process was included in the dossier. Then the summarizer (more accurately, a redactor) would assign a rating of excellent, very good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory and add the entry to previous paragraphs in the Rating Sheet. These paragraphs were dated, but neither signed nor initialed.

The redactor, in a special 1946 Rating Sheet review, gave her a mere “very good” rating, stating that Class III was high enough for her “because of her sex.”

This process made the board’s job much easier, because everything they needed to know about the candidate was summarized in the new paragraph. They could immediately tell whether the candidate was improving or slipping. But it also opened the door for mischief if the anonymous redactor were biased or had a personal ax to grind. In Frances Willis’ case, for example, a 1932 entry in her dossier reported that as a third secretary in Stockholm, she had assumed *chargé* duties, the first time a woman had done so. That report was indeed filed—but inside Frances’ 1928 Foreign Service School record, where it was overlooked by the redactor, who also ignored two press articles reporting the event that had been properly filed. As a result, that event was omitted from the first (1933) entry in her Rating Sheet, which assigned her an unimpressive “Satisfactory” rating.

Onsite, supervisor-generated AERs continued, virtually unchanged, during this period. However, the department-generated Efficiency Ratings returned as a short paragraph, covering both consular and diplomatic tasks, now with a rating (E [Excellent], VG [Very Good], S [Satisfactory], U [Unsatisfactory]) added, just like the Rating Sheet. They were not signed, but some bore reviewer initials. And in my aunt’s case, they often seemed to influence Rating Sheet deliberations more than AERs.

Major Changes, Good and Bad: 1946–1955

In response to abuses by Rating Sheet redactors, Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew and Dean Acheson, his successor in the position (the equivalent of today’s Deputy Secretary of State), mandated major changes in the evaluation process starting in 1946. These included abolishing the redactor’s rating on the Rating Sheet and transferring it to the Annual Efficiency Report, so that the onsite supervisor became responsible for rating the officer, just as is currently done. They also elevated the AER to major—not paramount, but major—importance in the promotion process.

While no directive is available defining these changes, consider the following events: Under Secretary Grew had appointed Frances Willis as his assistant in 1945 and given her an excellent

review, immediately promoting her to Class III. Acheson subsequently gave her an outstanding review. Then they discovered that the redactor, in a special 1946 Rating Sheet review triggered by that promotion, gave her a mere “Very Good” rating, stating that Class III was high enough for her “because of her sex.” Frances’ next AER included—for the first time—a rating at the end of it, and the subsequent Rating Sheet entry had none.

The department-generated Efficiency Ratings—now signed—continued, along with a periodic Inspector’s Efficiency Report, which added 16 questions to be answered by the inspected officer (e.g., “What is your ultimate goal in the Foreign Service?” “Are you in debt?”).

New forms started to appear, as well. One was a seven-page Position Description with a two-page, 1,100-word set of instructions requiring a detailed description of duties, including the officer’s estimate—within a 5-percent margin of error—quantifying such factors as time taken, successes and adverse consequences for each duty.

A one-page, department-generated, Annual End-User Summary Report also appeared, with a narrative evaluation similar to that in the AER. It ended with a new numerical rating system, consisting of six boxes and the requirement to check one box. The boxes ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 6, with 6 defined as “... superior in every respect, denoting the highest degree of resourcefulness and initiative, with no recognizable room for possible improvement”—a high bar, indeed.

The AER, which remained nearly unchanged for 16 years (apart from minor revisions in 1933 and 1943), was massively revised and expanded in 1949. Not only did it grow from one to six pages, but it now had four parts. Part II alone listed 13 factors to be graded in three categories: superior, satisfactory and not up to standard. These included versatility in knowledges (sic) and skills, such as accuracy, productivity, trustworthiness and reliability.

Part II concluded with narrative comments from the reviewer, similar to the old AER. Part III was a short section grading language skills, and Part IV listed activities to be graded, including political, economic, consular, etc., much like the Foreign Service cones that showed up at this time.

Part I was the oddest section of all, consisting of 31 groups of statements descriptive of FSO performance. The reviewing officer was required to underline the most descriptive and cross out the least descriptive. Here are typical examples:

A) He will probably not go much further in the Service.

B) He demands a high degree of efficiency from those associated with him.

- C) He is not active in seeking desirable contacts.
- D) He is imaginative.
- E) He is probably one of our future Career Ministers.

- A) He has a good sense of humor.
- B) He is adaptable.
- C) He shows little taste in his clothes.
- D) He is inclined to be pompous.

This evaluation process is flawed on three counts. First, the statements in each group are binary, either good or bad, and usually very good or very bad, which significantly skews the scoring. Second, the statements have very little correlation with each other: What does a sense of humor have to do with taste in clothes? Third, weighing answers between groups is entirely subjective: Is “probably one of our future Career Ministers” twice as good as “adaptable”? Four times as good? The saving grace was that narrative comments were allowed to remain.

In my aunt’s case, this new format appeared when she was assigned as first secretary/consul in the political section at the London embassy and had received excellent reviews. While she received an anonymous 89 score (out of 100, or a Very Good rating) on Parts I–IV, the Part II narrative section, written by Minister-Counselor Julius Holmes and approved by Ambassador L.W. Douglas, recommended her for appointment as a chief of mission.

One explanation for this odd addition is that while the number of State Department employees had stayed relatively constant (1,000–2,000) between 1900 and 1940, it rapidly rose to more than 10,000 during World War II, and topped 16,000 by 1950. With too much time on their hands, these bureaucrats created tasks to keep themselves busy, including massively revising and expanding existing reports and procedures and issuing new requirements.

Fortunately, order was restored in 1952 when the AER was totally revised and renamed “Efficiency Report.” It now had six parts: Parts I–V numerically graded the employee, using the new six-point grading system, on duties performed, personal qualities, factor analysis (30 factors about knowledge, performance and personality traits) and language, followed by a single, overall rating number.

Part VI, Summary Comments and Recommendations, covered 15 topics such as attitude, executive ability, physical fitness, adverse factors, etc., followed by summary comments, all in narrative form. In addition, there were boxes asking if a review panel was used and if the report was discussed with the officer under review—obviously desirable, but not manda-

This process made the board’s job much easier, because everything they needed to know about the candidate was summarized in the new paragraph. But it also opened the door for mischief.

tory steps in the evaluation. This format continued up to 1955, when Frances Willis received her final evaluation, one month before she was appointed Career Minister. She was promoted to Career Ambassador in 1962.

A Work in Progress

Frances Willis never complained about discrimination during her Foreign Service career. In fact, she said just the opposite in a 1951 speech to the National Council of Women in Finland: “I can say to you with complete honesty that since the day when I entered the Foreign Service I have been given equal treatment with the men in the Service. I have heard it said, of course, that there is discrimination against women who wish to enter the Service. All I can say is that my personal experience does not bear that out.”

It is likely that my aunt never reviewed her dossier, which contained many negative gender bias comments over the first 20 years of her career. Even if she had done so, she would probably have simply ignored them and pressed on.

In important ways, personnel evaluation is always a work in progress. For example, numerical grading systems have their own flaws. In the 1970s such a system was abused by some U.S. Air Force reviewing officers who wanted to ensure that the best and brightest members of their organization were promoted, so gave them the maximum 4.0 grade in every factor in the review. It didn’t take long for word to get out about that tactic, which greatly increased the number of perfect reviews submitted, ending the utility of that system. And, of course, a similar tactic has captured academic grading to an even greater degree, with grades higher than 4.0 being routinely awarded.

The fallback position is to revert to the ponderous—but much harder to abuse—narrative-type evaluation, which the Foreign Service has embraced. ■

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis to Receive AFSA'S Premier Award

The American Foreign Service Association is proud to name Ambassador Ruth A. Davis the 2016 recipient of its Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award in honor of her distinguished Foreign Service career and lifelong devotion to diplomacy.

The award will be presented at the AFSA Awards Ceremony on June 23, at 4 p.m., in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the Department of State.

Ambassador Davis was born in 1943 and earned her bachelor's degree (magna cum laude) from Spelman College and master's degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

During her 40-year career in the Foreign Service, she served as chief of staff in the Africa Bureau, distinguished adviser for international affairs at Howard University, Director General of the Foreign Service and director of human resources, director of the Foreign Service Institute, principal deputy assistant secretary for consular affairs, ambassador to the Republic of Benin and consul general in Barcelona. Earlier in her career, she was a consular officer in Kinshasa, Nairobi, Tokyo and Naples.

Davis established FSI's

School of Leadership and Management in 1999, improved crisis management instruction and training for locally employed staff, and led the Diplomatic Readiness

Initiative that boosted Foreign Service hiring. She has also helped to increase diversity in the Foreign Service, particularly as president and adviser to the Thursday Luncheon Group.

Since her retirement in 2009, Amb. Davis has served as the chair (and a founding member) of the International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge, an organization devoted to promoting

women's economic empowerment.

She also chairs the selection committee for the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship at Howard University's Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center. As vice president of the Association of Black American Ambassadors, she participates in activities involving the recruitment, preparation, hiring, retention, mentoring and promotion of minority Foreign Service employees.

Davis currently serves on the Board of Visitors for the Defense Language Institute, the Board of Directors of the Senior Seminar Alumni Association, the Advisory Council of the Foreign Service Youth

Foundation and the Board of the American Academy of Diplomacy. She is vice president of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, and president of the International Mission of Mercy, USA.

She is a senior adviser to the Thursday Luncheon Group and the International Career Advancement Program at the University of Denver, where she serves annually as a counselor and speaker and was honored with ICAP's first Diversity Award for visionary leadership and fostering diversity within foreign affairs. Finally, Davis is a member of AFSA and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

Davis has received the Department of State's Superior Honor Award, Arnold L. Raphael Memorial Award and Equal Employment Opportunity Award; the Secretary of State's Achievement Award; the Director General's Foreign Service Cup; two Presidential Distinguished Service Awards; and Honorary Doctorates of Law from Middlebury and Spelman Colleges. She was recently named to *The Economist's* 2015 Global Diversity List as one of the Top 50 Diversity Figures in Public Life.

Previous recipients of the AFSA award include George H.W. Bush, Thomas Pickering, George Shultz, Richard Lugar, Joan Clark, Tom Boyatt, Sam Nunn, Rozanne Ridgway, Charles Stuart Kennedy and William Harrop. ■

—Soren Smallwood,
Awards Intern



Ruth A. Davis



JOAQUIN SOSA/AFSA

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis with FSO Clayton Bond at AFSA's May 22, 2014, gala dinner at the State Department celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Foreign Service.



Stop Calling It Maternity Leave!

As someone who has spent more than half her career in Muslim countries, I am used to being asked what it's like to be a woman in the Foreign Service. I developed stock answers and anecdotes ranging from humorous to thought-provoking.

But it wasn't until I was posted in Sweden that I stopped focusing on how many female ambassadors there were or how to interact with male contacts and started thinking about gender equality, work-life balance and what it truly means to be family-friendly.

