



Giants in Their Realms:
Close Encounters of the Celebrity Kind – Vol. 6

by

Kerry J. Byrnes



Okemos High School (Class of '63)



Giants in Their Realms: Close Encounters of the Celebrity Kind

VOLUME 6 (ANNEXES)

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- **Annex 1 – Autobiography of Kerry J. Byrnes**
- **Annex 2 – Reflections on My Okemos High School Teachers**
- **Annex 3 – “Inspiring Personalities” Interview with Kerry J. Byrnes**

Annex 1:

Flight Log for Kerry Joseph Byrnes (9/11/45 – present) -- A Short Autobiography

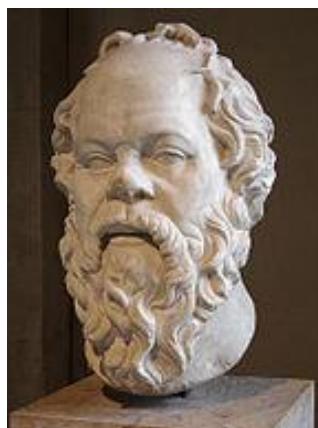


Nuovo Cinema Paradiso - Colonna Sonora--Ennio Morricone

(click on video link to hear the music)



Kerry J. Byrnes OHS '63



The unexamined life is not worth living. (Socrates (469 BC - 399 BC))

“Boeing Byrnes”

In the process of writing a memoir, I hit upon the idea of comparing myself to an airplane (“Boeing Byrnes”) that has made many stopovers in many realms around the world. The analogy reminded that airlines are required to maintain a flight log for each plane, in effect, a historical record of a plane’s flights, takeoffs, landings, problems and maintenance.

I became a member of the American Airlines' AAdvantage Frequent Flyer program on May 18, 1986. Since “Boeing Byrnes” has flown nearly two million miles just on American Airlines. If we go back to 1955 the log would tach out closer to three million miles flying on various airlines. I became an American AAdvantage One Million Miler (Gold for Life) a few years ago . Now just a little over 500 miles short of qualifying for Two Million Miler (Platinum for Life) status, I doubt that I will reach the rarified Ten Million Miler Level portrayed by George Clooney’s character, Ryan Bingham, in the film Up in the Air (2009).

At least the employers for whom I worked did not require me to travel around the world firing people as Clooney’s character did in the film. The common denominator of all jobs during my professional career remains today's most critical challenge-- sustainably create jobs, raise incomes, and reduce poverty in the rural sectors of the developing world.



Kerry (“Boeing Byrnes”) Building Model Airplanes (circa mid-late 1950s)

When I was a child, I spoke as a child,

I understood as a child, I thought as a child:

but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

--1 Corinthians 13:11 (Webster’s Bible
Translation)

I gave up building model airplanes and began flying on real airplanes during my primary school years. I took my first trip on an airplane in the summer of 1955. My father took the whole family to Europe for three months while on a consulting assignment.

The flight time pace picked up dramatically in 1963. My father moved the family to the Philippines, with interim stops in Ames, Iowa; Beaumont, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Tokyo, Japan, before finally touching down in Manila, The Philippines.

I became accustomed to flying to The Philippines and points in between during the years (1963-68) that I studied at Michigan State University (MSU). The vast horizons over the Atlantic and the Pacific as well as points south of the border, including Mexico and Colombia, became my world.

At Michigan State University I earned a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Sociology (1967) and a Master of Arts (MA) in Communication (1968). Some years later, I earned a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Sociology at Iowa State University (1975).

On completing my doctorate at Iowa State in 1975, I joined the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC). I worked with IFDC for 9+ years and flew to countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), carrying out various assignments including conducting a major literature review on fertilizer adoption and diffusion research; designing sociological input into fertilizer use studies in Bangladesh and Indonesia; and organizing, delivering, and evaluating fertilizer-related training programs funded by the United Nations Development Programme.

I left IFDC in 1984 to work in Washington, DC on projects funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID). My work focused on development projects in the LAC region. I also made two trips to Pakistan in the summer of 1987, conducting a study of water users associations (for the World Bank) and evaluating a farm forestry project (for USAID).

I logged a lot of miles on the “Boeing Byrnes” airframe, with a few hours down time for maintenance and repairs. I will spare you the detailed maintenance records (hernia surgery, cataract surgery, hip replacement surgery, cardiac surgery, etc.).

Highlights from the Mental Flight Log

1945-1959: I landed first in Dayton, Ohio (September 11, 1945) at the Wright Patterson Air Force Base, where my father served. My parents, Francis Clair Byrnes and Ethel Belle Overholt, still live in spirit and memory. My mother died in 1984 of emphysema and congestive heart failure (CHF) and my father followed in 1999 of adult primary liver cancer.

My earliest memory is a vague one from the late 1940s of our living room and porch of the small house in which my parents and I lived in a residential neighborhood of Dayton.

In 1948, at age three, the family moved to Worthington, Ohio. My father worked on improving agricultural journalism services at Ohio State University and in support of agricultural research and extension stations around the state of Ohio.

In 1951, at age six, I entered first grade at St. Michael Elementary in Worthington. I attended primary school there through the first few months of third grade when our family moved to East Lansing, Michigan. My father accepted a job as Associate Director of the National Project in Agricultural Communications (NPAC) at Michigan State College that, two years later in 1955, became Michigan State University.

I attended St. Thomas Aquinas primary school from 3rd through 8th grade. During 8th grade I played on the school's basketball team. Gus Ganakas coached us and the East Lansing High School team. He later became the head coach of the MSU Spartans basketball team. Later Gus became the color analyst on Spartan Basketball game radio broadcasts for many years on the Spartan Sports Network until retiring in late 2017.

My brother, Kevin Francis Byrnes, touched down in Columbus, Ohio on November 30, 1950. My parents took us on long road trips by car during the summers of our early years. In 1953 we took a trip by car to Ames, Iowa to visit my father's parents and then on to Los Angeles and back. Another trip took us across the Mackinac Bridge into Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

In 1955, our flight to Europe marked my first air travel experience. My father engaged in a summer-long consulting assignment in France and Germany. He helped improve agricultural journalism in the European countries. We visited several European countries (France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, England, and Ireland).

Two years later, on December 22, 1957, my sister Kathryn Ann Byrnes hit the runway in Lansing, Michigan. Both brother and sister bemoaned their birthdays getting lost each year in the holiday shuffle – Kevin’s amid Thanksgiving and Kathryn’s too close to Christmas.



Ethel, Kerry, Kathryn, Kevin, and Francis Byrnes (circa 1962)

1959-1963: I attended Okemos High School (OHS) in Okemos, Michigan, a town close to the Michigan State University (MSU) campus in East Lansing.

In athletics, I ran on the track and cross-country teams but never made the basketball team. Otherwise, I did not participate in after hour OHS extracurricular activities. Our home on South Hagadorn Road, across the street from MSU’s farm fields and campus, was actually closer to East Lansing than to Okemos. Unless my mother picked me up after an athletic practice, I usually boarded the school bus after school, went home, and did my homework.

During high school, I listened to a lot of Top 40 radio on WILS (1320 AM) with Erik O on the Radio—Lansing's voice of rock'n'roll. The father of one of the boys in our Boy Scout Troop 293 was the station manager at WILS. He commented during a troop outing that the worst song he had ever heard was Kathy Young's *A Thousand Stars*.

I always felt a particular affection for the song. Maybe that WILS station manager secretly tuned into the competing station (WJIM FM’s “music for the middle brow”) that featured so-called “easy listening” artists but not “highbrow” classical music!

Back then, in the day of 50,000 Watt AM clear-channel broadcasting, I also listened, during the evening, to disc jockey Dick Biondi (“the *wild I*-tralian”) on Chicago’s WLS (890 AM). A list of my favorite songs from my high school years is presented at the end of Annex 2.



Kerry in front of 4528 South Hagadorn Road (circa 1962)

The house was torn down a few years ago and a new building now sits on site.

Spring-Summer 1963: In mid-March 1963, our family moved to the Philippines. My father accepted a job with the Rockefeller Foundation to work at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, a small town in the province of Laguna, about an hour from Manila.

En route we made interim stops in Ames (to visit my father's parents, John and Gertrude Byrnes); Beaumont, Texas (to visit my father's sister, Betty); Los Angeles (to visit family on my mother's side); and Honolulu. The latter and, in particular, Waikiki, became my favorite travel destination to which I would return five times over the ensuing years.

In the Philippines, we lived in a one-story home at the foot of the hill at the far end of the housing compound's swimming pool.



Our Home in the Philippines

In the tropical humidity, by the time we hiked up the hill to the tennis court to shoot hoops or play tennis, we wanted to jump in the swimming pool to cool off. During one visit to the pool, I tried to do a back flip off the 3-meter spring board and cracked open the skin on the bridge of my nose. Fortunately I didn't break my nose, but I had two black and blue shiners.



Two shiners, a scraped nose, and damn lucky I didn't break my nose!

In early September, I returned to East Lansing to start my freshman year at MSU. I stopped in Ames, Iowa to visit my grandparents and hit the clothing stores to purchase some new threads. Maybe not the best dressed freshman at MSU, but at least I'd have a warm coat for the winter.

Top 40-radio was a whole new experience after being away from the States for half a year between mid-March and early September. The comparable Top 40 playlist of the Manila radio stations ran about six months behind the playlist of the tunes topping the charts on U.S. radio stations in the fall of 1963.

Suddenly I found that folk music (e.g., The Kingston Trio) had left the building and the British Invasion (e.g., The Beatles) had hit the U.S. shore, and the Beach Boys were no longer singing about sun, sand, and surfing but rather about girls, cars, and drag racing.

1963-1967: During my four years as an undergraduate at MSU, I took both required and elective courses, settling on a major in sociology. Of the majors of possible interest to me, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology required the fewest credit hours of courses for a major and provided me with the greatest flexibility to take courses offered by other departments.

