



Giants in Their Realms:
Close Encounters of the Celebrity Kind – Vol. 2

by

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VOLUME TWO (CHAPTERS 4-7)

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Chapter 4

Outbound Flight Epilogue

My foundation for working in Development began with my studies at both Michigan State University and Iowa State University. What I learned on campus was the first step in a career in development that lasted 40+ years, and where there always was something new to learn each day, whether working at my desk or in the field in a developing country.

My career afforded opportunity to meet and in some cases work with many of the “giants” in the *Professional Realm of Development Leaders*: Bob Chandler, Jr., Sterling Wortman, Jimmy Chen, Lester Brown, Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Dick Sawyer, “Scaff” Brown, Norman Borlaug, Ismail Serageldin, Muhammad Yunnus, Robert McNamara, Montague Yudelman, John Hatch, John Mellor, Dave Bathrick, and Hunt Hobbs.

To that list I would also add, from the *Spartan Educators* chapter, the names of John Hannah, Stanley Andrews, Francis Byrnes, and Robert Morris, all of whom, in one way or another, merit consideration as being among “the greatest generation” of *Development Leaders*. This has often left me wondering who among today’s Development professionals would qualify as meriting being included in that “greatest generation” of *Development Leaders*.

I first began thinking about this question one morning on my commute to work on the Metro, when I was reading the *Washington Post’s Express* and spotted an article about Gloria Swanson as “Hollywood’s First Movie Star” The article reminded me of Swanson’s Oscar-nominated portrayal of faded silent movie queen Norma Desmond in the film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). In this film, Joe Gillis, a young screenwriter (played by William Holden), suddenly recognizes his benefactor and the following exchange occurs:



Joe: *“Wait a minute. Haven’t I seen you before? You’re Norma Desmond. You used to be in silent pictures, used to be big.”*



Norma: *“I am big. It’s the pictures that got small.”*



This exchange between Joe and Norma gave me pause to reflect on the “close encounters” we had during our virtual stopover in the ***Realm of Development Leaders***, prompting the thought that Development as a field of endeavor used to be “small” but had leaders now recognized as “big” (“giants”). It struck me that by comparison, paraphrasing Norma Desmond, today it is Development that has “got big,” while its practitioners “got small.” Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, secretary-general of Civicus, a global network of civil society organizations and activists, recently stated this point slightly differently:

In the last 40 years, we have witnessed an explosion of growth in civil society. There are now...81,000 international NGOs and networks, 90% of them launched since 1975. ... this exponential growth, and the institutionalisation and professionalisation that has accompanied it, has some serious downsides. Sure, we’re winning battles here and there, but we’re losing the war; the war against poverty, inequality, exclusion and climate change. Too many of us who work in organised bits of civil society...have become removed from the forces that drive deep social change; from the causes that first inspired us. In devoting our energies to designing log-frames and reporting to donors, we’ve become mired in bureaucracy. For better or worse, the biggest NGOs today look and act like multinational corporations. The largest of them employ thousands of workers around the world and their annual budgets reach hundreds of millions. They have corporate-style hierarchies and brands worth millions. Saving the world has become big business ([Source](#)).

Further research on the Internet turned up another Norma Desmond quote perhaps also apropos: “They took the idols and smashed them, the Fairbankses, the Gilberts, the Valentinos! And who’ve we got now? Some nobodies!” While one might argue that the field of “giants” yet working in Development has shrunk over time, as the result of death, retirement, and/or attrition, it wouldn’t be fair to categorically say that the field is now left with a bunch of “nobodies.”

Yet even from the earliest years in which the United States has provided assistance in agriculture and rural development to the developing world, there have not been enough “giants” working in this field, working in the most effective way, and being supported by enough resources to make a lasting difference in growing economies sustainably and reducing poverty permanently, both of which remain as two of this world’s biggest challenges, not to mention, as did Sriskandarajah above, inequality, exclusion, and climate change.

Regardless of how many practitioners work in the field of Development or how big the field has become in terms of funding invested in development assistance, working in Development constantly challenges its practitioners, as it did Stanley Andrews (see vignette) over 50 years ago, to identify best practices and lessons learned in an ongoing search to find a better way for development assistance to more effectively address the challenges to sustainable development.

Until we make sufficient progress on this front, we certainly don’t have enough “giants” working in Development even as the field itself challenges one to herd cats at the same time that there is no shortage of cooks in the kitchen, that is, a lot of the field’s practitioners espousing their own views on what needs to be done for investments in Development to be more successful in addressing the challenges.