Just as Americans find it hard to imagine a society in which women are denied the right to vote, drive or be educated, Swedes find it hard to understand a society in which

parents are not automatically granted special leave on the birth (or adoption) of a child.

One of my Swedish colleagues was shocked to learn that new Foreign Service parents do not receive any parental leave and that the colleague she thought was on "maternity leave" was actually using a combination of annual leave, sick leave and leave without pay.

Employees who want to expand their families must choose between doing so and taking vacation, or doing so and earning a salary.

Now that I am involved in fighting for employee rights, I hear story after story about problems our female employees face when they make the decision to have a baby.

(Note: Employees who choose

to adopt or use a surrogate, including same-sex couples, also face struggles that AFSA is advocating to ease. However, for the purposes of this short article, I am focusing on pregnant employees.)

It is surprising that the diplomatic service of the United States—a country that works tirelessly around the globe to protect women and children and to fight for basic human rights—still treats its own female employees in such a way during what should be one of the happiest periods of their lives.

I am not a parent, nor do I plan to become one, but I feel very strongly about the need for the State Department to do much better in this area and to become the model employer it claims to be.

How could the department do better? First and foremost, take notes from the Department of Defense's recent decision to grant employees actual parental leave to determine how the Foreign Service can do the same. Other steps could include:

(1) Funding both parents' travel from post to the U.S. birth location. What kind of message are we sending about being family-friendly if we tell the non-pregnant partner that it is not important for them to be present at the birth of their children, or to assist their partners before, during and after delivery?

(2) Taking the no-cost step of allowing older children to

travel to join the mother at a later time instead of requiring concurrent travel, forcing a near-term pregnant woman to care for older children alone.

(3) Authorizing per diem during the entire medical evaluation (MEDEVAC), instead of forcing the mother to be out-of-pocket or move out of temporary lodging during her hospital stay.

(4) Appointing a point of contact for pregnancy-related MEDEVACs and pregnancy policy to provide clear and consistent written guidance to employees and management officers.

(5) Matching pregnant employees who are in the United States awaiting delivery with telework and/or bridge assignments so they do not have to burn annual leave while able to work.

These are but a few of the ideas that the department could pursue to help support soon-to-be parents.

I am pleased to report that the department recently formed a working group to look at these issues, and has invited AFSA to participate. We are also working closely with the employee organization Balancing Act and others to make sure that we have a good understanding of the wide range of issues affecting employees who wish to expand their families.

We are always open to hearing your experiences. If you have one to share, especially if you have a solution to propose along with it, please reach out to me at bryana@state.gov. ■

CALENDAR

March 2
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

March 6
Deadline: AFSA Financial Aid Scholarship Applications

March 10
11:30-2:30 p.m.
Workshop: Spotting and Solving Ethical Dilemmas at Work

March 15
Deadline: National High School Essay Contest

April 6
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

April 10-14
AFSA Road Scholar Program "Diplomacy in Action: The Middle East, South Asia and Global Terrorism"

May 4
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

May 6
Foreign Affairs Day/AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony

May 22-26
AFSA Road Scholar Program "The Middle East: Conflict and Controversy"

May 30
Memorial Day: AFSA Closed



A Legislative North Star

Over the years, USAID has resorted to more than 30 different hiring methods to keep the agency on track to meet its mission objectives. This number shows how astonishingly creative and tenacious USAID management can be when it comes to meeting its needs.

While those traits are admirable, USAID's effort to keep its work on behalf of the American people on track is precisely what has led it astray. It happens to all of us. We take shortcuts or, for budgetary reasons, cut back in places that in the long run are not in our best interest to cut (e.g., healthy food, education, exercise, vacation).

Like the proverbial frog sitting in a pot of slowly boiling water, USAID's creative hiring approaches will mean that eventually we'll come to realize that we are all sitting in a hot pool of trouble. As the AFSA USAID vice president, I cannot stand idly by and allow that to happen.

So how did we get here? First and foremost, the shortage of operating expense funds required to hire and train sufficient numbers of Foreign Service officers and civil servants led to the practice of hiring personal service contractors (PSCs) and program-funded Foreign Service Limited appointments. As of December 2015, USAID reported 941 PSCs and 228 FSLs on its roster. We expect the number of FSLs

to go up after the HRConnect system is updated to correct for the large number of staff that have been miscoded.

Using non-standard hiring practices to bring in staff to encumber positions traditionally reserved for Foreign Service officers—followed by repeat extensions of the timeframes these temporary hires are supposed to work—has had a severe impact on the career paths of our FSOs and dealt a striking blow to workforce morale.

It also represents a lost opportunity to leverage the skill and know-how of those in whom USAID has already invested. Further exacerbating the situation is the fact that now the agency lacks a transparent mechanism to account for the actual operating expenses needed for staff and training.

Fortunately, a legislative "north star"—in the form of a series of laws passed over the past 92 years—exists to help guide USAID back from the brink. There is much wisdom within the texts of the following laws:

- The Rogers Act of 1924 recognized the need for a strong, professional Foreign Service by establishing it as a career requiring competitive examination, worldwide availability, commissioning and merit-based promotion. The Foreign Service Institute was founded a year later to provide specialized training.
- The Foreign Service

Using non-standard hiring practices to bring in staff to encumber positions traditionally reserved for Foreign Service officers has had a severe impact on the career paths of our FSOs and dealt a striking blow to workforce morale.

Buildings Act of 1926 authorized the purchase, construction or lease of Foreign Service housing abroad, since the Rogers Act had eliminated personal wealth as a requirement to join the Service.

- The Foreign Service Act of 1946 further improved, strengthened and expanded the Foreign Service. A Director General position, along with the Foreign Service Board and Board of Examiners, was created to improve its administration and uphold the principle of competitive entry. The legislation also called for maximum compatibility among the various U.S. Foreign Service personnel systems.

- The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 unified existing non-military U.S. aid efforts and established the Agency for International Development to provide a program of assistance to underdeveloped nations with reporting back from the field.

- The Foreign Service Act of 1980 created a Senior Foreign Service and stipulated that the president should normally appoint FSOs, not political supporters, as

ambassadors. To do otherwise has a corrosive effect on the career Service and is an unfortunate squandering of the efforts that went into their careful selection, as well as of the long and varied experience that professional career officers bring to senior assignments. Also, Foreign Service pay and allowances were raised and the career aspect was re-emphasized with entry capped at the FS-4 rank.

As is evident, great minds across many generations have repeatedly come to the same conclusion: A strong, professional, career Foreign Service is required to fulfill its mission and meet its congressionally mandated obligations.

Following this legislative "North Star" will help USAID get back on track. It will take some time to address the consequences of the hiring decisions that got us to this point. However, assuming the agency can combine its creativity and tenacity with the commitment that the agency's leadership now has, USAID's FSOs can again emerge as the top development cadre they were created to be. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.
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Off Balance?

The Foreign Agricultural Service is among the smaller foreign affairs agencies, with Foreign Service officers accounting for only 20 percent of its total workforce. And despite widespread agreement within the agency that there should be balance between the Foreign Service and Civil Service, there appears to be a growing imbalance as it relates to Washington positions—of which few are designated for FSOs—and overall influence.

For FAS FSOs, this balance usually amounts to parity in the number of deputy administrator positions and other good jobs available to FSOs during their rotations in Washington. In fact, FAS has developed several mechanisms to maintain this balance, the main one being the placement mechanism for returning FSOs and the

fact that FSOs are generally expected to spend two-thirds of their career overseas.

There is little disagreement that providing meaningful Washington-based positions for FSOs and the “cross-pollination” that comes from mixing rotating Civil and Foreign Service employees offer valuable learning experiences for all involved. However, this sentiment can fall apart at the individual level when desirable jobs are at play and when civil servants view any open position as an exclusive promotional opportunity.

FSOs are beginning to see the balance change—not because the system has changed, but because of shifting FSO demographics. As noted in my previous columns, FAS has a desperate shortage of higher-level officers, and recent fixes

won't begin to alter the system for as much as a decade. Consequently, Senior Foreign Service officers and those at the FS-1 and FS-2 levels have to spend significantly more than two-thirds of their careers overseas.

At the same time, baby boomers are retiring and management has to fill domestic slots with civil servants, who encumber positions for much longer periods of time than FSOs.

In addition, the few FSOs in Washington, D.C., are now very concentrated in the Office of Foreign Service Operations, which deals exclusively with overseas issues and is itself isolated from the rest of FAS. This means the presence of FSOs in the rest of the agency is dangerously low and shrinking.

As a result, opportuni-

ties for “cross-pollination” between the Foreign and Civil Services are shrinking; many of the best jobs will be encumbered by civil servants for years to come; the number of Senior Foreign Service officers staying in Washington is diminishing; and the Civil Service culture is starting to predominate.

FSOs are in danger of finding ourselves “out of sight, out of mind” as our unique experiences and points of view become increasingly out of step with an agency that focuses inward, rather than outward. If FSOs cease to be embedded in positions throughout the agency, we may very well lose what connects us to our non-FS colleagues in FAS—and FAS risks losing the perspectives that, by definition, make it a Foreign Service agency. ■

AFSA Welcomes Spring Semester Interns

We are pleased to welcome our latest crop of interns to AFSA:

• **Advertising:** Koen Valks, of Baarn, Netherlands, is a graduate student in international affairs at American University. JeongEun “Jessie” Shin is also a graduate student at American University. She joins us from Seoul, South Korea.

• **Awards:** Atlanta native Marcy O'Halloran is a senior

international affairs major at The George Washington University.

• **Communications:** Briar Blount hails all the way from Queensland, Australia. She is studying criminology and international relations at Bond University.

• **Executive Office:** Allison Bailey, of Webster City, Iowa, is a junior political science major at Coe College in Cedar Rapids.

• **Labor Management:** Blake Ladenburg is a junior at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, where he majors in economics. He is from Columbia Falls, Montana.

• **Professionalism and Ethics:** John Balle comes to us from Detroit, Michigan. He recently graduated from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor with a degree in policy, economics and development.

• **Scholarships:** Kathryn

McGirk is a senior politics major at The Catholic University of America. She is from Elmhurst, Illinois.

We thank departing interns Devon Fitzgerald, Quinn Stevenson, William Roberson, Dastan Sadykov and Milo Opdahl for their great work this past fall and wish them the best. Long-term intern Shannon Mizzi has moved over to a contract editorial assistant position. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, December 2, 2015

Consent Agenda: On a motion from Retiree Vice President Tom Boyatt, the board approved all consent agenda items. These included (1) the Nov. 4 Governing Board minutes; (2) the appointment of AFSA Executive Assistant Patrick Bradley as keeper of records for AFSA's political action committee; (3) consent to the amendment to internal AFSA guidance governing the appropriate use of "officer" and "specialist" when referring to members of the Foreign Service in each of AFSA's five constituent agencies/departments; and (4) consent to the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee's recommendation that the Governing Board *not* add two names to the AFSA Memorial Plaques based on the fact that neither person qualified for inclusion under the criteria in place at the time of their death. The motion passed unanimously.