In the summer of 1964, I took courses at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico (Toluca, Mexico) and lived with a Mexican family. I traveled easily around Mexico by bus and visited towns such as Mexico City, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, San Blas, Veracruz and Acapulco.

That immersion experience in a Spanish-speaking culture allowed me to gain conversational fluency in Spanish after studying this language for three years in high school and second-year Spanish at MSU.

In 1965, I attended the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines (Los Baños, Laguna) for a semester. The university's student newspaper published my first, and so far only, op-ed piece titled "The Filipino Student Speaks Up."

1967-1968: I completed my B.A in the summer of 1967 and immediately traveled to Lubbock, Texas to enter a Peace Corps training program for a community development assignment in Costa Rica. However, I ran afoul of the program's psychiatrist and psychologist. They booted me out of the training program with an "involuntary de-selection" (translation: I refused to sign any of the papers that would have constituted a voluntary departure).

I caught a ride with one of the Spanish language instructors back to Washington, DC, taking up temporary residence with Uncle John Lamont and Aunt Marie (my mother's sister) in Arlington, Virginia. I needed to determine my next step with the uncertainty of an induction (draft) notice for military service hanging over me.

In the meantime, and no doubt with back channel assistance of my father, MSU's Department of Communication (where my father earned his Ph.D. in 1963) invited me to enroll in the department's M.A. program during the 1967-68 academic year. I earned a M.A. degree, writing my thesis on *The Relationship of Dogmatism to Channel Preference and Learning in Classroom Communication*.

1968-1969: As I neared completion of my M.A. in 1968, my father sent a telegram suggesting that I contact MSU's Department of Agricultural Economics to explore a potential employment opportunity with MSU in Colombia. MSU had recently won a contract for a project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to conduct an agricultural marketing study in Colombia's Cauca Valley. The project became known as the "Proyecto Integrado de Mercadeo Urban-Rural (PIMUR) or, in English, the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project.

I learned of this opportunity from my father. The Rockefeller Foundation reassigned him in early 1968, from IRRI in the Philippines to Bogotá, Colombia, to plan the design of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). The Center was to be built near Cali in Colombia's Cauca Valley. During the summer of 1968, my parents had moved from Bogotá to Cali, the city that coincidentally would be the site for the PIMUR project.

On receiving the telegram, I contacted the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics to explore if the department might be interested in hiring me to work on the PIMUR project. I met with two MSU agricultural economists – Kelly Harrison and Don Larson – who would be working on the PIMUR Project.

Both soon departed for Cali. Kelly suggested that I follow up with him after they were situated, and then we could discuss what might be possible. A few days after arriving in Cali, I made an appointment to meet with Kelly. We reached an agreement. I would work for \$100 a month to conduct a marketing information and communication study in coordination with the project's other studies (e.g., inserting my research questions in the project's various survey questionnaires).

During this period I met a young lawyer, Sonia Gomez Naranjo. Sonia had just graduated from law school. PIMUR hired her to work on the project's marketing laws and regulations study. Sonia and I were married within a year on August 30, 1969.

1969-1975: With the PIMUR project winding down in the late summer of 1969, I enrolled in a doctoral program in Sociology at Iowa State University (ISU) in Ames, Iowa. In early September of 1969, I traveled from Cali to Ames, Iowa, leaving my new bride in Cali until I could get settled in Ames. A month later, my parents helped make the arrangements for Sonia to travel to Ames.

In the spring of 1970, I received a draft notice, claimed Conscientious Objector (CO) status, dropped out of school, and along with Sonia joined Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). Following an orientation program in Atlanta, Georgia, we were assigned to Miami, Florida.

On September 10, 1970, I appeared before the Selective Service Board (aka "the draft board") in Lansing, Michigan for an interview in support of my application for CO status. The next morning I phoned the Selective Service to find out the result of the interview and was told the Board had granted me CO status and that I could come to the office later in the day to pick up my new Selective Service ("draft") card.

Coincidentally that day – September 11 – was my 25th birthday and the draft card with the CO status was the best birthday card I have ever received!

I returned to Miami and continued my service with VISTA. I worked as a teacher assistant with young children in a local school's Head Start program, taught English in evening classes for Spanish-speaking Latino and Creole-speaking Haitian residents of Miami's Edison Little River neighborhood, and occasionally helped out in the local community center. During the day, Sonia worked with the same school's social worker who did not speak Spanish, helping as an interpreter when the social worker visited the homes of parents who only spoke Spanish; then, in the evening, Sonia also taught an English class.



VISTA Volunteers Sonia and Kerry in front of their Miami apartment

In early 1972, after serving nearly a year-and-a-half in VISTA, my Selective Service Board notified me that the Board's earlier order for me to report to VISTA for Alternative Service had been cancelled. Relieved of the legal obligation to perform Alternative Service, I immediately contacted Iowa State to see how quickly I could return to Ames to resume my doctoral studies. My advisor invited me to come back immediately!

From early 1971 through mid-summer of 1975, I continued with my coursework, focusing during the last six months on conducting the research for and writing my doctoral dissertation.

Our son, Shannon Alexander, arrived August 28, 1974. I spent many of the nights preceding and after his birth working on my dissertation into the early hours of the morning. Six months to the day after I started conducting the research for the dissertation, I successfully defended it and was welcomed as ISU's newest Ph.D. in Sociology. The dissertation, titled *A Construct of Social Action for Small Farmer Agricultural Development*, analyzed The Rockefeller Foundation-funded Puebla Project in Mexico in the context of the Social Action Model earlier developed by ISU sociologists George Beal and Joe Bohlen. This Social Action Model had been a staple in the training programs that my father had assisted in developing at Michigan State during the 1950s under the National Project in Agricultural Communications (NPAC).

During my last year at Iowa State, I learned that the Director General of the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), located in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, planned to visit the campus on a recruiting trip to interview candidates for a position as Sociologist at IFDC.

Shortly after the interview, IFDC offered me the job. Sonia and Shannon spent the summer of 1975 in Colombia, while I packed up our belongings, arranged for their onward shipment to Alabama, and drove from Ames, Iowa to Muscle Shoals, Alabama to report for my first post-Ph.D. job.



Kerry J. Byrnes in His Office at IFDC (1975-84)

1975-1984: At IFDC, I initially worked in the Agro-Economic Division, conducting a major review of the research literature on farmer adoption of fertilizer technology. I also collaborated with IFDC scientists designing fertilizer use studies in Asia (Indonesia and Bangladesh).

In 1979, I transferred to the Outreach Division in support of a United Nations Development Programme-funded project to design, implement, and evaluate IFDC's fertilizer training programs. Over my 9+ years with IFDC, I carried out short-term assignments in Africa (Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Upper Volta); Asia (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand); and Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Mexico).

In early 1984, my mother (Ethel) passed away and, disappointed by opportunities at IFDC (including not having been able to line up an overseas posting), I began looking for a new job, leading to an invitation by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to come to Washington, DC for an interview.

The interview went well. USAID offered me the job and my family packed up our belongings in Florence, Alabama and, in late October of 1984, moved to Reston, Virginia. By this time my father was working with the International Agricultural Development Service (IADS) located in Rosslyn, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. We moved into my father's townhouse until we could sell our house in Alabama and buy a home in Reston. As it turned out, we purchased a townhouse on the 7th hole of the Reston Golf Course, a few stone throws away from my father's townhouse on the 18th hole.

During the summers, our son Shannon had a lucrative business running a lemonade stand on the edge of the golf course until he discovered there was a greater demand for beer than lemonade (and, no, we told him he couldn't sell beer). Finally, the golf course's management told him that he was not allowed to hawk lemonade and Shannon had to shut down his illegal lemonade still.

1984-1989 – My initial job in Washington, DC was as an employee with the then so-called “Graduate School-USDA” (now “Graduate School USA”) under a contract with USAID and physically located in Rosslyn, Virginia in USAID's Office of Rural and Institutional Development in the Bureau for Science and Technology. Coincidentally, my office in USAID was in the building adjacent to the building where my father worked with IADS. During this period, I developed a concept paper and a proposed design for a research project on the untapped role of producer organizations in agricultural and rural development.

Towards the end of my first year this job came to a screeching halt. It came to light that USAID's contract with the Graduate School-USDA -- a private sector-based organization that did not receive appropriated funds from the U.S. Congress and thus was not a USG agency -- was not legal because it had been sole-sourced (not competitively let). The fallout was that USAID terminated the contract and I and several colleagues working with USAID under that contract were released.

I quickly became a freelance consultant, over the next two years, carrying out various assignments with the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Agricultural Cooperative Development International (ACDI), Associates in Rural Development (ARD), Chemonics International, Management Training and Development Institute (MTDI), Ronco Consulting, Winrock International, and the World Bank.

With the exception of two assignments in Pakistan and several U.S.-based consulting gigs (proposal writing and training courses), all my assignments were conducted in Spanish-speaking countries (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Peru). Around 1987, I returned to a full-time job with USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE), initially under a contract with Price Williams & Associates, and subsequently with Labat-Anderson.

Over this four-year period, I am proud of three work assignments:

- As consultant to the World Bank I conducted a field-based study in Pakistan that the Bank published under the title *Water Users Associations in World Bank-assisted Irrigation Projects in Pakistan*;
- As Senior Social Science Analyst in CDIE, *A Review of A.I.D. Experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects*; and
- As a consultant to MTDI, developing and conducting a Spanish version of the Management Communication for Development seminar that my father and Michigan State colleagues had originally developed under the NPAC project in the 1950s.

November 1989-September 22, 2012 – In November 1989, I resigned my position with CDIE to take a job with Chemonics International on the USAID-funded Latin America and Caribbean Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services Project (LAC TECH).

I served from 1989-1993 as the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Advisor, providing analysis, strategy development, and evaluation services to USAID's Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) and technical support to USAID Missions throughout the LAC region.