But, as in sports, even if a team has a losing season, there is always next season. As my father, Francis Byrnes (see vignette) often said, “We can’t quit trying!” As my years working in Development increased, and certainly as I grew older, there was a gnawing sense that the current crop of today’s Development practitioners has little to no knowledge or memory of the “giants” who preceded them, has failed to heed the lessons that were learned, and rarely appreciates how frequently everything old is often suddenly new again.

As one example, the current rage, “scaling technology,” with its references to drivers, spaces, and pathways, on close analysis is a repackaging of (a) the adoption and diffusion of innovation model of Everett Rogers (see vignette); and (b) the social action model that George Beal (see vignette) and Joe Bohlen developed – and without any recognition of the “scaling technology” concept has intellectual origins that can be traced back to these earlier “giants.”

In today’s Development world, where new technologies and media are all the rage, growing utilization of these new technologies and media – Blogging, email, Digital Video Conferencing, Facebook, GIS, GPS, mobile telephony (e.g., mobile banking), Twitter, Skype, and Webinars, among others – risk emphasizing the medium (channel) over the message (e.g., an innovation’s technical and economic appropriateness), the credibility and competency of the change agent (e.g., extension worker) who promotes the innovation, and/or the adequacy of the enabling environment (institutions) in which an innovation is being promoted.

This has increasingly left me feeling that the Development profession has moved on and left me in the past, reminiscent of the Bob Elliot and Ray Goulding (see vignette) portrayal of grizzled veteran Stuffy (Ray) voicing his outlook on baseball when interviewed by sportscaster Biff Burns (Bob) as shown in the photo below.



“I don’t know, this game passed me by somewhere.”

Atul Gawande expressed a similar concern in *The New Yorker* (July 29, 2013 – pp. 36-45) in an article titled “Slow Ideas” that addressed the question “Why do some innovations spread so swiftly and others so slowly?” In the article Gawande expresses a reservation about what I would call an overly “high tech” and medium (channel)-focused approach to fostering the adoption and diffusion of new innovations:

In the era of the iPhone, Facebook, and Twitter, we’ve become enamored of ideas that spread as effortlessly as ether. We want frictionless, “turnkey” solutions to the major difficulties of the world—hunger, disease, poverty. We prefer instructional videos to teachers, drones to troops, incentives to institutions. People can feel messy and anachronistic. They introduce, as engineers put it, uncontrolled variability.

But technology and incentive programs are not enough. “Diffusion is essentially a social process through which people talking to people spread an innovation,” wrote Everett Rogers [see vignette], the great scholar of how new ideas are communicated and spread. Mass media can introduce a new idea to people. But, Rogers showed, people follow the lead of other people they know and trust when they decide whether to take it up. Every change requires effort, and the decision to make that effort is a social process (Gawande, pp. 41-42).

I know from many discussions with David Bathrick (see vignette) that we share discouragement that the United States (and USAID) did not do more over the years, and more effectively, to spur agricultural and rural development in the Third World.

From a personal standpoint, I feel a frustration that I was not able to do more than my efforts may have achieved. In recent years this concern often weighed on my mind as I neared retirement and looked back on such as may have been my contributions compared with those of the “giants” who preceded me in the realm of Development or who may yet work in this field. But I took some comfort in the MSNBC cable channel public service announcement in which Melissa Harris-Perry reflected on her father as follows:

We grew up in the Jim Crow South. And [my father] would give me birthday cards and instead of signing them “Love, Daddy”, always signed them “The struggle continues, Daddy.” And I was a little kid and I was like “What is he talking about?” But what it means and what I’ve taken on as my own is you don’t have to have all the answers and all the solutions to all the problems today. These problems have persisted, and lots of folks have been working on them. And you take up the banner, and you work on them during your lifetime, and then you pass it on to the next” (Melissa Harris-Perry, MSNBC).



Thus, it is up to the next generation to “take up the banner” and, as Francis Byrnes (see vignette) would say, “not quit trying” to accelerate Development in the Third World. Indeed, just as *Development Leaders* tried in the 1960s to help Mexico increase corn yields under the Puebla Project, a half century later a new generation of *Development Leaders* (Hunt Hobbs, CIMMYT colleagues, and Mexican stakeholders) are continuing the “struggle” in Mexico’s MasAgro program to raise agricultural productivity to benefit small-scale farmers, Mexico’s economy, and sustainable agriculture in a world increasingly concerned with how climate change is adversely impacting on Agriculture’s ability to feed the coming generations.