AFSA Outreach Efforts: Executive Director Ian Houston briefed the board on AFSA's enhanced public outreach on the critical role of the Foreign Service in promoting America's

national security, economic prosperity and values. Progress has been made on partnering with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation to bolster the association's outreach efforts. In addition, AFSA is collaborating with the United States Institute of Peace on the annual high school essay contest, exploring the idea of creating a Foreign Service unit for inclusion in A.P. history and U.S. government curricula, and leveraging key partnerships to reach a broader audience at the grassroots level, among other efforts.

U.S. Diplomacy Center: Ambassador (ret.) Bill Harrop briefed the board on how construction of the museum, curation of exhibit content and establishment of a governance structure are progressing. He thanked AFSA for its support to date and expressed a desire for the association's continued involvement going forward. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, January 6, 2016

Consent Agenda: On a motion from State Vice President Angie Bryan, the board approved all consent agenda items. These included (1) the Dec. 2 Governing Board minutes; (2) the appointment of Information Management Specialist Susan Danewitz and Foreign Service Officer Ramón Escobar to replace outgoing State representatives Samuel Thielman and Philip Laidlaw on the AFSA Governing Board; and (3) the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee's recommendation that the Governing Board add Steven Farley's name to the AFSA Memorial Plaques in the C Street Lobby of the Department of State. The motion passed unanimously.

Applicant to the Committee on the Foreign Service Profession and Ethics: On a motion from Retiree Representative Al La Porta, the board approved the appointment of State Foreign Service Officer Tim Haynes to serve on the AFSA Committee on the Foreign Service Profession and Ethics. The motion passed unanimously.

Overseas Development Program: On a motion made by AFSA State Representative Nini Hawthorne, the board agreed to refine and reconsider at its next meeting AFSA's response to the Department of State's evaluation of the Overseas Development Program. ■



AFSA ON THE HILL

The FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act

On Dec. 18, the House and Senate passed a \$1.14 trillion omnibus appropriations package to fund the government through September 2016, which President Barack Obama promptly signed. There are many pieces of good news for the Foreign Service in the fiscal year 2016 budget.

Best-Value Contracting. A new provision allows the Department of State to use “best-value” contracting when selecting the local guard contractor at all overseas diplomatic missions. Previously, at all but high-threat posts, State was required to hire the security firm offering the lowest price, regardless of past performance or quality of service.

AFSA’s support was instrumental to the addition of this measure to the omnibus. Our consistent and measured advocacy on the Hill led the office of Representative Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) to seek AFSA’s assistance to impress on her colleagues the importance and urgency of this change. AFSA responded with a letter to the Hill in favor of best-value contracting signed by six of our most distinguished career ambassadors, paving the way for inclusion of the provision.

In a press release, Rep. Frankel hailed the measure,

“We have a moral obligation and national security imperative to safeguard our diplomats serving this nation overseas.”

We thank Rep. Frankel for taking the lead on delivering this new flexibility in contracting, which will improve security at our embassies for decades to come. We also owe thanks to original co-sponsor Rep. Randy Weber Sr. (R-Texas) and longtime AFSA friends, House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.).

Overseas Comparability Pay. In other good news, Overseas Comparability Pay will continue at the current two-thirds level, which AFSA sees as a significant victory in the current budget environment. Funding for full OCP remains one of our members’ highest priorities, and AFSA will continue to work with agency management and interlocutors on the Hill to secure it at the earliest possible opportunity.

Compensation for Iran Hostages. At long last, the legislation includes a section approving compensation for American victims of state-sponsored terrorism. The three-decades-long effort—a cause that AFSA advocated throughout the years—was spearheaded by the

Funding for full OCP remains one of our members’ highest priorities, and AFSA will continue to work with agency management and interlocutors on the Hill to secure it at the earliest possible opportunity.

Americans taken hostage at Embassy Tehran in 1979.

The language—promoted by Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and Rep. Gerry Conolly (D-Va.), among others—authorizes payments of up to \$10,000 per day of captivity and up to \$4.4 million for each of the 53 hostages or their estates. It also makes American victims of other state-sponsored terrorist attacks eligible for benefits.

The International Affairs Budget

The overall international affairs budget for fiscal year 2016 increased by 7 percent over the enacted fiscal year 2015 level, and the all-important Diplomatic and Consular Affairs Programs account—which funds State operations around the world—was increased by 4.8 percent to \$8.2 billion, a \$373 million increase from current levels.

Despite the progress on overall funding levels, the continued erosion of funding in the base budget is a significant concern.

According to the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, funding for the fiscal year 2016 international affairs budget—including the overseas contingency operations (OCO) account and international food aid—totals \$54.6 billion: \$39.7 billion in base funds and \$14.9 billion in OCO.

These figures illustrate that the broader 7-percent increase in the international affairs budget is driven by 61-percent growth in the OCO account (\$5.6 billion), while cutting base funding by 5 percent (\$2 billion). Base funding has not been this low since fiscal year 2009.

Still, AFSA sees this as a good budget for the Foreign Service. Though the budget environment remains challenging, AFSA is pleased that our strategy to protect the Foreign Service from any significant cuts has paid off.

If you have any questions about the budget or related topics please email advocacy@afsa.org. ■

—Javier Cuebas,
Director of Advocacy

Announcing the 2015-2016 AFSA Financial Aid Scholars

The American Foreign Service Association bestowed 124 named financial aid scholarships worth \$218,000 on 64 students for the 2015-2016 school year. These need-based awards were provided to undergraduate children of Foreign Service employees who are AFSA members. Individual awards ranged from \$3,000 to \$5,000. (See pages 71-75 featuring each recipient, including the names of his or her parents, the university attended and scholarships received.)

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Harriman established the first AFSA

memorial scholarship in 1926 to honor her son Oliver Bishop Harriman, who died suddenly while she served in Copenhagen. AFSA has since endeavored to help families lessen the burden of paying for college by providing awards to their children.

During the last 89 years, the scholarship fund has grown to \$7 million thanks to the many individuals who have established annual and perpetual scholarships or made general donations. Affiliated organizations such as the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and DACOR, as

I thank all the people at AFSA who made this award possible. Thank you for making it possible for me to reach my academic goals and the cost of college more affordable with this scholarship.

—Katherine Sugely Arriola, Junior, SUNY Buffalo State



well as some corporate entities, have also played a critical role in the success of the AFSA Scholarship Program. No AFSA membership dues go toward the scholarship fund.

AFSA's Scholarship Committee manages the program. Every March, the committee receives applications from FS dependents all over the world and determines the recipients, taking into account family assets and income, among other factors. The scholarships are disbursed in installments, which are sent directly to the students' colleges in August and December to coincide with the start of the academic semester.

Smaller scholarships are bundled together to make larger award amounts. Students need only submit one application; AFSA will match students to the appropriate scholarships, in accordance with any special restrictions placed on each individual award.

Recipients receive information on their particular scholarship—how and why

it was established and by whom—and submit personal thank you letters and photos that are shared with the scholarship donors. In this way, AFSA seeks to build a stronger sense of Foreign Service community. Donors and students often form a personal connection, leading to ongoing correspondence or even an in-person meeting.

In 2015, AFSA provided a total of \$260,000 in college aid. In addition to the 64 need-based scholarship recipients, 22 high school seniors received funding through AFSA's Merit Awards Program (see the 2015 July/August AFSA News). Over the last 25 years, AFSA has awarded \$4 million in college aid to more than 2,200 FS students.

For more information on the AFSA Scholarship Program, visit www.afsa.org/scholar or contact AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or dec@afsa.org.

—Lori Dec,
Scholarship Director

Spotlight on Scholarship Donors



Harriet Winsar Isom Financial Aid Scholarship

Harriet Isom is a retired career Foreign Service officer who worked in Asia and Africa with the Department of State from 1961

to 1996. During her final 10 years of service, Ambassador Isom headed the U.S. embassies in Laos, Benin and Cameroon. She speaks Indonesian and French. In retirement, she returned to her family ranch near Pendleton, Oregon, where she is a "gentlewoman farmer" and active in Oregon civic and volunteer organizations.

Amb. Isom graduated from Mills College and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. She has received women of achievement awards from the March of Dimes Oregon Chapter, the Oregon Commission for Women and the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce. Isom established her AFSA scholarship in 1993.

FINANCIAL AID SCHOLAR BIOS

Najee Agu

Son of Edward and Wanda Agu. Recipient of the Harriet P. Culley Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Edith K. and Wilbur J. Carr Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Omar Sykes Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Old Dominion University.

Anandan Amirthanayagam

Son of Indran and Ruthann Amirthanayagam. Recipient of the Harry A. Havens Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Brown University.

Barbara Armstrong

Daughter of Alina and John Armstrong. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending King's College London.

Salma Badeh

Daughter of Lul Abdalle and Mohamed Badeh Farah. Recipient of the Adolph Dubs Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Oliver Bishop Harriman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Texas at Arlington.

Samater Badeh

Son of Lul Abdalle and Mohamed Badeh Farah. Recipient of the Louise Holscher Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of North Texas.

Daniel Blankenship

Son of June and Robert Blankenship. Recipient of the Ruth Nay Skiles and Victor H. Skiles Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending George Mason University.

Jeffrey Carlson

Son of Mark and Melinda Carlson. Recipient of the Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Wheaton College, Illinois.

Sarah Carlson

Daughter of Mark and Melinda Carlson. Recipient of the James Bolard More Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Wheaton College, Illinois.

William Cassilly

Son of Michael and Traci Cassilly. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Mary Washington.

Allison Childers

Daughter of Julie and William Childers. Recipient of the Associates of the Foreign Service Worldwide Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Liberty University.

Caleb Childers

Son of Julie and William Childers. Recipient of the Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Liberty University.

Dylan Childers

Son of Julie and William Childers. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Liberty University.

Kirsten Christensen

Daughter of Casey and Margie Christensen. Recipient of the Albert E. Carter Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Florida State University.

Clarissa Crawford

Daughter of Brian and Elizabeth Crawford. Recipient of the Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship and the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Erasmus University (The Netherlands).

Everett K. and Clara C. Melby Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship

Everett Melby had a 27-year career as a Foreign Service officer from 1947 to 1974 with the Department of State. He met Clara while working at the World Council of Churches, and they married in 1944. Mr. Melby's overseas assignments included Bern, Athens, Bonn, Georgetown, Frankfurt, Port-au-Prince and Quebec. Clara accompanied her husband at all posts and raised four children. She spoke Dutch, French, German and English fluently.

The couple's children and colleagues established the AFSA scholarship in 2003 when Mr. Melby passed away. Each year since then, Eric D.K. Melby—the couple's son and an AFSA scholarship recipient himself in the late 1960s—has contributed to his parents' scholarship.



Dillon Cummings

Son of Constance and David Cummings. Recipient of the William Benton Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Clara C. and Everett K. Melby Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Lawsuit Over the Movie "Missing" Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Colorado State University.

Kristina Cummings

Daughter of Constance and David Cummings. Recipient of the Rose Marie Asch Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Concordia University (Canada).

Lisa Curbow

Daughter of Cecilia and Ethan Curbow. Recipient of the Barbara Bell Black Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Catholic University of America.