In mid-1993, USAID moved my position to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Over the next 19+ years, I worked for USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD) or, as currently known, the Office of Capacity Building and Development (OCBD). My initial role was serving as Institutional Development Advisor. I developed an Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop that colleagues and I conducted for NGOs in the LAC region.

In 1995, USDA in consultation with USAID redefined my position as Economic Integration and Free Trade Advisor in the Office of Regional Sustainable Development. I assisted USAID's LAC Bureau and Missions in designing trade capacity building programs to help the LAC region's smaller economies and developing countries prepare for participating in and benefiting from free trade agreements with the United States.

Around 2008, USDA in consultation with USAID redefined my position as Senior Program Specialist, focusing on two major areas:

- Provide technical support to the design and implementation of the U.S. Government's food security program (Feed the Future) in support of the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative; and
- In support of USAID's Local Capacity Development initiative, revitalize the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop. In early 2012 I traveled twice to Asunción, Paraguay to plan and conduct this workshop for Paraguayan non-governmental organizations (NGOs) being assisted under a USAID/Paraguay-funded democracy project.

September 23, 2012 – September 30, 2014 – I worked 19+ years (1993-2012) as a USDA Foreign Agricultural Service employee under a Participating Agency Services Agreement (PASA) between USAID and USDA. On 9/23/12, USAID transitioned my position in the LAC Bureau's Office of Regional Sustainable Development (LAC/RSD) to a new employment category.

I became a USAID Foreign Service Limited (FSL) employee with the new title of Agriculture Development Officer (or Senior Agricultural Advisor). In this role, I continued to represent the LAC Bureau and USAID field Missions in LAC countries in design, implementation, and evaluation of the Feed the Future program.

During this period, I also provided leadership to the design of:

- A Federal Trade Commission (FTC) project to identify and address constraints to competition in food security-related markets in Central America;
- An assessment of constraints to the growth of the horticulture sector in Central America, including research on drip irrigation of horticultural crops; and
- An Inter-Agency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to design and carry out a program of regional workshops and country-specific "train-the-trainer" courses on food safety to help LAC countries prepare for implementation of the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act.

Work-related Travel to the Developing World - Since the late 1960s, "Boeing Byrnes" carried out over 170 short-term assignments in 37 countries, racking up nearly 2 million miles on American Airlines plus untold earlier miles on overseas and domestic airlines. While many of those domestic airlines – Braniff, Capitol, Republic, Eastern, and Pan Am – are now defunct, "Boeing Byrnes" continued to rack up the miles.

Family – After my wife Sonia, son Shannon, and I moved to Virginia in 1984, Sonia earned a teacher's certificate from George Mason University and began teaching Spanish in local high schools.

On July 1, 2011, she retired after 20+ years of teaching. During retirement her passion has been travel to distant locales, most recently visiting Istanbul, Barcelona, Dubai, and her home city of Cali, Columbia.

Our son, Shannon, born in Ames, Iowa, August 28, 1974, graduated from Virginia Tech. In 2004, he completed a Masters at Marymount University and married Jeannine Long.

Shannon initially taught 6th grade math and science in a local primary school but decided he liked teaching younger children and switched to teaching 3rd grade until the 2015-16 academic year when the school's administration reassigned him to teaching 6th grade.

During basketball season, which runs nearly all year long, Shannon coaches basketball in Reston at his former high school (South Lakes High School), rising over several seasons from assistant freshman coach to freshman coach to junior varsity coach to, effective with the 2014-15 basketball season, assistant varsity coach.

Shannon's first and only child, Braden Ezequiel, was born September 17, 2008. For a seven-year-old, Braden is an amazing basketball player, already having a skill set far surpassing what his grandfather had at the same age.

My mother, Ethel Belle Overholt Byrnes, an ISU graduate (B.S. in Home Economics, 1938), died in Virginia in early 1984 of a weakened heart and emphysema. After my mother's passing, my father, Francis C. Byrnes (B.S. in Agricultural Journalism, Iowa State University, 1938; and Ph.D. in Communication, Michigan State University, 1963), continued working with Winrock International or other clients as a consultant for 15 years, until June 1999, when he took ill, dying of adult primary liver cancer just one month later, a few days short of his 82nd birthday.

My father always told me his motto was, "We must never quit trying." He never did until the day he died and neither will I.

Just eight months earlier (in October 1998), I accompanied my father on a trip back to Ames, Iowa, where Iowa State University awarded him its second highest honor – the Henry A. Wallace Award for his Outstanding Contribution to International Agriculture in Writing, Teaching, Research and Leadership.

Had my father and mother, surely now in heaven, still been alive at the time I retired from USAID, they would have been proud that the Agency honored their firstborn son with its second highest award, the Administrator's Outstanding Career Achievement Award for a career marked by exemplary contributions in the fields of agricultural development and trade capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Passions – When not “on the road,” spare time beyond family and home “moanership” is dedicated to film music, initially collecting film soundtrack records and eventually converting this passion into a sideline business (Kerry's \$ Collectible\$), selling records on ebay.com (tracer*007) and writing about film music, which you can sample by reading “Next Stop... Willoughby: Film Music Voyages in The Soundtrack Zone.

On the sports front, I follow MSU Spartan football and basketball and Washington Redskins football. During the NFL season, the Redskins-Cowboy rivalry is alive and well in Reston. Both my son Shannon and grandson Braden are avid Dallas fans. We argue over who is the better quarterback -- The Cowboys' Tony Romo or the Redskins' - and former MSU Spartan - quarterback Kirk Cousins. No Contest! No longer an argument as each of those quarterbacks is no longer with his former team.

In the fall of 2012, I started working on a memoir, a sort of reverse autobiography, of which this short autobiography is a part, writing about people that I've seen, met, studied under, and/or worked with who had a large or even small impact on my personal life and/or professional career. This OHS Alumni website will include a number of the memoir's vignettes, the first to appear being the vignette I wrote about one of my teachers, Dale Brubaker, who taught economics, history, and American Government at OHS in the early 1960s.

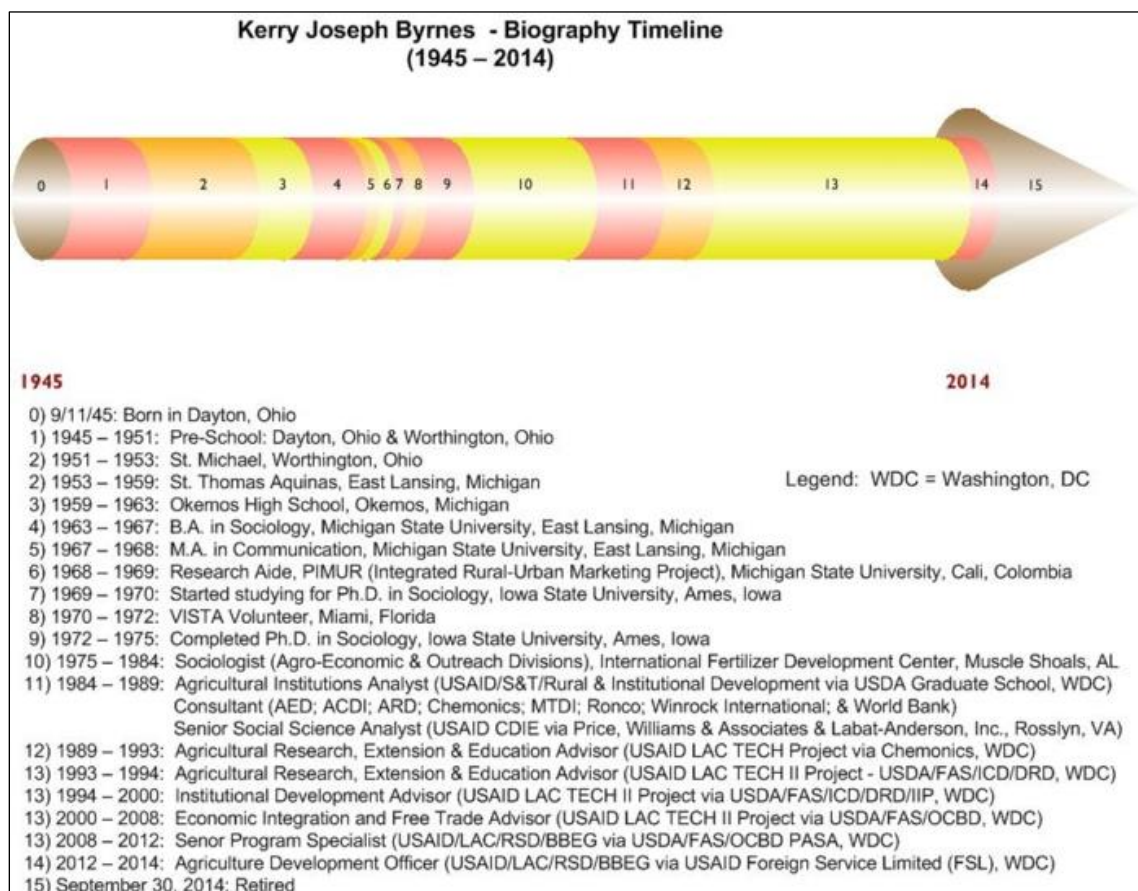
Retirement – I set September 30, 2014 as the date that I would retire, and on that date pulled “Boeing Byrnes” out of service, at least out of full-time employment. I redeployed the airframe to a healthier living program (i.e., less fast food and more walking), post-retirement hobby pursuits, and travel to Cali, Colombia (where Sonia's family lives) and other destinations which to date have included Waikiki, Hawaii; Cali, Colombia (twice); Istanbul Turkey; Barcelona, Spain; and Cancún, Mexico, with my next up trip now scheduled to Madrid, Spain; Morocco, and Lisbon, Portugal in late September 2018.