In the wake of the Green Revolution, **Sterling Wortman** (see vignette) wrote about this challenge in *To Feed This World* (1978). But today’s Development challenge is much more complex than in that earlier Green Revolution era. Today Agriculture is challenged not only to increase productivity but also to create jobs and raise incomes, including for women and youth; upgrade value chain quality and efficiency; put in place sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), including food safety, measures to comply with the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA); and sustainably manage sustainably and upgrade the natural resource base on which a productive and sustainable Agriculture depends.

Indeed, with these and other challenges, what today's World now needs to feed itself is not a **Green Revolution** but rather what I call a **Rainbow Revolution** in which these multiple issues, beyond just increasing crop yields, must be simultaneously addressed in order to build sustainable capacity for Agriculture to drive economic growth and poverty reduction for the years and decades to come.

Honorable Mentions - Over the years I met many ***Development Leaders*** about whom vignettes could have been written on the role they played as leaders, if not giants, in agricultural and rural development (ARD). However, given space considerations, in lieu of vignettes on them, I note as honorable mentions the following (listed alphabetically by last name), all of whom I have known in conjunction with their work at one or another of the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs such as CIAT and IRRI) while field staff members of the Rockefeller Foundation or one of the IARCs.

Surajit Kumar DeDatta (born: 1936) – former Agronomist at IRRI for 27 years; later Virginia Tech's Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, Office of International Research, Education and Development. S.K. and I served as members the Asia Rice Foundation USA board of directors.

Ulysses Jerry Grant (12/31/20 – 11/1/87) – first Director General of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). In 1986, Ulysses was a member of consulting team on which I served as co-team leader for an evaluation of a USAID/Panama agricultural technology transfer project.

Dale Douglas Harpstead (born: 9/1926) – former Rockefeller Foundation scientist and former Chair of the Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University. A great story/joke teller whom I originally met in 1969 when he was working at CIAT.

Richard Harwood – C.S. Mott Foundation Chair of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University and, from 1985-90, director of Asia Programs for the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development. He also served as director at the Rodale Press Inc. Research Center, and led the Cropping System Program at the International Rice Research Institute.

Robert Dale Havener (7/24/30 – 8/3/2005) – former Director General (1978-85), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT); former Chairman of the Board and Acting Director General of CIAT; and former President and Chief Executive Officer of Winrock International. I once interviewed with Bob for a job with CIAT.

Robert W. Herdt – former IRRI agricultural economist. Bob and I served as members of the board of directors of the Asia Rice Foundation USA.

Forrest F. "Frosty" Hill (12/30/00 – 10/20/88) – a co-founder of IRRI and former Vice President of the Ford Foundation. I once interviewed with Dr. Hill for a job with the Ford Foundation, an interview that had been organized by Reed Hertford (3/12/38 – 4/28/12).

Peter Randolph Jennings (born: 1931) – IRRI's first rice breeder (1961-67) and later CIAT plant geneticist. In the summer of 1963, I played basketball with Peter in the gymnasium at the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

Andrew Colin McClung (10/15/23 – 2/2/15) – former Assistant Director (IRRI & CIAT); former President, International Agricultural Development Service (IADS); and 2006 World Food Prize Laureate. Colin and I served as members of the Asia Rice Foundation USA board of directors.

Donald L. Winkelmann – former CIMMYT agricultural economist and later Director General (1985-94) of CIMMYT. I occasionally saw Don when he visited the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in the late 1970s and years later when he attended International Centers Week in Washington, DC while he was CIMMYT Director General.

During my career in the ARD field, I rarely found myself meeting and/or working with non-economist social scientists (i.e., sociologists and anthropologists), although there were a few exceptions: Jacqueline Ashby, Milton Leonard Barnett, Julio A. Berdegué, Robert Cardinalli, Gelia T. Castillo (First Filipina Rural Sociologist), Michael M. Cernea, E. Walter Coward, Jr., Heliodoro Díaz-Cisneros, Michael R. Dove, Cornelia Flora, Jan L. Flora, Isao Fujimoto, Grace Goodell, A. Eugene Havens (1936 - 6/28/84), Juan F. Jamias (Filipino Communication Scientist), William Alex McIntosh, Leobardo Jiménez Sánchez, Michael J. Yates, and Frank W. Young.