Natascha Curbow

Daughter of Cecilia and Ethan Curbow. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of North Georgia.

Stephen Feldmayer

Son of Jamene and James Feldmayer. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending West Chester University.

Alexandra Garcia

Daughter of Kathleen and Rudolph Garcia. Recipient of the Jacq Bachman Siracusa

Financial Aid Scholarship and the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

Claire Gilbert

Daughter of Jeffrey and Terri Gilbert. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Webster University (The Netherlands).

Rachel Gilbertson

Daughter of Christopher and Lori Gilbertson. Recipient of the Edith K. and Wilbur J. Carr Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Raina Haynes-Klaver

Daughter of Karen Klaver. Recipient of the Edith K. and Wilbur J. Carr Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending San Jose State University.

Charles Holtrop

Son of Daniel and Julie Holtrop. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Montgomery College.

William Holtrop

Son of Daniel and Julie Holtrop. Recipient of the Colonel Richard R. Hallock Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Marcia Martin Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Adele Langston Rogers and William P. Rogers Memorial

AFSA's assistance has made a big difference in being able to pay for college this year.

—Sarah Carlson, Sophomore,
Wheaton College, Illinois



Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Calvin College.

Luke Howlett

Son of Patricia Howlett. Recipient of the Louis C. Boochever Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending St. Lawrence University.

Adriana Huff

Daughter of Deborah Paolini. Recipient of the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial

Aid Scholarship and the John Campbell White Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending West Chester University.

John Huyett

Son of Douglas and Robin Huyett. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Nicosia (Cyprus).

Suzanne Marie Collins Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship

Jack Collins, a Foreign Service officer with the Department of State from the 1960s through the 1980s, and his wife, Trudy, keep the memory of their daughter Suzanne Marie Collins alive with an AFSA scholarship. In 1985, Suzanne was tragically murdered at age 19 while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. She had been active in high school sports, served as a class officer and sang in the school choir.



The award was established in 1996 by John Douglas and Mark Olshaker, co-authors of the books *Mindhunters* and *Journey Into Darkness*. The books chronicle behavioral profiling of serial killers. *Journey Into Darkness* discusses Suzanne's death in some detail. She rose to the rank of lance corporal and died the day before she was to graduate from aviation school.

Margaret-Anne Johns

Daughter of Marcelina and Stephen Johns. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the William Leonhart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Stephens College.

Liam Kierans

Son of Lisa Bucher and Thomas Kierans. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending College of William & Mary.

Colin Krafft

Son of Christopher and Mary Krafft. Recipient of the Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Ashley LaReau

Daughter of Cindy LaReau. Recipient of the Evelyn and Robert Curtis Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Savannah College of Art and Design.

Meredith Lehan

Daughter of Terri Baker. Recipient of the Francesca Bufano Lapinski Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending St. John's College of Annapolis.

Christina McGuire

Daughter of John and Suzanne McGuire. Recipient of the Fallen U.S. Diplomats in Libya Financial

Aid Scholarship and the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Oregon State University.

Connor McKinney

Son of Christopher and Tracy McKinney. Recipient of the Terence Flannery Memorial Annual Financial Aid Scholarship, the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Rozanne L. Ridgway Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of California, Berkeley.

Jacob Murri

Son of Amy and William Murri. Recipient of the John Foster Dulles Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Brigham Young University.

Emily Neder

Daughter of Marqui Neder. Recipient of the Betty Carp Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Eastern Washington University.

Aidan Omdahl

Son of Brent and Natasha Omdahl. Recipient of the Anthony G. Freeman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Philip C. Habib Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Brigham Young University.

Ashton Omdahl

Son of Brent and Natasha Omdahl. Recipient of the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Brockman

The AFSA scholarship is certainly appreciated. I am confident that with AFSA's help, I will succeed at all my endeavors.

—*Dillon Cummings, Freshman, Colorado State University*



M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Brigham Young University.

Jordan Palmer

Son of Susan Baker and Paul Palmer. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Texas Tech University.

Julia Palmer

Daughter of Susan Baker and Paul Palmer. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the George Shultz Financial Aid Scholarship and the John C. Whitehead Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of California, Santa Cruz.

Alvaro Pareja

Son of Lucy Gonzalez and Javier Pareja. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial

Financial Aid Scholarship, the Lowell C. Pinkerton Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Ernest V. Siracusa Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Florida International University.

Sarah Patton

Daughter of Susan and William Patton. Recipient of the Hope and John Bastek Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Elizabeth M. and William E. Cole Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Green Mountain College.

Aidan Pazan

Son of Michele Castagna and Stephen Pazan. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the C. Montagu and Frances M. Pigott Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Ohio University.



This scholarship will help make paying for college more affordable for my family. I know this journey would have been much tougher without the support of the Foreign Service community.

—*Colin Krafft, Freshman, Virginia Tech*

I am so blessed to be a recipient of an AFSA scholarship. It means the world to me to be able to study at a university. One day hopefully, I can help others as AFSA has so generously assisted me.

—*Andrea C. Salazar, Junior, George Mason University*



Aid Scholarship, the Charles C. and Janet K. Stelle Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Cameron C. Turner Jr. Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Saint Leo University.

Andrea Salazar

Daughter of Jose and Wendy Salazar. Recipient of the Associates of the Foreign Service Worldwide Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending George Mason University.

Kathleen Saunders

Daughter of Robert and Wendy Saunders. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of New Mexico.

Amelia Smith

Daughter of Matthew and Susan Smith. Recipient of the Kiang Fund for Excellence Financial Aid Scholarship and the Dalton V. Killion Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Avery Smith

Son of Matthew and Susan Smith. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Oberlin College.

Madeline Strandemo

Daughter of Guy and Kimberly Strandemo. Recipient of the Marc Grossman and Mildred Patterson Financial Aid Scholarship, the Harriet Winsar Isom Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Minnesota.

Thomas Strandemo

Son of Guy and Kimberly Strandemo. Recipient of the Elizabeth N. Landeau Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of Louisiana, Lafayette.

Antigone Valen

Daughter of Kelly and Stephen Valen. Recipient of the Suzanne Marie Collins Financial Aid Memorial Scholarship, the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Princeton University.

Arianna Volciak

Daughter of Christopher Sr. and Sabrina Volciak. Recipient of the Alice and John Hubler Annual Financial Aid Scholarship and the Christopher and Eliza Van Hollen Memorial Financial

Isaac Pearson

Son of Connie and Kurt Pearson. Recipient of the Norton W. Bell Financial Aid Scholarship, the Arthur B. Emmons Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Sheldon Whitehouse Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending James Madison University.

Alana Perera

Daughter of Michele Balthazaar and Dale Boustead. Recipient of the David D. Newsom Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Evelyn K. and Horace J. Nickels Memorial

Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending California State University, Northridge.

Rebecca Post

Daughter of Jonathan and Kathryn Post. Recipient of the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Wanit Ruekit

Son of Kanyanee Bras. Recipient of the Martin G. Patterson Memorial Financial



George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship

George Newman joined the Department of State in 1951, kicking off his 30-year career as a Foreign Service officer. Soon after entering the Service, he met Martha, “Mattie,” and they married.

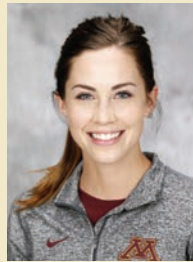
The Newmans' overseas posts included London and a large number of assignments in Asia. They never had children, but became good friends with another FS

couple Elvin and Edith Roseman. Janet, the Rosemans' daughter, lived with the Newmans in Manila to attend high school while her parents were posted in Cambodia where there was no appropriate school.

During his last few months of life George Newman told Janet that he wanted to make sure “the young people (of the Foreign Service) were going to be taken care of.” Mattie predeceased George, and when he passed away in 2008, the AFSA Scholarship Fund and Janet Roseman Bayless were the equal beneficiaries of his estate.

It is so wonderful to be able to receive support from the Foreign Service community. I hope one day I will be able to give back to the younger generation in a similar way that AFSA and its donors are helping me.

—Madeline Strandemo, Junior, University of Minnesota



Aid Scholarship. Attending Marymount University.

Christopher Volciak Jr.

Son of Christopher Sr. and Sabrina Volciak. Recipient of the Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Lehigh University.

Morgan Wilbur

Son of Allison and Richard Wilbur. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Wheaton College, Massachusetts.

Evangeline Wilton

Daughter of Chad and Rachel Wilton. Recipient of the Prabhi G. Kavaler Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Saint Michael's College.

Daniel Wolff

Son of Eric and Kathleen Wolff. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Walter K. Schwinn Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Columbia International University.

Hannah Wolff

Daughter of Eric and Kathleen Wolff. Recipient of the Heyward G. Hill Memorial/DACOR Bacon House Foundation Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Hillsdale College.

Jonathan Wolff

Son of Eric and Kathleen Wolff. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship, the George and Mattie Newman Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Anna B. and John M. Steeves Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Hillsdale College.

Misaki Yonashiro

Daughter of Naomi and Ronald Yonashiro. Recipient of the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending University of California, Davis.

Rebekah Zehr

Daughter of Dora and Wilbur Zehr. Recipient of the Susan Lowe Modi and Sorab Modi Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship and the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Financial Aid Scholarship. Attending Northern Virginia Community College.

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For more information on all of these contests, go to: www.fsyf.org

AFSA is pleased to roll out this inaugural edition of the Retiree Corner—a new feature that will appear in every other issue of AFSA News. The Retiree Corner will augment the existing AFSA Newsletter, which transitioned to all-digital distribution in 2016. Between the Retiree Corner, the electronic AFSA Newsletter and the long-established Retiree VP Voice Column, AFSA is bringing our members even more robust coverage of issues of interest in retirement.

To continue receiving the AFSA Newsletter, send your email address or, if you don't have one, that of a family member or friend to member@afsa.org.

Self-Plus-One Enrollment Still Open

If you missed the Dec. 14 open season deadline to enroll in the self-plus-one health benefit, you're in luck.

Per guidance from the Office of Personnel Management, "annuitants are allowed to decrease enrollment at any time. This means that if you have a self-and-family enrollment and you decide you would like to change to a self-plus-one enrollment, you may do so throughout the year. ...

"If you have a self-only enrollment, however, you must experience a qualifying life event (QLE) in order to change to self-plus-one. These are events such as marriage, divorce or a family member's loss of coverage under another health insurance program. For a full list of allowed QLEs, please view the [form] SF-2809."

To get an SF-2809 form, call HRSC at 1(866) 300-7419 or download it from www.afsa.org/retiree.

You must file the form with the Department of State's Human Resources Service Center in Charleston, South Carolina, either as an attachment to your email to HRSC@state.gov, or by U.S. mail to: U.S. Department of State, HR Service Center,

1999 Dyess Ave., Building E, Charleston SC 29405.

Be forewarned: While OPM reported that self-plus-one enrollment would save, on average, 6 percent over the self-and-family option, in some plans self-plus-one costs more! For example, self-plus-one costs \$3.61 per month more than self-and-family in the popular Foreign Service Benefit Plan administered by the American Foreign Service Protective Association. Definitely check with your insurer before switching.