My decision to retire at the end of September 2014, a year earlier than previously planned, was driven, in part, by my difficult recovery from the open-heart surgery I underwent on July 5, 2013. But the decision was hastened by my employer's rapidly declining interest in agriculture and rural development in the LAC region, with USAID increasingly focusing more and more on Africa and less and less on economic growth and poverty reduction in the LAC region.

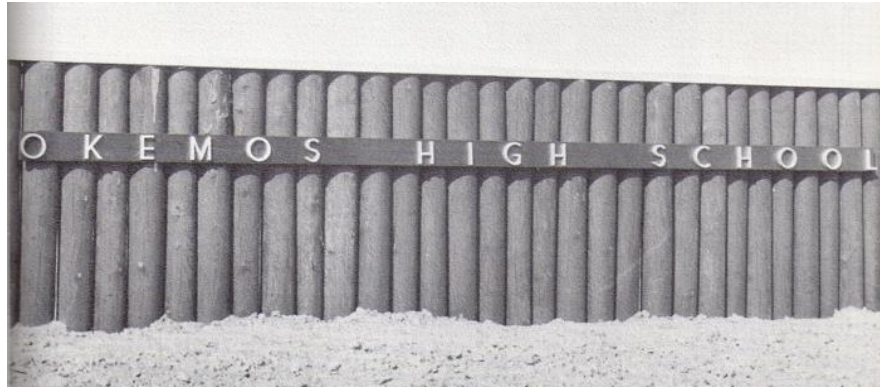
In January of 2016, Sonia and I downsized from the two-story house that we lived in for 22+ years to a three-bedroom condo in Reston Town Center, thus freeing us from the risk that one might have to shovel snow on any given winter day. Plus, just arrange for someone to come in weekly to water the plants, then lock the door, and take off on another mini-vacation to the next tropical - or temperate - port of call.

In February 2018 it was back to the hospital for a week to undergo and recover from minimally-invasive open heart surgery to replace the “repaired” mitral valve which had increasingly been declining in its performance. Compared with the nightmare recovery from my first heart surgery in 2013, I had a very quick recovery the second time round, in fact, doing so well with my walking regime and building back stamina that my cardiologist deemed that I didn’t need to go back into the three-month long (three one-hour visits per week) cardiac rehabilitation program.

The graph below presents a biographical timeline overview of the life and professional career of “Boeing Byrnes” up through retirement on 9/30/14.



Annex 2 - Reflections on My Okemos High School Teachers



Everything in high school seems like the most important thing that's ever happened in your life. It's not. You'll get out of high school and you never see those people again. All the people who torment and press you won't make a difference in your life in the long haul. (Mark Hoppus)

As families atomize and home influences deteriorate, the caring teacher may become the most influential adult in a student's life. (**Gordon Sabine** [see vignette], The Palm Beach Post, June 26, 1971)

There is, as one grows older, opportunity to look back on how the years spent in high school may have influenced the course of one's subsequent life. I attended Okemos High School (OHS) in Okemos, Michigan, just a few miles from East Lansing, Michigan and the Michigan State University campus. One OHS classmate recently wrote to me that she had not been inspired by her years at OHS. This prompted me to look back and reflect on whether and, if so, in what way(s) my high school teachers may or may not have influenced my life. Contrary to the Mark Hoppus quote introducing this Annex, while one might never again see one's teachers from high school, it's not necessarily the case that one's high school teachers “*won't make a difference in your life in the long haul.*” To the contrary, as Gordon Sabine (see vignette) observed: “*the caring teacher may become the most influential adult in a student's life.* Below, in alphabetical order of the teacher's last name, are some memories of my OHS teachers and how they inspired (or not) my life.



Okemos High School (OHS) Campus (*Tomahawk*, 1961)



Robert Baker (2/6/20 - 6/26/2011)

Robert Baker (physical education and basketball coach) – I tried hard for four years to make the OHS basketball team but to no avail. But along the way Mr. Baker alerted Mr. Bjorkquist, my biology teacher, that I would be a good prospect for track and cross country. In the 2nd semester of my senior year, perhaps as a sort of consolation prize, Mr. Baker offered to me the opportunity to earn credits as an assistant in his physical education classes. This honor's other two recipients were Bruce Champion and Gilbert Johnson who, like me, also just missed the cut on making the varsity basketball team.



John Bjorkquist

John Bjorkquist (Biology and Cross Country) – Biology was not a favorite subject—and even less cutting into frogs—but Mr. Bjorkquist made the class tolerable and motivated me to be a better runner in cross county, resulting in taking 2nd place in the annual Turkey Trot, losing to a German exchange student (Hans) who sprinted past me in the last 100 yards.



Cross country's most consistent runners, Hans Wiegand, Kerry Byrnes, Jim Allen, and Jim Somers run the course in preparation for the regional meet.



First row: Kirk Campbell, Don Black, co-captain Jim Somers, co-captain Jos Overholt, Kerry Byrnes, Hans Wiegand, Jim Allen. Second row: John Bjorkquist, coach; Pete Georgiady,

Devo Parrish, Bill Brackenfeld, Greg Miller, John Gordon. Third row: John Roswinckel, Glen Gronseth, Lynn Van Sickle, Paul Chasel, Will Schultz, Brock Hofeling.

After all that running across the countryside and/or in circles around the track field, I knew that neither sport – track or cross country – was my cup of tea; thus, I didn't try out for either sport when I became a freshman at Michigan State University.



Marcia Mae Boznango (7/14/26 - 9/4/02)

Marcia Boznango (English) – When OHS moved to its new campus facility at the beginning of my sophomore year in 1960, Ms. Boznango’s class was the first of the day. I really don’t have any memories of that class, perhaps a clue that she had little motivational impact on me. She sponsored the school newspaper and yearbook but I found neither extracurricular activity appealing, though years later, in my work for the U.S. Agency for International Development, for several years I edited a monthly newsletter on trade and trade capacity building that I called *LAC Trade Matters*. This, for a period of time, was an interesting task, even garnering an agency award as a “best practice.” My ability to put that newsletter together on schedule was probably more a credit to my father Francis C. Byrnes who had majored in journalism at Iowa State University, edited the college newspaper, and often helped me with editing my grade school and high school papers.



Dale Lee Brubaker (7/16/37 - 6/56/13)

Dale Brubaker (Government/Economics) – Dale Brubaker (see vignette) was the teacher who most inspired me at OHS. He was enthusiastic about ideas and engaged the students in reading and discussing popular issue-oriented books available as low-cost paperbacks. Mr. Brubaker’s approach to teaching inspired paying attention to him during class and working hard on class assignments, resulting in the only instance where my OHS grades over a semester rose from A- to A to A+. Unfortunately, given that I was in my senior year, I didn’t have other opportunities to take additional courses with Mr. Brubaker. I now see in retrospect that Brubaker sparked in me an interest in social issues, planting a seed that later influenced a decision to major in sociology at MSU. After my first two years at MSU and studying the university course catalogue, I discovered that majoring in sociology would allow me the most flexibility to take courses of interest in other departments, during a period of time in which I remained undecided about what I really wanted to do with my life.



Greta Gary

Greta Gary (World History) – This teacher did not inspire! I was doing fairly well in her world history course until she assigned writing a term paper on “WWI and WWII.” I thought this a rather expansive topic to cover in a term paper—and she hadn’t provided any guidance to trim the topic down to some aspects of these two wars. I blew off the task, calculating that, even with an F, the high marks I had already earned in the course would allow me to salvage at least a B. I’m sure my explanation to her why I didn’t turn in a paper (“even with an F I’ll still pass”) must have grated. Indeed, on the report card, she crossed off a mistakenly written D+ and replaced it with a B-. An unfortunate case study in the pitfalls of having students focused more on studying for grades than on learning. By contrast, learning was so much fun in Brubaker’s class that earning an A was a byproduct of a teacher inspiring such interest in a subject that one focused on learning and not on the grade.



Rachel Freund Grinnell (7/2/03 - 9/30/93)

Rachel Grinnell (English) – I didn’t see eye to eye with Ms. Grinnell, especially with the high heels she wore, but not because I wasn’t “tall” (I already had grown to what would be my adult height of 6’ 1”). I got on her wrong side when, as a freshman, I challenged her in English class that she had thrown words into the spelling bee that were not covered in any of our assignments. I already had brought a chip on my shoulder into Grinnell’s class because of having lost a spelling bee during grade school for spelling “judgment” as “judgement” (both forms are acceptable though the former is apparently the preferred American spelling). I recall that Grinnell had great posture as she walked around the room in high heels, shoulders back and chest out, with my male classmates whispering speculatively that her ability to parade around the classroom with such spectacular posture was learned at a much younger age and in another line of work of less repute. Looking back, my earlier education in English in a parochial primary school provided a better foundation for me in developing such skills as I have as a writer. There I learned how to diagram a sentence, which raised my awareness about how a sentence is constructed and what it needs to contain in order to be complete and not leave a reader pondering what is missing from a sentence that doesn’t make any sense.



Edward Joseph Kapalla (9/18/16 - 6/30/02)

Edward Kapalla (Industrial Arts) – One learned quickly not to mess with Mr. Kapalla or fool around in his “shop” class, a good thing because he taught respect for the tools/machines we had to work with for our various wood/metal projects. As a result, I survived “shop” class (and projects) without major or even minor injury. My one surviving shop project, a metal/wood candy/nut bowl, is shown below along with images of two other “creations” which had a shorter life span, notably the triangular-shaped cribbage board similar to the one shown below (God only knows what became of it over the years) and a thread spool rack (like the one shown below) that my mother did use at least up to the time that our family moved to the Philippines in 1963.



But these projects didn’t inspire me to devote my life to working with metal and wood, nor did industrial arts class equip me with a robust set of domestic skills that would later, as a home owner, be useful in fixing electrical, plumbing, and other problems around the house. Why didn’t “shop” teach us practical skills like how to repair a toilet, replace an electrical outlet, or fix a hole in a wall? Perhaps those were the life skills being taught to the gals and guys over in what was the then-called “home economics” class.