Mostly my ARD contacts were with economists or agricultural economists working with organizations such as universities, international agricultural research centers, the Inter-American Development Bank, and/or the World Bank. Listed below, their names comprise a Who's Who of international agriculture and rural development:

Dale W. Adams	Arnold C. Harberger	David F. Nygaard	Maximo Torero
Jock R. Anderson	Robert W. Herdt	Elinor Ostrom	Eduardo J. Trigo
Edgar Ariza-Niño	Reed Hertford	Rajul Pandya-Lorch	Alberto Valdés
Carlos A. Baanante	Peter E. Hildebrand	Per Pinstrup-Andersen	Michael T. Weber
Randolph Barker	William David Hopper	Martin E. Piñeiro	Abraham Melvin Weisblat
Hans P. Binswanger	Douglas E. Horton	Carl E. Pray	Clifton Wharton, Jr.
Derek Byerlee	Glenn Johnson	Edwin C. Price	
R. Gordon Conway	Bruce F. Johnston	Thomas A. Reardon	
Sir John Crawford	David Kaimowitz	Harold M. Riley	
Ralph Cummings, Jr.	Earl D. Kellogg	James A. Roumasset	
Dana G. Dalrymple	Donald W. Larson	C. Ford Runge	
John DeBoer	Uma J. Lele	Vernon W. Ruttan	
Alain deJanvry	John J. Lindt, Jr.	G. Edward Schuh	
Ruben G. Echeverría	Russell Mawby	Grant M. Scobie	
Carl K. Eicher	Alex F. McCalla	James D. Shaffer	
Howard Elliott	John W. Mellor	Philip Steffen	
Walter P. Falcon	Nicholas W. Minot	John Stovall	
David L. Franklin	Mohinder S. Mudahar	Robert L. Thompson	
José Graziano da Silva	Roger Norton	C. Peter Timmer	

My Last Days at USAID

On September 18, 2014, the clock ticking toward my retirement just twelve days later on 9/30/14, my colleagues in the Office of Regional Sustainable Development of USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean held a retirement party in my honor. USAID headquarters staff from various bureaus and offices were in attendance, the food was plenty, the libations were ample, and several colleagues shared their, thankfully, positive memories of working with me.

However, what I wasn't expecting was the LAC Bureau Acting Assistant Administrator, Beth Hogan, presenting to me the USAID Administrator's Outstanding Career Achievement Award, the Agency's second highest award for a retiring staff member. The award's citation reads: "With congratulations and gratitude for a career marked by exemplary contributions in the fields of agricultural development and trade capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Signed by the Agency's Administrator, Rajiv Shah, this award was especially meaningful to me because its nomination was written by my two closest colleagues, Doug Pulse (Broad Based Economic Growth Acting Team Leader) and Tracy Quilter (BBEG Team Leader on detail to the Bureau's program office) as well as approved by Rose Rakas, Director, Office of Regional Sustainable Development in the LAC Bureau. I share below some photos of this event and my Thank You remarks.



Beth Hogan and Kerry Byrnes



Beth Hogan, Kerry and Sonia Byrnes, and Rose Rakas

Kerry's Thank You Remarks at USAID Retirement Party: September 18, 2014

Let me make just a few comments by way of saying thanks for this farewell fiesta. First, if you've not already met her, please, a round of applause for Sonia, the young lady, lawyer, and 22+ year veteran of teaching high school Spanish, who has been my #1 supporter for 45+ years since we were married in Colombia in 1969.

Next, let me say how very grateful I am for the opportunity that USAID afforded for me to work with the LAC Bureau for nearly 25 years, beginning in 1989 with the LAC TECH project that was implemented by Chemonics; from 1993-2012 with USDA as a RSSA and later PASA; and, most recently, as a FSL for the last two years. Over the past 25 years, I shepherded a varied portfolio of assistance initiatives including:

- Advising on agricultural research, extension, and education issues;
- Designing and delivering Organizational Management for Sustainability Workshops for NGOs;
- Developing Trade Capacity Building initiatives to help countries deliver on FTA obligations; and
- Collaborating with BFS on – and representing LAC in – Feed the Future.

Over those years I've been on 143 TDYs which included visiting 23 LAC countries, Puerto Rico, Canada, and several U.S. cities from Miami to Atlanta to Tucson, nearly six trips per year – which kept me away from home and family (Sonia and Shannon) – and which explains why I now want so much to stay close to my six-year old grandson who, unfortunately, couldn't be here today as he is in school.