You can rest assured that self-plus-one is considered a type of self-and-family plan and thus meets the requirement allowing the survivor of an annuitant to continue Federal Employees Health Benefits coverage, provided that the couple had been enrolled in a self-and-family (including self-plus-one) plan for at least the preceding five years and the annuitant had set up the spouse to receive survivor benefits.

AFSA Outreach Expands

The American Foreign Service Association Governing Board has committed to explaining what the Foreign Service does to a broader audience across the United States. To do so AFSA has

aggressively increased the ranks of its Speakers Bureau, a program connecting Foreign Service speakers with groups that request one.

In the past year, we have more than doubled the number of Speakers Bureau members to 360, and speaking engagements have tripled to almost 100. Half of those resulted from speakers proactively setting up speaking engagements on their own.

But that's just scratching the surface of what the Speakers Bureau might accomplish. Thanks to a new partnership with the Cox Foundation, AFSA is also targeting high school social studies teachers in an effort to get Foreign Service speakers in front of a new generation of future leaders.

To succeed, we need more retirees—especially those outside the D.C. area—to step forward and join the Speakers Bureau. All that is required is a willingness to share your personal Foreign Service story.

AFSA will help you get started by providing background information, suggested talking points and a free copy of its popular guide to the Foreign Service, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, to take with you to the venue.

To learn more, visit our

Speakers Bureau page at www.afsa.org/speakers.

Update on OPM Data Breach

As of December, the Office of Personnel Management had sent letters to about 93 percent of the current and former federal employees who were affected by last year's cybertheft of OPM records.

The letters contain information on credit monitoring, identity theft protection services and insurance provided at no cost to affected individuals and their dependent minor children (under the age of 18 as of July 1, 2015) for a period of three years.

OPM has established a verification center operated by the Department of Defense to collect valid addresses for individuals who could not be located and to assist with PIN issues. Those who believe they may have been affected, but have not yet received a letter, may contact the center by calling (866) 408-4555 or by visiting www.opm.gov/cybersecurity.

After contacting the verification center, the individual will receive a letter (the process can take a few weeks). Recipients should confirm that the letter is valid by matching it to the sample

letters available on the OPM website. Any electronic or paper correspondence that asks for personal information or does not direct the individual to OPM's cybersecurity website should be considered fraudulent and reported to local law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

A few AFSA members have reported problems reaching someone at the phone number provided and with the process of applying online for free credit monitoring and ID theft insurance. However, in most cases, problems have

eventually been resolved.

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.afsa.org/opm-breach. Should you wish to speak with someone regarding a specific question or problem, send an email to retiree@afsa.org.

Popular Social Security Strategy Ending

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 has ended a popular option some married couples have used to maximize their Social Security benefits.

It used to be the case that the higher earner could "file and suspend" their Social

Security benefits on reaching full retirement age (FRA). Suspension meant that their benefit would continue to grow by 8 percent per year until he or she reached age 70.

The lower earner could simultaneously file a "restricted application" for half of their spouse's suspended benefit and immediately begin receiving a monthly payment. When the higher earner reached age 70, he or she could begin collecting their maximum Social Security benefits, and the lower earner could collect half of that higher benefit.

The new law will end this

practice, effective April 29, 2016. It also bars anyone born after Jan. 1, 1954, from filing a "restricted application" to receive spousal benefits, even if the spouse has already reached his or her FRA. Any beneficiary age 66 before May 2016, with a spouse who turned 62 before Jan. 2, 2016 may still take advantage of the "file-and-suspend" option, provided they do so before April 30.

To learn more about what this change might mean for you, visit www.socialsecurity.gov or contact us at retiree@afsa.org. ■

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Second Annual Book Market a Success!

The American Foreign Service Association hosted its 2nd Annual Book Market on Nov. 19 at AFSA headquarters. This year, 21 Foreign Service authors were on hand, showcasing their talents and sharing their experiences with attendees. Each author's book was

also featured in *The Foreign Service Journal's* annual roundup of FS-affiliated authors' recent works (see the November FSJ).

Participating authors drew a diverse crowd ranging from Foreign Service retirees to active-duty colleagues and university students interested in the Foreign Service as a future career. Book genres fell into a wide range of categories, such as cooking, fantasy and fiction, policy, photography, memoirs, children's books, history and biographies.

The authors also enjoyed meeting one another and could be overheard sharing their experiences with the publication process and swapping tips on the craft of writing.

We're already looking forward to this year's roundup! If you have a book coming out in 2016 (or had one published in late 2015), please send us a copy for inclusion in the November 2016 edi-



Ambassador (ret.) and prolific author Charles Ray, at left, chats with a book market browser about his latest novels, *Mob Justice* and *A Time to Kill, A Time to Die*.

tion of "In Their Own Write." Please include any marketing materials you may have.

If you have any questions about the process, contact Editorial Assistant Shannon Mizzi at mizzi@afsa.org. ■

—Shannon Mizzi,
Editorial Assistant

A Conversation with Pearson Fellows



On Jan. 15, American Foreign Service Association President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Director of Advocacy Javier Cuebas and Director of Communications Ásgeir Sigfússon visited Pearson Fellows at the Russell Senate Office Building for a brown-bag lunch. The group discussed ideas for maximizing the benefits of the Pearson Fellowship for the individual officer, as well as for the Foreign Service. Participants also offered valuable input on a number of issues affecting the career Foreign Service (e.g., changes to the employee performance evaluation system, 360-degree evaluations, staffing shortages and bulges, bidding). Amb. Stephenson listened to fellows' personal experiences navigating the Foreign Service personnel waters. ■

Changes on the AFSA Governing Board

Given the mandate of the Foreign Service to deploy worldwide, it is sometimes necessary for members of the AFSA Governing Board to leave the board during their term. When vacancies occur, AFSA bylaws state that the Governing Board has the authority to appoint individuals to fill these positions.

State Representatives Sam Thielman and Philip Laidlaw took office with the current Governing Board on July 15. In November, Thielman took the momentous step of retiring from the Foreign Service, and Laidlaw has taken up his new assignment as the deputy chief of mission in Bogotá. We congratulate them both and thank them for their service.

Not skipping a beat, at the Jan. 6 meeting, the



Sam Thielman



Ramón Escobar



Philip Laidlaw



Susan Danewitz

Governing Board appointed Information Management Specialist Susan Danewitz and Economic Officer Ramón Escobar to fill Thielman and Laidlaw's spots.

Danewitz joined the Foreign Service in 2006 and is currently serving as technology policy adviser to the senior coordinator for knowledge management in the Office of the Deputy Secretary of State for Resources

and Management. She has served in Yemen, Austria and Saudi Arabia, not to mention the 20 posts to which she has been sent on temporary duty assignments.

Having been involved with information technology for more than 20 years, Danewitz started as a Unix system administrator and webmaster in 1995. She has covered the entire software development life cycle during

the course of her career and became a certified information systems security professional in 2015.

Escobar is a State Department Dean and Virginia Rusk Fellow at Georgetown University. Since joining the Foreign Service in 2006, he has served in Iraq, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and Washington, D.C. In his last assignment, on the Colombia desk, he was primarily responsible for assisting Special Envoy to the Colombia Peace Process Bernard Aronson in his efforts to help end Latin America's longest-running conflict.

We welcome Susan and Ramón to the AFSA Team!

AFSA still hopes to fill the vacant Broadcasting Board of Governors representative slot on our Governing Board. To submit your name for consideration to fill this or other board vacancies, please send your CV and a statement of interest to bradley@afsa.org. ■

—Patrick Bradley,
Executive Assistant

Connecting with America's Teachers



AFSA's Awards Coordinator Perri Green, seated behind table, and Editorial Assistant Shannon Mizzi attended the 2015 National Council for the Social Studies Conference in New Orleans, Nov. 13-15. NCSS is the United States' largest association devoted to social studies education. Green and Mizzi were there to meet social studies educators and promote the Foreign Service through AFSA's 2016 National High School Essay Contest and best-selling book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*. AFSA was one of more than 150 exhibitors at the conference, which attracted approximately 3,000 attendees. Pictured: Green speaks with teachers about this year's essay contest theme, which focuses on peacebuilding through diplomacy. ■

Power in Numbers: Coalition Collaboration

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed the Federal Postal Coalition to AFSA headquarters on Dec. 7 for the group's annual end-of-year meeting.

The gathering was part of the association's ongoing efforts to leverage its resources and amplify its advocacy message by partnering with groups representing fellow federal employees. FPC is comprised of 31 national organizations that collectively represent five million middle-class federal and postal workers and retirees.

Immediately prior to the gathering, Amb. Stephenson held a private meeting with representatives from the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association—also an FPC member. During this discussion, Stephenson's first with NARFE President Richard Thissen since taking office, the two resolved to continue close collaboration on issues where there is common cause (e.g., paid parental leave and pensions and retirement benefits).

NARFE excels at protecting the benefits available to all federal employees. By partnering with NARFE and other similar groups, AFSA is better able to focus its advocacy efforts on issues specific to the Foreign Service. ■

—*Maria C. Livingston,*
Associate Editor



AFSA representatives presented NARFE President Richard Thissen with an AFSA coin in appreciation for his organization's steadfast support of federal employees. From left: AFSA Director of Advocacy Javier Cuebas, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Thissen, NARFE Legislative Director Jessica Klement and AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston.



Amb. Stephenson opened the Dec. 7 Federal-Postal Coalition meeting by welcoming the group to AFSA headquarters and expressing hope for further productive engagement and collective achievements in 2016. Stephenson and FPC Chairman Alan Lopatin enjoy a light moment during the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Director of Professional Policy Issues

AFSA announces our first-ever director of professional policy issues: Maria Livingston. Her new department is responsible for providing policy analysis and

recommendations on issues affecting the health and well-being of the Foreign Service career path across all of AFSA's constituencies.

Maria joined AFSA last spring as the associate editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*, where she communicated association news to our members in the AFSA News section of the *Journal*. Prior to that, Maria served as a Foreign Service officer for eight years, with assignments to Guatemala City, Mexico City and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. She was also detailed to the U.S. Executive Director's Office at the World Bank.

A New Mexico native, Maria holds bachelor's degrees in international studies and Russian from the University of Denver and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Please join us in congratulating Maria on her new role.



Retiree Representative

AFSA is happy to present Isabelle Hazel, its new retiree representative. For the past two years, Isabelle has been a data-entry specialist in AFSA's membership department.

A recent graduate of The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, she has prior experience in international affairs through internships with Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.), the Council on Foreign Relations, Mayer Brown JSM in Hong Kong and Doctors Without Borders. Isabelle has thoroughly enjoyed engaging with members of the Foreign Service in a supportive capacity during her time at AFSA and is eager to build even more relationships through her new role as retiree representative.

AFSA welcomes Isabelle to the team! ■

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■ **Weyland Beeghly**, 72, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, died at home on Dec. 10 in Omaha, Neb., after a two-month illness.