Joy M. Moore (2/26/03 - 3/8/02)

Joy Moore (Typing) – “Mr. Byrnes, you had more errors than any other student on the typing test. Please slow down and focus on accuracy.” I ignored her plea and by the time I was a freshman in college was making some extra cash typing term papers for my roommates. By the mid-1970s, I had upgraded from a Royal manual to an IBM Selectric – with my typing speed having increased to 70 wpm w/ three errors and 100 wpm w/ seven errors. This astounded the word processing center secretaries in the organization where I worked at the time. But I can’t give all the credit to Ms. Moore as my mother had previously enrolled me involuntarily in a summer typing class at East Lansing High School. Typing, as one now realizes in the computer age, would become one of the most useful life (or work) skills acquired in my youth, so much so that I now find it very difficult as an adult to pick up a pencil to take notes—perhaps because, as my typing got better, my penmanship got worse, especially handicapped from birth as a lefty.



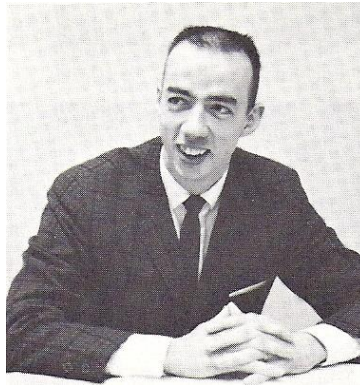
Bertha Leona Mosher (8/20/02 - 9/1/77)

Bertha Mosher (Spanish) – She was my Spanish teacher for three years until I decided I didn’t want to take Spanish 4 (literature). Before the start of my freshman year at MSU, I scored just a few points short of placing into Spanish 3, an indicator that Mrs. Mosher instilled in me a solid foundation of vocabulary and grammar. But it wasn’t until the end of my freshman year, when I traveled to Mexico the summer of 1964 to live with a host family in Toluca, that I really became fluent in Spanish—which I would chalk up as a second valuable life skill, one eventually proving an asset in seeking employment in Colombia for a year as a research associate on a MSU agricultural marketing study; and also a practical asset in meeting the young lady (Sonia Gomez Naranjo) whom I married in 1969 and who has stayed by me 46+ years and counting. My Spanish fluency also helped me for many years in designing and conducting adult-oriented workshops in agricultural extension methods, management communication for development, and organizational management for sustainability. For a while, I even was hooked on watching “*telenovelas*” (soap operas) on Univision until I saw the story lines as not that much different from one “*telenovela*” to the next.



John Nelson Nordrum (4/15/35 -)

John Nordrum (Geometry and Trigonometry) – These two courses were not my cup of tea but John motivated one to keep up with the class, do the homework, and pass the exams, albeit certainly not in my case with flying colors. Over a decade later, after taking Calculus 1 as a graduate student at Iowa State University, I couldn't recall enough high school "trig" to be able to keep up with Calculus 2. If there was one mistake I made in my selection of courses at MSU, it was not getting at least through Calculus 2 so that I'd have some command of integration which I later discovered to be a missing life skill that made it impossible for me to take more advanced economics and statistics courses at Iowa State University during my doctoral program.



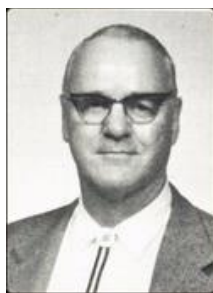
Gary Lynn Raymond (4/6/35 - 10/3/15)

Gary Raymond (Drivers' Education and Track) – The funniest teacher I had at OHS – young, hip, and a motivator, especially on the track field when I ran track and cross country. I am a better driver because of "good driver" attitudes instilled by Mr. Raymond. While having never had or caused an accident, I've been rear-ended four times, the first tie back in the 1960s driving my grandfather's car which didn't have a seatbelt, resulting in severe whiplash. Now I don't drive unless I have on my seat belt, thus saving me the next three times I was rear-ended.



Douglas Earl Richey (9/10/30 - present)

Douglas Richey (Algebra) – Taking algebra was a struggle, especially as I didn't see this as a useful life skill. Much later in graduate school when taking Calculus 1, it became clear how important equations were for understanding differentiation. But Mr. Richey hung in there with me one semester as my grade was tanking from A- to B- and then F on two consecutive quizzes. I realized that this wasn't going to end well, motivating me to get some tutoring from our next-door neighbor (Edward Norton) who was a math teacher at Sexton High School in Lansing, Michigan. By semester's end, with Mr. Norton's tutoring and taking practice tests, I wowed Mr. Richey earning an A on the last two tests, salvaging a B- for the course.



Joseph Hutton Walbridge (4/3/15 - 4/4/86)

Joseph Walbridge (Chemistry) – Mr. Walbridge engaged the students and I survived, even with my lab partner (Wendy Hamner) and I identified only one of four elements in the qualitative analysis. Mr. Walbridge, impressed by our analytical procedures and logical deduction, yet gave us a B! I didn't find chemistry interesting or of great relevance, especially with the outcomes of lab "experiments" generally pre-determined, unless one put the class at risk of an explosion for not following procedures. For me chemistry was an exercise in rote learning and the antithesis of studying social issues which I found much more interesting as I later discovered when I took Mr. Brubaker's government course during my senior year.

What I learned at OHS – The first thing I recall learning at OHS was the "culture shock" I experienced my first day as a freshman. In the last class of the day, I needed to ask a question, so raised my hand. When the teacher recognized me, I stood up to ask my question, immediately realizing that I had not seen any other student stand up all day long and that more than a few students in the room were having a bit of a chuckle over what they had just witnessed. Of course, I brought into the OHS classroom the same way I had asked questions during the previous eight years of having been a student in a Catholic primary school. Standing up to ask a question was a way of showing respect to the nuns who had been my teachers throughout primary school.

But I quickly realized at OHS that there was another world out there different from the parochial schools (St. Michael in Worthington, Ohio and St. Thomas Aquinas in East Lansing, Michigan) that I attended for eight years under the tutelage of dedicated but strict nuns. Perhaps some nuns were much better teachers—and motivators—than others, but this was even clearer when none (no pun intended) of my OHS teachers wore habits that were a constant reminder to be respectful, whether one liked the nun as a teacher or not. And, at OHS, one's teachers could be women or men, girls didn't wear the same dreary uniform day in and day out, and I didn't have to go to Mass every day where I often served as an Altar Boy.

Beyond required courses, one could choose which courses to take and how those would add up to being prepared to go to college. One had to balance studies and extracurricular activities, though in high school and later college I really wasn't interested in extracurricular activities—and didn't start dating until my freshman year at Michigan State University (MSU). What I ultimately learned from being a student at OHS really came down not so much to the

courses taken or the knowledge and skills acquired but rather to what I learned from interacting with other students and the adults who were my teachers, advisors, activity sponsors, coaches, mentors, and role models (or not).

Some question what is the real value of primary school, middle school, high school, or even college since each is an interim point along the way to growing up, finding one's place in life, and eventually landing a first job. Indeed, first jobs, part-time in high school, college, or thereafter, be they helping around the house, babysitting, mowing lawns, cleaning dormitory lavatories, or being a factotum in a campus office, may have had a bigger impact on growing up, becoming an adult, and pursuing a professional career.

To the point, the time I spent working in the Michigan State's Office of International Programs; meeting developing country students invited into our home by my parents; attending international films at MSU; and traveling to Europe, Mexico, the Philippines, and other countries, all before graduating from college, opened my eyes, more than any course I took at OHS or later MSU, to a world beyond Worthington, East Lansing, or Okemos that was incredibly more interesting than the one in which I had spent my formative years. Indeed, that broader world, especially the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean would become the focus of my professional life over the coming decades working in international agricultural and rural development.



Kerry at OHS

In doing research for this book, I discovered that Okemos, Michigan and Washington, DC (where I now live in nearby Reston, VA) in recent years shared the challenge of transitioning to a new moniker for a hometown team. For Okemos High School, the transition is already underway and reflected below in the school's old and new logos:



Former Okemos Chieftans logo honored Chief Okemos of the Chippewa Tribe



New Okemos Chiefs logo designs being considered by Okemos High School

As upsetting as it was for many Okemos students, alumni, and fans that the Okemos School Board changed the school's mascot and logo, a bigger controversy brews here in Washington, DC where there is a clamor for Dan Snyder, owner of the National Football League Washington Redskins team, to change the team's name.



Controversies such as the above, however, were not on my mind during my 7th-8th grade school years at St. Thomas Aquinas (see **Father Mac** vignette) or during my high school years at Okemos High School. What often was on my mind were the melodies and lyrics of the pop songs of the day. The following provides a partial listing of my favorite pop songs from those years (1957-63). How many of these songs also were among your favorites?

1957 – Little Darlin' (Diamonds)

1957 – Diana (Paul Anka)

1957 – Round and Round (Perry Como)

1957 – Honeycomb / Kisses Sweeter Than Wine (Jimmie Rodgers)

1958 – Volare (Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu) (Domenico Modugno)

1958 – Catch A Falling Star / Magic Moments (Perry Como)

1959 – Venus (Frankie Avalon)

1959 – Dream Lover (Bobby Darin)

1959 – Broken-Hearted Melody (Sarah Vaughan)

1959 – The Big Hurt (Miss Toni Fisher)

1959 – Pretty Blue Eyes (Steve Lawrence)

1960 – Footsteps (Steve Lawrence)

1960 – Mission Bell (Donnie Brooks)

1960 – Dreamin’ (Johnny Burnette)
1960 – Poetry in Motion (Johnny Tillotson)
1960 – A Thousand Stars (Kathy Young with The Innocents)
1960 – You’re Sixteen (Johnny Burnette)
1960 – Corinna, Corinna (Ray Peterson)
1961 – Rubber Ball (Bobby Vee)
1961 – Spanish Harlem (Ben E. King)
1961 – Runaway (Del Shannon)
1961 – A Hundred Pounds of Clay (Gene McDaniels)
1961 – Travelin’ Man / Hello Mary Lou (Ricky Nelson)
1961 – Portrait of My Love (Steve Lawrence)
1961 – Moody River / Speedy Gonzales (1962) (Pat Boone)
1961 – Raindrops (Dee Clark)
1961 – This Time (Troy Shondell)
1961 – Tonight (Could Be the Night) (The Velvets)
1961 – Calendar Girl / Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen (Neil Sedaka)
1961 – Angel Baby (Rosy & the Originals)
1962 – Duke of Earl (Gene Chandler)
1962 – Johnny Get Angry (Joanie Sommers)
1962 – The Loco-Motion (Little Eva)
1962 – I Remember You (Frank Ifield)
1962 – Venus in Blue Jeans (Jimmy Clanton)
1962 – Bobby’s Girl (Marcie Blane)
1962 – Scaled with a Kiss (Brian Hyland)
1962 – I Remember You (Frank Ifield)
1962 – Rhythm of the Rain (The Cascades)
1963 – Blame It on the Bossa Nova (Eydie Gormé)
1963 – Our Day Will Come (Ruby & the Romantics)
1963 – Can’t Get Used To Losing You (Andy Williams)
1963 – I Will Follow Him (Little Peggy March)
1963 – Sukiyaki (Kyu Sakamoto)
1963 – Then He Kissed Me (The Crystals)
1963 – Be My Baby (The Ronettes)
1963 – Fools Rush In (Ricky Nelson)
1963 – Forget Him (Bobby Rydell)
1963 – Alice in Wonderland (Neil Sedaka)
1963 – Your Other Love (Connie Francis)

Annex 3 - “Inspiring Personalities” Interview with Kerry J. Byrnes

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

(John Quincy Adams)

On October 11, 2012, I was checking my messages on LinkedIn.com and read the following message sent by Codrin Paveliuc-Olariu:

My name is Codrin. We have been connections on LinkedIn for a while and our paths have crossed in the LAC through our organizations, but we never met unfortunately. I would like to interview [you] (via e-mail would be the easiest way) for the YPLD website (www.ypld.org). We have started a while back a new section called "Inspiring Personalities" (see here: <http://www.ypld.org/2011-12-29-12-17-25/inspiring>) where we interview different people that could make a difference in the life of young people (and, why not, in the world). Would you agree to answer to a few questions and to send us 2-3 photos? Usually we try to keep the interview to 5-6 questions so it won't take too much of the respondent's time. Regards, Codrin [Note that the ypld.org website is no longer active.]



Codrin Paveliuc-Olariu

I didn't immediately respond but several weeks later wrote back to Codrin to ask if he would send the questions to me for review and that I would let him know if I would be able to respond.

On receiving the questions, I thought to myself that answering them would be a breeze; I'd just craft a few sentences to respond to each and be done with the task. After writing back to Codrin to let him know that I would send him my responses, I turned my attention to answering each question.

But, as I started writing, I began to remember things that I thought would be of interest to a young professional aspiring to a career in the international development field. In the end, and after two close friends and colleagues—David D. Bathrick and Huntington Hobbs—provided feedback on my draft, I finally was able to answer the seven questions in only eleven pages!

I wrote to Codrin to ask if he had any requirement that my answers not exceed some page length, telling him that my draft was eleven pages. When he wrote back that the page length would not be an issue, I emailed the answers to him.

Several weeks later, Codrin responded to advise that the article was now online and promoted through social media. Unfortunately, the ypld.org website is no longer active. However, at that time, when I clicked on the link that Codrin sent, I was surprised to read that Codrin hailed my interview as: **“THE GREATEST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT JOB HANDBOOK EVER** – For those interested in getting started in a career in International

Development, we have the greatest career guide ever. We have interviewed USAID's Kerry Byrnes, Agriculture Development Officer with the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.” Here now are the written answers I provided for the interview questions.

1. Your main specialization is Sociology. How did you become interested in agriculture and, more important, in international development?

Several role models and life events influenced my interest in Agriculture and International Development. This story begins in East Lansing, Michigan in early 1963 where my father (Francis C. Byrnes) had just completed his Ph.D. in communication as a behavioral science and had accepted an offer from The Rockefeller Foundation to head the Office of Communication at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Philippines. My father's professional career in agricultural communication actually had begun 25 years earlier when he took a job working as the editor of a small-town newspaper in Iowa, following graduation from Iowa State University with a B.A. in journalism. Later, after serving in the Army Air Force, he took a job with Ohio State University to provide communication support to Ohio's agricultural extension service. Then, in 1953, he left OSU to take a job with Michigan State University (MSU) as the Deputy Director for the National Project in Agricultural Communications, which also led to earning his doctorate.

The family's move to the Philippines in March 1963 was my introduction to the developing world and the challenges of agricultural development. During the summer of 1963, I accompanied my father on a number of field trips that afforded opportunity to see lots of paddy rice fields and to gain a glimpse of life in the rural villages of a developing country. At the end of that summer, I returned the States to start my undergraduate studies at Michigan State University, deciding to major in Sociology. It so happened that the Department of Sociology was the university department that required the fewest credits being earned in one's major in order to graduate with a B.A. This opened the door – and provided the flexibility – for me to take elective courses in such diverse fields as history, anthropology, psychology, and communication.

During this period, a second role model was Dr. Everett Rogers who, like my father, had followed an academic path from ISU to OSU to MSU, but had arrived at MSU with a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct a major research project on the adoption and diffusion of agricultural technologies in Brazil, India, and Nigeria. I learned about this study when I enrolled in Rogers' Communication of Innovations course that focused on the adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations in the developing world. One such innovation – the IRRI-developed IR-8 “miracle rice” variety – would subsequently spark the Green Revolution in Asia in the latter part of the 1960s.

While studying at MSU, I started to consider the possibility of applying to the Peace Corps as a way to get into the field of international agricultural development. Interestingly, while my father worked with MSU, he also served as deputy director of one of the Peace Corps' first training programs, the graduates of which were assigned to Nigeria. As I neared graduation, I applied to and was accepted by the Peace Corps to train during the summer of 1967 for an assignment working in rural community development in Costa Rica. However, eight weeks into the training, the Peace Corps' psychiatrist and psychologist deemed me unfit to serve as a Volunteer—and sent me packing home.

The experience of getting kicked out of the Peace Corps was a crushing blow that, fortunately, didn't kill my resolve to find a way to move forward. As a colleague recently put it, there are two lessons here: “don't let others define your career aspirations” and “push and define your own destiny.” In practical terms, this meant that I had to find another way to get into the international development field—and, as a first step, decided to go back to MSU in the fall of 1968 to study for a M.A. in Communication while continuing to look for another opportunity to find a job in international development. Nearing completion of my M.A. thesis in the summer of 1968, I received a telex from my father who

had recently been transferred by The Rockefeller Foundation from the Philippines to Colombia to assist in establishing the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) outside Cali in the Cauca Valley.

The telex informed me that MSU had recently won a project with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct an agricultural marketing study in, of all places, Colombia's Cauca Valley. Coincidentally, I had been planning to visit my parents in Cali after completing my M.A. On learning of MSU's new project, I reached out to MSU's Department of Agricultural Economics – both at MSU and once I arrived in Cali (the site for the project's office) – to explore if it might be possible for me to work on the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project (or PIMUR by its Spanish acronym). This led to an agreement that I would design and conduct a Market Information and Communication study as an integral component of the overall project.

Some highlights of my experience with the PIMUR project were the opportunity to work with professionals in other disciplines, notably agricultural economists; learning about agricultural marketing; and the practical experience of applying research skills (e.g., questionnaire design) that I had learned as a student at MSU. Then, in the late summer of 1969, I received a letter from Iowa State University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology offering me a research assistantship to study for a Ph.D. in sociology. I traveled to Ames, Iowa in the fall of 1969 to take up my doctoral studies at ISU through mid-1975. My period of study at ISU, however, experienced a 1.5 year interruption (mid-1970 to early 1971) as I set aside my doctoral studies program in order to serve as a VISTA Volunteer in a Miami community, where I taught English classes for Spanish-speaking and Haitian residents and also worked with young children in a local primary school Head Start program.

On returning to ISU in early 1971, I continued taking the required sociology courses but also a mix of statistics and economics courses, with a view to following in my father's footsteps to become a social science researcher at one of the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) such as IRRI or CIAT. One avenue that I explored as I neared completion of my doctorate in 1975, was applying to The Rockefeller Foundation's Postdoctoral Fellowship program that funded recent Ph.D. graduates to carry out research at one of the IARCs. But that option evaporated when I received a letter from The Rockefeller Foundation stating that, given my father's employment with the foundation, the foundation felt it would not be fair to grant me a fellowship—another crushing blow!

But, shortly thereafter, representatives of two IARCs – the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA in Nigeria) and the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC in Muscle Shoals, Alabama) – visited the ISU campus in search of candidates to fill social science research positions at each center. While the interviews with the center representatives went well and I was hopeful of receiving a job offer from IITA, it was IFDC that offered me a job to serve as the Center's Sociologist. After arriving at IFDC during the summer of 1975, I worked over the next 9+ years on various assignments, first in the Center's Agro-Economic Division and later in the Outreach Division, including numerous short-term assignments to various African, Asian, and Latin American countries.

A lesson here for a young professional aspiring to find a career in International Agricultural Development is to keep trying, to keep looking for job opportunities in this field, and, as colleague reflected, “try every door that you can” and “take every international experience that you can.”

2. You first worked in the private field moving then to the government sector, more specifically to USAID. How would you describe these two experiences?