Mr. Beeghly was born on April 23, 1943, in Sioux City, Iowa, to Milford and Dorothy (Graham) Beeghly. Raised on the family's 500-acre farm near Pierson, he graduated from Kingsley-Pierson High School in 1961, attended McPherson College in McPherson, Kan., for two years and received a degree in agriculture journalism from Iowa State University in 1965.

He married Susan Caylor of Anderson, Ind., in 1970, and the couple moved to Ithaca, N.Y., where Beeghly graduated from Cornell University in 1972 with a master's degree in agricultural economics.

Mr. Beeghly joined the Foreign Agriculture Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an analyst in the Grain & Feed Division in 1973. He and his family moved to the former USSR in 1976 where he served as the assistant agricultural attaché at Embassy Moscow.

After a break to work the family farm from 1978 to 1983, Beeghly returned to the Foreign Service, where he spent the remainder of his career. He served as agricultural counselor in the former Soviet Union (1983-1986), Thailand (1986-1990), Poland (1991-1993) and India (1998-2002). During several tours at USDA in Washington, D.C., he and his family lived in Alexandria, Va.

Mr. Beeghly was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2002 and retired from the Foreign Service in 2004. He and his wife moved to Omaha in 2011 to be closer to his daughter and sisters.

Colleagues remember Mr. Beeghly as a man of many talents: a singer/songwriter/guitarist, who wrote and performed songs about animal husbandry; a humorist and storyteller, who schooled the agricultur-

ally ignorant on the exciting intricacies of plant and animal reproduction; and a gifted writer of both the prosaic and the absurd.

Some members of the Foreign Service may recall his amusing correspondence and tongue-in-cheek cable communications; others may recall his bovine attire at a country team meeting in Bangkok or his booming baritone belting out a bluesy rendition of "Pig Piles in the Wintertime" at the Warsaw Embassy Follies.

His family remembers him as a teasing, affectionate, dependable presence in their lives, a person who loved interesting dinner table conversation, brisk walks, card games with his grandchildren, musical gatherings of friends, bawdy jokes, Brussels sprouts and ice cream.

Mr. Beeghly is survived by his wife, Susan; three children: Graham Beeghly of Santa Monica, Calif., Laura Beeghly (and her husband, Brian Priesman) of Omaha, Neb., and Benjamin Beeghly (and his wife, Anna) of Baltimore, Md.; four grandchildren, Tessa and Ezra Priesman, and Milo and Mira Beeghly; and two sisters, Beverlee McCollum and Bonnie Nigro, both of Omaha. He is preceded in death by his parents, Milford and Dorothy Beeghly of Pierson, Iowa.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the National Parkinson's Foundation.

■ **Robert Orris Blake**, 94, a career diplomat, former ambassador and sustainable agriculture advocate, died on Dec. 28 at his home in Washington, D.C.

Born in Los Angeles, Calif., on April 7, 1921, Robert Blake grew up in Whittier, Calif., where Pat Nixon was his high school typing teacher. He attended Stanford University, graduating early in 1943, when he left to begin officer training as a naval seaman. He served as an officer

on the U.S.S. *Duluth* in the Pacific. After completing a master's degree at the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, he joined the Foreign Service in 1947.

During a three-decade-long career, Mr. Blake served in Nicaragua, Moscow and Tokyo, before returning to Washington to head up the Soviet desk at the State Department. A Russian speaker, he served as a Soviet expert in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He also served as a political officer in Tunis and deputy chief of mission in Kinshasa and Paris. In 1970 President Richard Nixon appointed him U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Mali, where he served until 1973.

After a distinguished career in the diplomatic corps, Ambassador Blake began a second career in international sustainable development. Concerned that U.S. government agencies were funding the destruction of natural resources around the world, he joined the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development as a senior fellow in 1977, heading up their advocacy work in Washington.

There, he co-authored two books about actions allied nations were taking to address environmental challenges in the developing world, and organized the Tropical Forest Action Group that convinced USAID to withdraw funding for clearing tropical forests for cattle ranches in Latin America.

In 1986, Amb. Blake founded the Committee on Agricultural Sustainability for Developing Countries that worked to influence the agricultural and rural development policies and programs of the World Bank, USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank. He believed in "the absolute need to make farmers—especially the female farmers who

do most of the work in many places—full partners in agricultural development.”

Amb. Blake also made time to serve on the boards of organizations he admired, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Wilderness Society, The Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Council of Maine and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, among others.

In his final years of life, he became increasingly concerned about poverty and hunger in the United States. He volunteered for the Salvation Army, delivering food to the homeless at night. He also delivered Meals on Wheels and participated in discussions with the leaders of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., to encourage its more active engagement in addressing hunger.

Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Sylvia Whitehouse Blake; three children, Robert Blake Jr., currently serving as ambassador to Indonesia, Lucy Blake of Palo Alto, Calif., and George Blake of Newport, R.I.; and five grandchildren.

■ **Judy Jacob Copenhaver**, 70, a retired member of the Foreign Service, died of leukemia on Dec. 18 at her home in Cuero, Texas.

After serving as a Civil Service employee with the Drug Enforcement Administration in Mexico, Mrs. Copenhaver began her Foreign Service career in 1986. Postings with her tandem husband, Barry, included Panama City, Bonn, Islamabad, Monrovia, Kinshasa, Lahore, Mexico City, Malabo and Sierra Leone. She retired in 2009.

In retirement Mr. and Mrs. Copenhaver delighted in bringing their many friends and their family together—including grandchildren Carson, Justin, Max and Maya—at their beautiful home “La Finca” in Cuero.

In addition to her grandchildren, Judy

Copenhaver is survived by her retired Foreign Service husband of 50 years, Barry, and their children: Scott and Ineke Copenhaver; Jill (a retired State Department civil servant) and Lonnie Trevino; and Leah Copenhaver.

■ **Robert E. Fritts**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer and two-time U.S. ambassador, died on Sept. 28 in Williamsburg, Va.

Born in Oak Park, Ill., in 1934, Mr. Fritts received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan in 1956 and served as a commissioned U.S. Navy officer from 1956 to 1959, when he joined the Foreign Service.

Mr. Fritts served in Luxembourg, Japan and Indonesia as an economic-commercial officer. In 1973, he was transferred as deputy chief of mission to Sudan, where the U.S. ambassador and his deputy had been assassinated.

In 1974, at the age of 39, he became the youngest ambassador in the history of the Foreign Service when President Richard Nixon named him U.S. ambassador to Rwanda. As Fritts wryly observed, it was a record that “lasted about six months.”

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan appointed him U.S. ambassador to Ghana, where he served during a period of fluctuating bilateral relations.

Other State Department policy positions included principal deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Consular Affairs and deputy inspector general.

Following retirement in 1991, Amb. Fritts joined the faculty of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He was also a senior fellow with the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., and an occasional United Nations election observer in Africa. There he witnessed the election of Nelson Mandela. In later years, he and his wife, Audrey, both

lectured on cruise ships.

Amb. Fritts served on the boards of a number of civic and foreign policy organizations in Williamsburg and Hampton Roads, including the Reves Center for International Studies and the Jefferson Program in Public Policy at the College of William & Mary, the Middle Plantation Club, the Williamsburg Symphonia, the Williamsburg Choral Guild and the World Affairs Council of Greater Hampton Roads.

He was also a member of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs and the American Foreign Service Association in Washington, D.C.

Amb. Fritts had a keen interest in history and loved choral music. He was a stillwater canoeist, freshwater fisherman and a tennis and golf enthusiast.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Audrey Nienhouse Fritts, of whom he often said that he was “unfailingly supported through her knowledge, charm and courage”; two daughters, Susan Herzog (and her husband, Charles) of South Salem, N.Y., and Robin Long (and her husband, Bob) of Flagstaff, Ariz.; and four grandchildren: Leigh, Callum, Zachary and Matthew.

Memorial donations may be made to the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, designated for the Chancel Choir, or to the International Rescue Committee or other international refugee relief organization.

■ **Roderick Nay Grant**, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 23 from cardiac arrest. He was a resident of Ashburn, Va.

Mr. Grant was born on July 30, 1927 in Los Angeles, Calif., and grew up in nearby Glendale. An accomplished athlete, Mr. Grant captained Hoover High School’s first southern California championship track team, and later earned All-America

honors in the long jump competing for the University of California.

After graduating from high school, he served in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II. Mr. Grant attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned a B.A. in philosophy and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

He later studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and then at Harvard University, from which he received a master's degree in public administration.

Mr. Grant joined the Foreign Service as a commercial officer in 1956. He and his wife, Marianne, served in Munich, Brussels, Bonn, Taiwan and Paris (twice), in addition to Washington, D.C.

In 1982, while serving as commercial counselor in Paris, Mr. Grant and his family were the target of a terrorist attack attributed to the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction. A bomb mounted underneath Mr. Grant's vehicle dislodged and later exploded when the French bomb squad attempted to diffuse it, ultimately killing two police officers. Mr. Grant and his family were unharmed.

Following his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1984, the Grants moved to Sequim, Wash., returning in 2008 to the Washington, D.C., area, where their son and daughter-in-law reside. Mr. Grant devoted his retirement years to writing poetry, publishing six books of poems.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Marianne; his son, Kenneth; his brothers, Bruce and Kenneth; and his sister, Marian. His daughter, Laurie, preceded him in death in 1993.

■ **Sondra Otey Hartley**, 73, the wife of retired FSO Douglas Hartley, passed away on Dec. 13 at Mercy Hospital in Portland, Maine, after a fight against cancer.

The daughter of the late Laura Wade Little and the late Dr. Bedford Otey,

Sondra was born and raised in Memphis, Tenn., graduating from The Hutchison School. She attended Randolph Macon College in Virginia and graduated from the University of Alabama.

In 1979, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she met Douglas Hartley, a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. State Department. A few weeks after their wedding, the couple moved to Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Sondra's vivacity and charm, enhanced by her quick grasp of the Portuguese language, quickly won the hearts of the Brazilians.

After living for five years in Salvador and in Rio de Janeiro, the Hartleys returned to Washington, D.C. There, she worked with a book publisher and lectured on life in the Foreign Service.

In retirement, the couple spent summers with friends in Maine, bought property in Cushing and eventually built a house there on the coast, where they moved permanently in 2008. Mrs. Hartley was intensely interested in politics and was active as a volunteer at the Cushing Community School, the local Historical Society, the local Food Bank and the Farnsworth Museum. She was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Thomaston, Maine. Because of her openness, loyalty and unfailing generosity, she had a wide circle of friends.

Sondra Hartley is survived by her beloved husband, Douglas, and by three half-brothers, a half-sister, a step-son, four step-daughters, 10 grandchildren and a great-grandson who was born two weeks before her death.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made to the Cushing Historical Society, P.O. Box 110, Cushing ME 04563, or the Cushing Community School, 54 Cross Road, Cushing ME 04563.

■ **William Alston ("Otty") Hayne**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer and descendent of a pioneering California family, died peacefully at his home in St. Helena, Calif., on Nov. 14 following a courageous battle with cancer.

Born in San Francisco in 1925, Mr. Hayne spent his first years on the family farm in Marysville, where his proud parents advertised their business as "Hayne Hogs & Hay." When the family moved to the Bay Area, he was educated at local schools before going to the Thacher School in Ojai, Calif.

After high school, he joined the Navy and was sent to Doane College in Nebraska and then to the V-12 Program at U.C. Berkeley, where he earned his undergraduate degree in two years. He was on his way to join the Pacific war effort on the U.S.S. *South Dakota* when the war ended. After his release from the U.S. Navy Reserve, he received an MBA from Stanford University under the GI Bill in 1949.

Mr. Hayne then worked for the Spice Islands Company and for Riley Precision Tool Company. In 1952, he met and wed Elisabeth Church, a transplanted Philadelphian, to whom he would be happily married for 55 years and with whom he would raise three children.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1954 and was posted to the U.S. consulate in Kingston, Jamaica. Subsequent overseas postings as an economic officer included Lima, Paris and Mexico City. He was also detailed to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he earned another master's degree, and to Harvard University, where he served as a fellow at the Center for International Affairs.

Mr. Hayne retired from the Foreign Service in 1980, and he and his wife moved to his family's century-old vineyard property in St. Helena. There he

replanted much of the family's vineyard and developed a small herb farm and culinary herb business.

He became an active member and director of the St. Helena Rotary Club, and a member and senior warden of Grace Episcopal Church. In 1990, he was elected mayor of St. Helena and was reelected in 1992, running unopposed.

Mr. Hayne bravely supported his wife as she developed and suffered from Alzheimer's-related illnesses until her death in 2008. In 2014, he married Christine Gorelick of St. Helena. He is remembered as a man of great integrity, intelligence, humor and kindness.

Mr. Hayne is survived by his wife, Christine; his son Alston (and his wife, Adrian); his daughter Amanda (and her husband, John Kirkwood); his son Nicholas; and five grandchildren, Victoria Hayne, Cecilia Hayne, Spencer Kirkwood, Elisabeth Kirkwood and Alexandra Kirkwood. He is also survived by his brother, Elliot (and his wife, Judy) of Novato, Calif.; and numerous nephews, nieces and cousins.

Donations may be made in his memory to the wonderful residential-educational community where his developmentally-disabled son, Nick, lives: the Devereux Foundation of California, P.O. Box 6784, Santa Barbara CA 93160.

■ **Jean Foshee LeBaron**, 65, the wife of retired FSO and former Ambassador Richard LeBaron, died of complications related to metastatic breast cancer on Dec. 13 at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. She was a resident of Alexandria and Northumberland County, Va.

Born to John and Sybil Foshee on Dec. 23, 1949, Mrs. LeBaron spent her childhood and early adult years in Mobile, Ala.

She was an avid equestrian in her youth, winning numerous regional competitions. She was also an accomplished

competitive diver. She loved exploring the Gulf Coast, especially Dauphin Island, but, by her own account, did not much like going to school. Nonetheless, she was a graduate of Murphy High School in Mobile and briefly attended the University of Southern Mississippi.

In 1971 Mrs. LeBaron moved to Washington, D.C., where she met her husband, Richard. They were married on June 8, 1975, at St. John's Church in Georgetown and started a long career together that took them to many countries around the world. Just after marriage, the couple moved to Brazil for two years where Mr. LeBaron held a consultancy with the Brazilian Council for Scientific Research.

Mr. LeBaron joined the Foreign Service in 1979, and the couple embarked on a 33-year diplomatic career that took them to Nicaragua, India, Tunisia, Portugal, Egypt, Israel, Kuwait and Great Britain.

Mr. LeBaron was ambassador to Kuwait from 2007 to 2010, and served as deputy chief of mission in both Tel Aviv and London. They also spent a number of years living in Alexandria, Va., while both held positions at the State Department. Mrs. LeBaron served as a post management officer in the European and South Asian bureaus.

Mrs. LeBaron was well known in diplomatic circles for her accomplished representational entertainment events in support of American foreign policy. She believed in the importance of sustained personal engagement for U.S. diplomacy, and was very good at it. Her husband often said that any success he had as a diplomat was largely due to Jean's gracious and generous help.

After Amb. LeBaron retired from the State Department in 2012, the couple spent more of their time at Prudence Farm, their home on the Great Wicomico River. Mrs. LeBaron lovingly renovated a

100-year-old farmhouse and spent many happy days there in her last years while continuing to contend with cancer. She loved to boat on the river, briefly opened an antique shop on Main Street in Kilmarnock, Va., and was active in efforts to improve the town.

She will be remembered for her kind heart, sense of humor, many loyal friends and the equal respect she gave to people of all backgrounds and standing. An accomplished antique collector, she scoured flea markets all over the world. She loved animals of all kinds and was active in efforts to protect wildlife in Africa, as well as supporting local organizations in the United States and abroad that care for abandoned animals.

In addition to her husband, Richard LeBaron, Jean is survived by her brother, David Foshee and his family, of Mobile.

Donations in memory of Jean LeBaron are welcome at the Lombardi Patient Assistance Fund at the Georgetown University Medstar Hospital and the Northern Neck Animal Welfare League in Kilmarnock.

■ **Edwin H. Moot**, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 12 in Rockville, Md.

After graduating from Northwestern University, Mr. Moot served in the U.S. Army in Europe from 1943 to 1945. He joined the Foreign Service in 1947.

During a 30-year diplomatic career, Mr. Moot served abroad in Germany, Egypt, Italy, Hong Kong, the Somali Republic, Southern Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe), Zambia, Nepal and Mexico. He retired in 1977.

Mr. Moot was preceded in death by his wife, Joanne Ling Moot, also a Foreign Service officer, who passed away in 2002. He is survived by two sons, a daughter and six grandchildren.

■ **Gladys Ann Pollock**, 80, a retired member of the Foreign Service, died in an automobile accident on Dec. 28. She was a long-time resident of Arlington, Va.

A native of Beaumont, Texas, Ms. Pollock spent most of her career as a Foreign Service secretary for the U.S. Information Agency, rising to the highest ranks of her profession. She served abroad in London, Rome, Paris, Beirut, New Delhi, Tehran, Belgrade, Mexico City and Istanbul.

Ms. Pollock was a talented artist. After retirement from the Foreign Service, she settled in Arlington, Va., where she pursued work in ceramics and papier-mache art. With a gift for interior design, she combined influences from the cultures around her with her own American sensibilities during her years overseas. The result was a warm and welcoming abode wherever she was assigned.

Ms. Pollock is survived by a beloved sister, Dorothy Pollock Moore, and several devoted nieces and nephews in Texas and Florida, and by a host of friends who recently gathered in Washington to celebrate her 80th birthday.

■ **Ernesto Uribe**, 78, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency, died in Falls Church, Va., on Nov. 21.

A Texan, Mr. Uribe grew up on horseback, working in South Texas where his family had raised beef cattle since 1755. He was educated in the public schools of Laredo, Texas, and graduated from Texas A&M University, earning two undergraduate degrees in 1960 and 1961 and a master's degree in 1962.

While studying, he worked as an assistant radio editor for the Texas state agricultural extension service.

In 1962, he joined USIA as a binational center grantee in Guayaquil. After two years in Ecuador, he was transferred to San Salvador. He formally joined the

staff of the Foreign Service in 1966 and remained in San Salvador as a student affairs officer. He was commissioned as an FSO in 1970.

During a 33-year diplomatic career, he served full tours in seven different Latin American countries. He witnessed eight coups d'état and several bloody uprisings. He was a vocal advocate for greater Hispanic employment in the Foreign Service. He retired in 1995 as a member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of minister counselor.

In retirement, Mr. Uribe published three works of historical fiction that drew on his foreign affairs experience, as well as his memoir, *My Way*. He enjoyed visiting his ranch in Texas, where he managed a herd of cattle and rode his horse.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Sarah Meade Uribe; their three children: Anne Uribe Cespedes, Ernesto Uribe II and August Orville Uribe; and six adoring grandchildren: Fernando R. Cespedes II, Sarah H. Cespedes, Oscar A. Uribe, Andreas O. Uribe, Ernesto T. Uribe and Daniel K. Uribe.

Donations in Mr. Uribe's memory may be made to the Boy Scouts of America, Texas A&M at Laredo, or the World Wildlife Fund.

■ **John P. ("Basil") Wentworth**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Oct. 3 in Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Mr. Wentworth was born on Sept. 17, 1925, in Massachusetts. He served as a commissioned U.S. Navy officer from 1943 to 1950. He earned his B.A. from the Case Institute of Technology in 1946, and worked as an electronics engineer for Hughes Aircraft and Boeing as an electronics engineer and project designer from 1950 to 1953.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1955 and began a 23-year diplomatic career

traveling the world for the State and Commerce Departments. After his first posting, to Mexico as a consular officer, he was transferred in 1958 to Cyprus. There he was shot and wounded in a terrorist assassination attempt during the civil unrest.

Subsequent postings included Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Ethiopia and Israel. He served two tours in Washington, D.C., at the State and Commerce Departments, respectively. His last overseas assignment was to Australia, after which he retired in 1978.

Mr. Wentworth is remembered as a master wordsmith and punster who loved to discover new words in many languages. He spoke French, Spanish, Modern Greek, Hebrew, Russian, Amharic and chiShona (the last are African languages).

He wrote limericks and other poetry; composed chamber music, operettas and choral music; arranged music for band and chamber groups; and loved to sing. He played the tuba and euphonium in various brass and community bands and viola in community orchestras and chamber groups around the world. Friends and family members recall that he was kind to everyone, a real gentleman.

Mr. Wentworth studied at Dartmouth College, Case Western Reserve University, Princeton University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Foreign Service Institute and the University of Indiana in Bloomington.

He was predeceased by his wife of 58 years, Jocelyn. Mr. Wentworth is survived by his children, Carolyn Henderson (and her husband, John) and Peter (and his wife, Jan Sullivan); and his grandchildren, Jenna Barron (and her husband, Alex) and Joe Henderson. ■

Take One: What U.S. Diplomats Do

“America’s Diplomats”

A film produced by the Foreign Policy Association and airing on PBS stations this month

REVIEWED BY JANE C. LOEFFLER

Our diplomats do important and often dangerous work on our behalf, but explaining that work to a TV audience is no easy task.

First, diplomats have an array of job descriptions—from those who negotiate peace treaties or commercial pacts to those who promote American culture or issue entry visas. There is no single sound bite that can summarize or even suggest the full range of diplomatic activity.

Second, at distant workplaces, diplomats labor beyond the radar of most geographically challenged Americans, who have a hard time locating London, let alone Lima or Lomé, on world maps.

And third, what makes it especially hard to put diplomacy on film is that the best footage in terms of sheer drama is taken from the most glamorous or violent historical episodes. But alas, 99 percent of diplomacy is low-profile work, often best accomplished by low-profile people under less than ideal conditions.

If military history is about big battles, diplomatic history is about how those big battles are best avoided. How do you put that on TV and make it watchable?

To his credit, MacDara King has done an admirable job with his production of “America’s Diplomats,” a new film that airs on PBS stations this spring. (Noncommercial screening and viewing is available at <https://vimeo.com/152777066> with the password “Diplomacy.”)