Over the years, folks often asked: “Do you work for USAID?” My reply: “No, but I try to!” This is because, until recently, my various employers were not USAID, although almost all the jobs I've held were funded by USAID, as the following examples illustrate:

- As a MSU graduate student, I served as one of the trainers in a couple of USAID-funded “Management Communication for Development” training courses (which course had been developed by my father during his early years with MSU);
- As an ISU graduate student, I worked on the USAID-funded “Indicators of Social Development” project, including writing a report on indicators of social development for the small-farmer agricultural sector;
- Working with IFDC for 9+ years under USAID and UNDP funding, including conducting a major literature review on adoption and diffusion of fertilizers and assisting with the development, conduct, and evaluation of the Center’s training courses;
- From late 1984 to late 1989, working in Washington, DC as a consultant to private sector firms holding USAID-funded contracts to carry out research studies, training courses, area assessments, project evaluations, etc., including a major study of USAID experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects; and
- From late 1989 to mid-1993, working as the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education (AgREE) Advisor for a private firm – Chemonics International – on the USAID-funded “Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) Project.”

Near the end of phase one of the LAC TECH project, as Chemonics was beginning to prepare its proposal to bid on the project’s phase two, I learned that USAID’s Request for Proposal for phase two of the LAC TECH project did not include the AgREE advisor position. However, later that same day, I learned that USAID planned to place the AgREE advisor position under an interagency agreement that USAID had with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Once that position was advertised, I applied for it to Office of International Cooperation and Development in USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service. On being hired under that interagency agreement in mid-August 1993, I worked as a USDA employee for the following 19+ years until 9/22/12.

While employed by USDA, I worked directly with the Broad Based Economic Growth team in USAID’s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (Office of Regional Sustainable Development). As Presidential Administrations – and USAID priorities – changed over the years, I worked on a range of development issues, including agricultural research, extension, and education; institutional strengthening of NGOs (developing a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability training course); trade capacity building during the negotiation of various Free Trade Agreements with eight different Latin American and Caribbean countries; and, most recently, food security under the Feed the Future initiative – the U.S. Government’s program in support of the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative.

For various bureaucratic reasons, the end of my employment with USDA on 9/22/12 transitioned the very next day, 9/23/2012, into being hired by USAID under the Foreign Service Limited program as an Agriculture Development Officer – an employment option that I had initially explored when I had applied for employment with USAID over 40 years ago in the late 1960s or early 1970s. At that time, USAID sent me two different letters – “Congratulations, you are qualified to serve as an Agriculture Officer” and “Congratulations, you are qualified to serve as an Agricultural Economist.” However, both letters continued: “Unfortunately, we currently do not have any openings but we’ll keep your application on file.” Now, 40 years later, there finally was an opening to hire on as a USAID employee. Now, when people ask if I work for USAID, I can truthfully answer: “Yes!”

One lesson to be drawn from the above is to “keep trying” as each job will provide opportunities to learn, gain experience, and expand your contacts, ultimately opening doors to new job opportunities.

3. The work in international development presents many challenges, especially in regions confronted with natural disasters and very harsh socio-economic conditions such as the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. Please share with us a few experiences that you remember most vividly.

While the LAC region has made considerable progress on development over the years, many countries (or sub-regions thereof) must yet overcome various constraints to accelerating broad-based economic growth and reduction of poverty. While I once did work on a short-term USG interagency response to a natural disaster (1998's Hurricane Mitch in Central America), the longer-term "disaster" in the LAC region is not one that is natural in origin but rather man-made, this "disaster" being that so many of the region's countries are underinvesting in Agriculture, hence underexploiting the potential for Agriculture to serve as an engine or driver for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Addressing this challenge is a priority objective of the USG "Feed the Future" initiative which, in the LAC region, is providing agricultural and nutrition assistance in three countries – Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti. However, as the recent book *Why Nations Fail* highlights, many LAC countries continue to be constrained by extractive political and economic institutions that put a hard brake on more inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, unless reforms are made to remove anti-competitive practices (e.g., cartels that result in a lack of competitive pricing in fertilizer, transportation, food, and other markets). Looking to the longer term, climate change, as one recent article documented, is now threatening one million small-scale maize and bean producers in Central America. Just as Rome was not built in a day, Agriculture in the LAC region continues to offer many challenges that stand in the way of achieving sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

Looking back over the past 50 years that I've been a student of or worked in the field of International Agricultural Development, there have been "highs" (the Green Revolution of the 1960s-1970s) and "lows" (the fuel and food price crises of the mid-1970s as well as those of the 2000s). In the Latin America and Caribbean region, some developing countries have experienced considerable development (e.g., Chile) while others have continued to languish (e.g., Haiti), a trend that is also readily observed in the diversity of development in the countries of Asia and Africa. As this trend likely will continue over the next 50 years, another lesson that can be drawn about pursuing a career in International Agricultural Development is the following -- Sometimes it will be thrilling. Sometimes it will be scary. Sometimes it will be frustrating. But, ultimately, it will always be rewarding.

4. In international development and, especially, in agriculture and rural development, work never ends. What would you say to a young professional entering this field?

What would I say to a young professional entering this field? Below are some of the responses that come to mind:

- First, seize the earliest opportunity to get out into the field as quickly as possible. There is no substitute for obtaining as soon as possible whatever experience you can obtain living and working in a developing country. For example, over the years, I've observed that many returned Peace Corps Volunteers have used the experience that they gained working in the Peace Corps as a springboard for earning a graduate degree and then going on to work in international development in Agriculture (or other development fields such as health, education, or environment) in a variety of employment settings. Remember that the challenges to achieving accelerated agricultural and rural development are not limited to the LAC region but are also present in many countries of Africa and Asia.
- Second, as an aspiring young professional, figure out if you are more interested in generating new, science-based knowledge (in which case, build your engagement with development on a foundation of doing university-based research, teaching, and outreach) or in solving real-world development problems. In the latter case, there is a wide

range of potential employment opportunities in development, ranging from donor country government agencies; international and developing country NGOs; for-profit consulting firms; regional and multilateral banks; and even private sector (commercial) firms seeking to expand into developing country markets, demonstrate and practice corporate social responsibility, and explore and enter into public-private partnerships or alliances for win-win sustainable delivery of public and private goods and services.

- Third, keep in mind the advice given by my father's doctoral committee chair – pursue every opportunity to get as much education and diversity of work experience as possible until you turn 40, as this is the best way to build a solid mix of technical knowledge and practical work experience, information processing skills, and interpersonal communication abilities (e.g., to work in teams). Then zero in on identifying the job or career that you want to pursue over the next quarter century – or longer!

At the same time, along the way and at least up to when you turn 40, periodically revisit and answer the following three questions which my father always offered to young professionals seeking career development advice. Try to answer the first before going to the second, and the second before going to the third:

1. If you could have your wish, what work would you like to be doing 10 years from now?
2. Looking at your situation (e.g., currently as a student or as an employee of the organization where you currently are working), what do you expect that you will most likely be doing 10 years from now?
3. Looking at your current situation, what do you fear that you will most likely be doing 10 years from now?

It is said that there is nothing that so focuses the mind as the thought of one's own execution on the morrow. If, as a young professional, you reflect on these three questions, it is likely that your answers will motivate you to develop – or revise – your career development plan and rededicate yourself to vigorously implementing the plan.

- Fourth, as a former USAID colleague once told me back in 1985, also consider the following three questions (variations on the above three questions):

1. What kind of work do you want to do?
2. Where do you want to do this work?
3. Who do you want to work with to carry out this work?

If you can get a job meeting your answer to one of the questions, you will be lucky! If you can find a job meeting your answers to two of the questions, you will be very lucky!! And, if you can land a job meeting your answers to all three questions, you will be extremely lucky!!!

- Fifth, over the course of a career in International Agricultural Development, you will have an opportunity to “make a difference.” Early in your career you will have the opportunity to impact dozens of lives. As you move up in experience and responsibility, you will impact hundreds of lives or even thousands or more. This is a career worth pursuing.

5. In the past years, interest in agriculture and international development among young people decreased dramatically. How could we motivate young professionals to get involved in this field?

During a seminar held at a major U.S. Land Grant University, my father asked how many of those in attendance – students and professors – work in Agriculture. He was surprised by how few in the audience raised a hand. So he then

asked: “How many of you eat food each day?” Of course, everyone raised a hand! The point, of course, is that Agriculture impacts on our daily lives in so many ways.

Last night I was looking on the Internet at some web pages providing information on how many merit badges have been discontinued by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). One badge, discontinued in 1975, was the Corn Farming badge I had earned back in the early 1960s on my trek to becoming an Eagle Scout. As I reviewed the list of discontinued badges, it became clear many were Agriculture-related, including:

Agribusiness (discontinued in 1995); Agriculture (1975); Animal Industry (1975); Bee Keeping (1995); Beef Production (1975); Botany (1995); Citrus Fruit Culture (1952); Cotton Farming (1975); Dairying (1975); Farm and Ranch Management (1987); Farm Arrangement (1973); Farm Record and Bookkeeping (1958); Forage Crops (1975); Fruit Culture (1952); Gardener (1911); Grasses, Legumes and Forage Crops (1958); Hog and Pork Production (1958); Nut Culture (1954); Poultry Farming (1913); Sheep Farming (1975); Small Grains (1975); Small Grains and Cereal Foods (1958); Soil Management (1952); and Veterinary Science (1995), among a few others.

That the BSA would discontinue various Agriculture-related merit badges in the United States only reflects the transition of the U.S. economy away from being largely an agrarian society and toward becoming an economy in which Agriculture is only a small percentage of an economy now largely dominated by the industry and services sectors.