Released by the Foreign Policy Association, the film aims to raise awareness



The film is strongest in its opening sequences that deal with the history of the Foreign Service and how and why a merit-based system evolved in the first place.

of this little known dimension of public service—its pitfalls and its pleasures.

The film is strongest in its opening sequences that deal with the history of the Foreign Service, and how and why a merit-based system evolved in the first place. It is strong, too, in graphically pointing out the growing risk associated with overseas assignments since the 1980s when terrorists first turned U.S. embassies into accessible targets.

Messages from Foreign Service officers and former ambassadors, all of whom are also career FSOs, underscore the film’s several themes. Ronald Neumann, for one, argues that “diplomats need to meet the public,” and Nicholas Burns speaks to the need to “balance risk and security.” Others place these issues squarely in the ongoing political discourse that too often separates the State Department from its critics.

The film is also effective in detailing peace negotiations, such as those led by Richard Holbrooke to end strife in Bosnia

and Herzegovina (1995), and in showing the symbolic power of U.S. presence when Edward Perkins was appointed the first black ambassador to South Africa (1986).

It also highlights the role of commercial diplomacy with a lively segment on how American diplomats made sure that U.S.-built Harley-Davidson motorcycle engines could roar on in Europe after European Union regulators tried to ban them.

The film features a diverse group of diplomats, but it is weak, perhaps, in focusing too much on the traditional hierarchy that for decades excluded many of the faces that now make up a majority of the Foreign Service. The retro look of the title slate—it is almost all white men, for example—points to an underlying tension in a film that tries to look backward and wants to look ahead, but can’t do both at once. (Something curiously arresting about that is the uncanny resemblance between Benjamin Franklin and John Kerry!)

Uneven film editing results in repeti-

tion, rapid shifts in pacing, and some overemphasis on death and destruction in a film with a broader purpose. The producers may feel that this will rivet viewers, but it may also confuse them and add to their sense of vulnerability. It is one thing to trace the escalating threat of terrorism directed at U.S. interests worldwide and quite another to linger over scenes of mayhem in a film that might otherwise instill confidence in the mission of the Foreign Service.

And while relatively few Americans died in or near the 1998 attack on the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, some 4,000 Kenyans were killed or injured there. Crimes of that sort are global in their impact. U.S. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell stood valiantly with her Kenyan hosts in the aftermath of that attack, yet the film does not convey that her stance was well understood here or that massive changes in embassy design followed directly. Furthermore, juxtaposing a jumble of terrorist incidents out of chronological order strips them of context and renders them meaningless as history.

William Harrop and Edward Marks, two career diplomats who also served as consulting producers, deserve accolades for their efforts to underscore the historic significance of the Foreign Service. While the film was not designed as a promotional device, the U.S. Diplomacy Center will surely benefit from any increased public awareness it generates.

More importantly, the film arrives at a propitious moment when diplomats see their authority increasingly marginalized, and some sense respect for their mission is waning. At such a time, if the film stimulates discussion, even heated debate, it is tremendously worthwhile.

Jane C. Loeffler is an historian and author of The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building

America's Embassies (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010). She has been honored by the Department of State for her work. She has contributed a number of articles to The Foreign Service Journal, primarily relating to embassy design and security.

Voices We Need to Hear

Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East

Edited by Donna Lee Bowen, Evelyn A. Early and Becky Schulthies, Indiana University Press, Third Edition, 2014, \$30, paperback, 504 pages.

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN W. BUCK

There is a reason why *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East* has recently come out in its third (substantially revised and updated) edition. Edited by a professor of Middle East studies and political science, an anthropologist, and anthropologist and recently retired Senior FSO Evelyn Early, this book is the best I can recommend for those wishing to go beyond the fear-mongering about the so-called Islamic State group to understand how most of the Middle East lives.

While written by academics, the book is far from being “academic.” It is usefully divided into sections: Generations and Life Passages, Gender Relations, Home, Community and Work and, probably particularly of use for those wanting real insight, Islam in Practice and Performance and Expression, which covers social media and recent events.

Each section contains several chapters, each of which is a topical essay by a sociologist, psychologist or other expert researcher. In the section, “Islam in Practice and Performance and Expression,”

chapters bear titles such as “Deposed Leaders, YouTube and the Contested Language of Arab Uprisings,” “Martyrs and the January 25 [Egyptian] Revolution,” “Sounds of the Syrian Revolution,” and also contain poetry from the Yemeni civil war.

Each chapter of the book starts with a concise, well-written summary of the results of the author’s research, making it easy for readers to locate chapters bearing on their particular interests.

What makes this book special is that so many of its contributors really are able to get inside what is going on in the Muslim Middle East, the so-called Arab “street.” Most of them have actually lived close to those they write about and speak the local language. Early, for example, spent five years studying women in a poor section of Cairo and is fluent in Arabic.

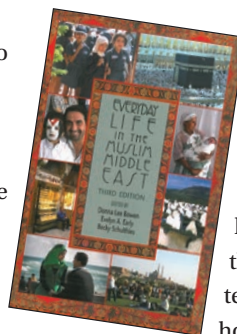
In their introduction to the book, the editors point out that the “everyday approach” is extremely helpful in understanding how Middle Easterners in specific local contexts perceive highly charged questions such as what is “traditional” and what is “modern” and how they mark their own distinctions between

what is “honorable” and what is “shameful.”

The essays based on this approach also demonstrate how family values are accommodated to workday demands; how religious preachers present their interpretations of Islam’s tenets on satellite television; and how class distinctions between workers and administrators on

factory floors contribute to the discontent that fueled the Egyptian uprising.

Despite media efforts to reduce the “Arab Spring” uprisings to an artifact of Twitter and other social media, much of



the story of the protests lies in the daily lives of merchants, workers, professionals and farmers examined in this book, the editors note.

What makes this book special is that so many of its contributors really are able to get inside what is going on in the Muslim Middle East, the so-called Arab “street.”

The introduction also provides the needed broader context for the book’s contents, covering Middle Eastern Muslim culture, the historical context of Middle Eastern life, and Islam and politics, as well as who the Islamists are. In addition, the authors discuss Middle Eastern responses to U.S. policy, remind-

ing us that two issues, Palestine and Iraq, “crystallize opposition to U.S. policy.”

“The question of the future of Palestine and the rights of Palestinians in

the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza remain the single largest area of concern for Middle Easterners,” they state, pointing to a study indicating that opposition to foreign military intervention is “the single largest cause of suicide bombings throughout the Middle East.”

In sum, this book provides excellent

insights into the base of society in the Muslim Middle East. And, as the editors point out, “We need to listen more, especially now, to the voices of Middle Eastern peoples in all their different social, political and economic circumstances and orientations, to understand their aspirations and frustration.”

For those serving in one of our “fortress” embassies in the Middle East, where getting to know those beyond the elite is difficult, this book should be a must-read. ■

After receiving a master’s degree from the Harvard Center for Middle East Studies, Stephen Buck served at eight Arab posts during 39 years in the Foreign Service. He is a longtime member of the FSJ Editorial Board.



Secretary of State John Kerry delivers the keynote address at the Foreign Affairs Day celebration at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, District of Columbia, on May 3, 2013.

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A Precarious Journey into Europe

BY DANIEL MORRIS

He had a skinny frame, big dark eyes and an eager disposition. People walked by his bench in one of Belgrade's biggest downtown parks without paying much attention to him or to the dozens of other refugees who had made temporary homes there. Given the language barrier, even the many who cared were at a loss to connect.

My friend Ivana and I stopped, and I offered an introduction in Arabic. His eyes brightened. His name was Ziyad and, within moments, he was rapidly explaining how the previous night he had fallen asleep on the grass outside his uncle's tent when his pillow suddenly disappeared. After registering the shock, he saw a man running away with his small bag. It contained his life: mobile phone, wallet and passport.

I was skeptical. In high school I gave \$20 to a struggling musician on a Harlem sidewalk who needed cab fare to get back to Queens. "Lesson learned," I said to myself after I got home and found that his MySpace page didn't exist.

Then Ziyad showed me the police report. Maybe this wasn't a con, I thought. "Shu maktoob?" he asked. What does this mean? The police had used a picture of Ziyad's passport saved on his uncle's



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phone to record his information, and now he wanted to know what it said. Ivana took the paper, narrowing her brown eyes on the tiny font.

"It says you're from Damascus, Syria. Born in 1988." I translated into Arabic. We stumbled our way through his description of the crime across three languages. The report was accurate, Ziyad sighed. He had recognized the thief—an Afghan refugee—as he fled, he said. The Serbian police explained that it would take weeks for a judge to hear the case, and Ziyad did not have that kind of time.

He had other concerns. "Yinfa fi euroba?" he asked. Will this work in Europe? These refugees were, of course, already in Europe. But from their perspective, they had yet to arrive. Europe was a place like Germany or Sweden. A place where if you didn't have a second cousin, at least you had an Arabic-speaking community.

Serbia didn't have that. It was somewhere to stop for a few days to rest, treat medical ailments from the onsite doctor, eat meals delivered from the back of a truck and maybe get a new change of clothes.

"I don't think so," I replied, doubting any well-meaning refugee agency in Hungary or Germany would give a Serbian police report much credibility, even if they could understand it. Ivana knew a translation and notary service a 10-minute walk away. But it was 4:30 p.m., and Ziyad

had a ticket for a 5 p.m. bus with his uncle and close companions to the Hungarian border.

We relayed the news from earlier in the day, even though Ziyad had probably been one of the first to know: the border was shut after the Hungarians installed the last section of a new wall. He smiled. Ivana and I exchanged looks of concern, but he wasn't bothered. "We'll see," he said flatly. Such discouraging reports had lost their capacity to deter; Ziyad had figured out a way past a half dozen borders in recent weeks.

I was still reflexively on guard for an oblique appeal. Now I was puzzled. Where was the shakedown? I decided that if he wasn't going to ask, I would: "Can I give you money for the translation and notary?"

"Thank you," he replied. There are two thank-yous in Arabic. Said with a slight nod, it means yes. Said with a slight blush, it means no. His face turned a shade of pink. Rejection.

We all rose from the bench. The brittle fall day was turning to dusk. Serbs going about their daily lives crisscrossed the park, fixing their gazes at the ground ahead. Ziyad joined his group nearby.

Ivana and I stood in silence for a moment. I had trouble summoning words to express the combination of inspiration, confusion and sadness I felt. We watched them walk toward the bus station, continuing their precarious journey into a Europe still uncertain how to look at them. ■



This photo was taken in the open-air market in Puerto Escondido, in Oaxaca, Mexico, in November 2014. The market sells everything from fresh cheese to fried grasshoppers and is a place to socialize as well as do your shopping. Sandals are all one needs in this warm climate! ■

Alex Davis was the community liaison officer in Nuevo Laredo, where his wife, Monica Davis, served as a vice consul in the consulate. She completed this, her first tour, in January, and the couple will head to Cambodia in November. The photo was taken with a Canon EOS 50D.

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