Along the way, many of those discontinued merit badges were renamed, replaced, and/or combined into new merit badges to keep pace with the times as America’s population of youth eligible to become Boy Scouts became increasingly urbanized, although some of the newer badges fortunately still do have an Agriculture focus. However, even as modernization entails, almost by definition, that the percentage of a country’s population working in agriculture declines, one should not lose sight that Agriculture in a globalized economy, especially when value-added agroindustrial processing is factored into the equation, continues to be a major engine for economic growth through primary production, value-added and agro-industrial processing, and agricultural trade in local, regional, and export markets.

Looked at in this light, today’s Agriculture involves a more complex array of disciplines, not just food production but also food processing and packaging, food safety and food science, and the challenge – food security – so many developing countries yet face as a result of failing to invest in developing Agriculture as an engine for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Thus, considering a career in International Agricultural Development does not automatically mean or translate as a “going into farming” career path. Numerous fields offer great potential to contribute to Agriculture and Development, affording opportunities to work and have impact on the great issues of our century. Let me cite just three examples. (1) As land for Agriculture is becoming increasingly scarce, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of how to use land most efficiently and sustainably. (2) As water for Agriculture is becoming increasingly scarce, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of how to capture and manage water most efficiently. (3) As more and more of the food that we eat moves across borders, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of ensuring food safety. Further, new technologies are on the horizon or need to be developed for climate-smart agriculture. And, as small-scale farmers in the developing world struggle to diversify their land and labor resource away from subsistence agriculture and toward growing and marketing high-value crops, this transition will need to be supported by helping them to make the transition from tilling and harvesting their fields to meet subsistence needs to running their farms as profitable, income-earning agribusinesses.

If you do not find International Agricultural Development appealing as a career, then the next time that your stomach is telling you it's hungry, remember that Agriculture is everything that has to take place to get your food from farm to fork, from plot to plate, from stable to table. Surely, somewhere in that Agricultural Value Chain, there has to be a point of entry (a job) where you can earn a living, develop your career, and contribute to building the capacity of this planet to feed its population.

6. What are the main challenges today in development activities? Should these be seen as obstacles for stopping these activities or should we consider them as motivation for future actions?

As one might guess from my prior responses, there were a number of individuals along the way who inspired my interest in Agriculture and International Development—my father, Everett Rogers and, not the least of which, President John F. Kennedy whose leadership created the Peace Corps. It was Kennedy who said: “My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Without drawing a comparison that my father was a “Jack Kennedy,” my biography does reflect in various ways that my father and others were role models who sparked my interest in a career in Agriculture and International Development.

I recall one discussion with my father that has always stayed with me. Back in the 1960s, when he was working at IRRI in the Philippines, he told me about a cocktail party discussion that he had the night before with another IRRI colleague—a discussion that touched on the above question. The colleague stated something to the following effect: “So much money has been dumped into trying to develop these countries and we’re not any further ahead—look at how underdeveloped they still are!” My dad’s response – “That may be true but we can’t quit trying!” – a theme that I introduced in my response to question 1.

Any number of reasons that you or I can quickly list provide a clear rationale for staying the course – that is, to not “quit trying” on International Agricultural Development. These are what I call the BOBs – “The Bag of Bads” – the “Bads” that to one extent or another, in various combinations and guises, are present in many countries of the developing world, as follows:

- Headline hunger (lack of availability of food)
- Hidden hunger (lack of access to food because of low incomes and lack of purchasing power to buy the food that is available in a local market)
- Hades hunger (the food insecurity that is resulting because of climate change and not being more effective to develop climate-smart agricultural technologies and climate-smart agricultural production systems);
- Long-term negative impacts of undernutrition – and inadequate health and education – on a child’s growth, health, and learning;
- Illegal migration;
- Drug and people trafficking;
- Gangs and violence;
- Environmental degradation;
- Destabilization (e.g., food riots); and
- Backsliding on democracy.

Further, these various “BOBs” in one way or another, directly or indirectly, are looming on our doorstep or even knocking at our own front doors or down the street in our local communities. For a more prosperous – and safer –

world, “we can’t quit trying” to foster a more sustainable Agriculture in the developing world. Quitting is not an option! And one key to the solution will be Agriculture.

If anything, the challenges are enduring, the needs pressing, the pressure for better answers overwhelming – and we are only going to be able to make inroads on these challenges if a new generation of smart, well-trained, competent, motivated professionals take up the baton to lead the next generation forward.

7. What would you say to a young professional asking you for advice regarding possible career choice?

If you are interested in a possible career in International Agricultural Development, read back through my answers to this article’s questions. Ask yourself what you want to do with your life. Do you want to make money (well, we do need money to buy food and pay the rent) or do you want to make a difference? Do you want to see the world other than by joining a branch of your country’s military? In what better field to “make a difference” and “see the world” than applying your education/training, knowledge/skills, and youth/energy to hook up with some type of public sector, private (for profit) sector, or nonprofit (not-for-profit) organization that, in one way or another, has an Agriculture-related development mission?

Once you’ve begun to define your target – in terms of technical area and type of organization – for a job in International Agricultural Development (or the development field more broadly), keep in mind the following three questions:

What are the three keys to successful marketing? **Answer:** Location, Location, Location!

Looking back, I can see how both personal and professional contacts that I made along the way have played a significant role in opening doors toward future opportunities. To illustrate: In 1986 I worked in Panama on an evaluation of the USAID/Panama “Agricultural Technology Transfer (ATT) Project” that was being implemented by Chemonics International. While carrying out the evaluation, I met Albert “Scaff” Brown who was Chemonics’ home office manager for the ATT project. I could not have anticipated then that Scaff would interview me just three years later in 1969 for the LAC TECH AgREE advisor position with Chemonics. In retrospect, I was in the right “location” – the right place at the right time – to meet Scaff as a result of working on the ATT Project evaluation for another firm (Ronco Consulting Corporation) that summer of 1986. Lesson: Try to find ways to be in the right place at the right time. How to be in the right place at the right time lies in my response to question 3 further below.

How do you get to Carnegie Hall? **Answer:** Practice, Practice, Practice!!

Dr. Gordon Sabine, the Michigan State University Vice-President who took the university in the 1960s to #1 among U.S. universities in recruiting National Merit Scholars, had a formula posted on his wall: “Luck = Opportunity Knocking + Being Prepared”. While one cannot conjure up “luck,” one can put in lots of hard work in order to “be prepared” for when “opportunity knocks.” This goes back to my earlier comments about getting as much education and practical work experience as possible up until you are 40 before zeroing in how you would like to spend the last quarter century – or longer – of your professional career. When “opportunity knocks,” it largely will be how well you are prepared for the prospective job, in terms of having the requisite knowledge and skills, that will determine your chances of landing the job.

To illustrate: When my father interviewed with the Rockefeller Foundation for the job of Director of Communication at IRRI, he was apprehensive that he didn’t know anything about rice. But IRRI didn’t hire my father because of what he knew about rice but rather because of his knowledge of and practical work experience in agricultural journalism, communication, and training. Similarly, when Opportunity knocked on my door for a job as a Sociologist with IFDC,

I didn't know anything about fertilizer. But IFDC told me that they could teach me what I needed to know about fertilizers—what they wanted me to do was to apply my knowledge of adoption and diffusion of agricultural technologies (earlier learned studying under Everett Rogers at MSU), my experience working on the PIMUR agricultural marketing study in Colombia, and my Ph.D. training in sociology (where my doctoral dissertation had been on The Rockefeller Foundation's Puebla Project to promote adoption of a high-yielding maize technology package in Puebla, Mexico) to the challenge of fostering increased adoption of fertilizer technologies in the developing world.

So hone your technical skills through Practice, Practice, Practice! The knowledge and skills that you learn and acquire as a student and the practical work experience you accumulate on the job chart the “map” for getting to Carnegie Hall – that is, they define the path that will play a role in determining the job opportunities for which you are qualified.

How do you hook up with the right job in Agriculture or International Development? In other words, how do you get “Opportunity” to knock? **Answer:** Network, Network, Network!!!

There are many organizations seeking to hire young professionals with the “right stuff” – check out these organizations' web sites for job postings – and keep checking back to see what Agriculture- and International Development-related jobs have been posted. Get to know potential employers through exploring their web sites – what is the organization's mission, how does the organization work toward achieving its mission, and what types of employment opportunities does the organization offer? Write a good resume geared to the job and organization you are targeting. Prepare a strong cover letter to present yourself and what you can contribute to helping the organization achieve its mission. Set up an appointment with the potential employer to “meet and greet” and “get to know one another” via phone, Skype, or best of all in person. Join and explore how to utilize social (professional) networking tools (e.g., LinkedIn.com). To stay abreast of job openings, search Google using the search term “international career employment weekly.”

Remember that the key to “Location” – being in the right place at the right time – is to “Network”! Stay in touch with personal and professional colleagues who can keep an eye out for and alert you to job opportunities that may be of interest to you – and that the key to “Luck” is “being prepared” when “opportunity knocks.”



Bangladesh

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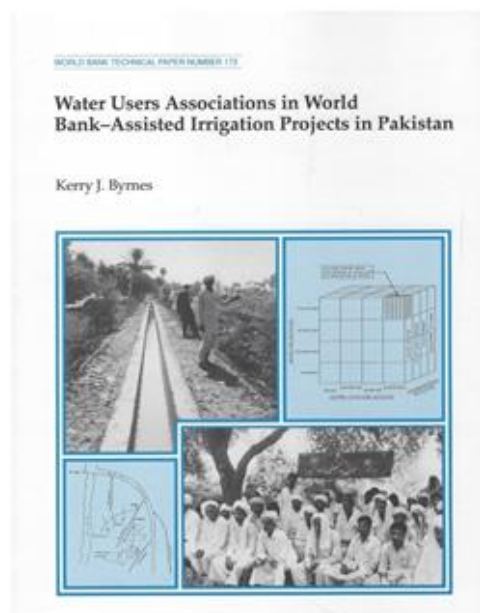
Guatemala



Indonesia



Report for USAID



Report for The World Bank