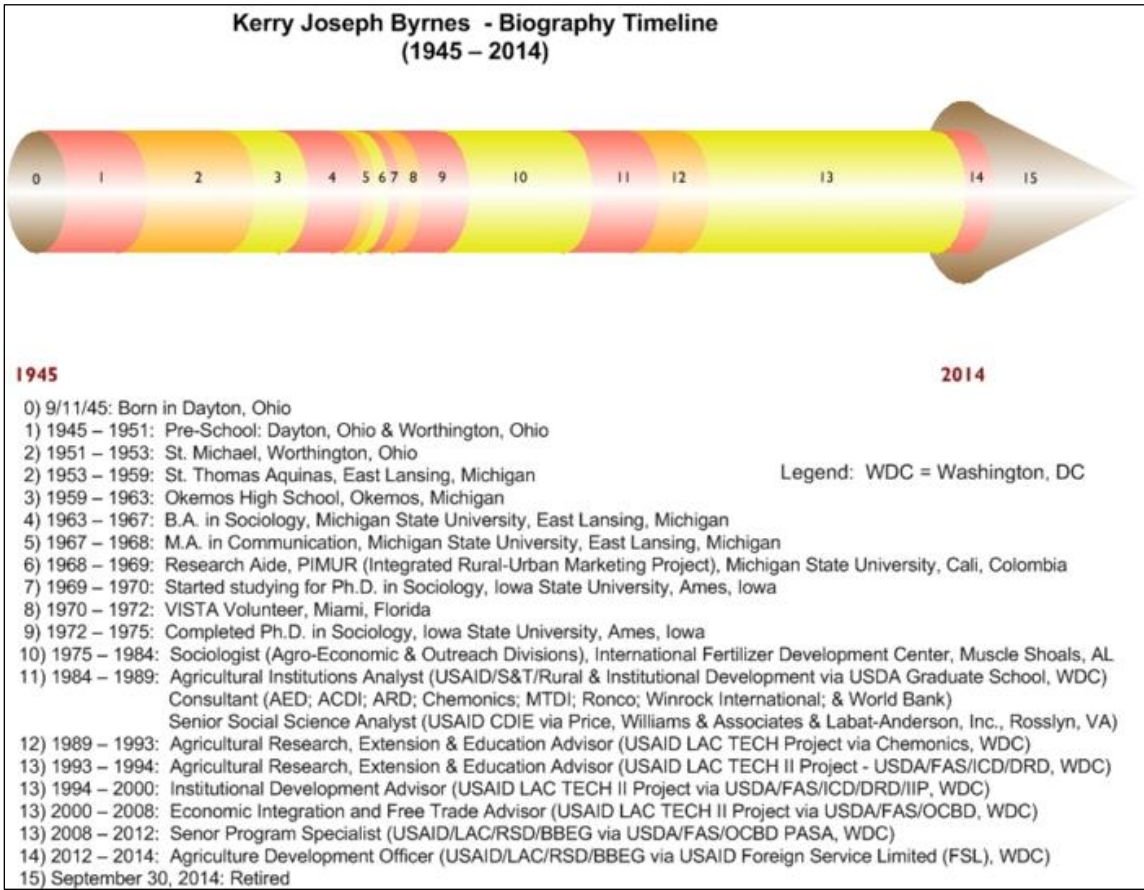
While I've been working with the LAC Bureau, I was fortunate to have BBEG team leaders who were always supportive even as they somehow found a way to put up with me. Those team leaders included Gale Rozell, John Becker, Bill Baucom, John Beed, Bill Brands, Barry MacDonald, David Jessee, Tracy Quilter, and Doug Pulse. There even was a thankfully brief period of two months or so between David's retirement and Tracy's arrival when I had to put up with myself as the acting team leader.

Now, with Tracy on detail to SPO, Alice moving to the Export Import Bank, and my exit on 9/30, the new Fiscal Year will find BBEG’s acting team leader, Doug, holding the reins of a one-person team that once numbered seven when I started working here in 1998. With Toraanna’s recent passing, the only other persons working in LAC back then and still here now are Betty, Jeannie, and Terri. Everyone else has moved on and, so it goes, now too has arrived my turn to move on. As in the song, “long time passing,” “Where have all the flowers gone?”

I greatly appreciate all the work of Doug, Tracy, and others to organize and contribute to this retirement party. Going forward, I wish all of you the best for advancing the work of USAID in the LAC region. And... perhaps, after I get through a long bucket list of things I’ve long wished I had more time to pursue, I just might get the itch to get back into development work in one capacity or another. But...until then, don’t hold your breath! Gracias!!

Some Career Accomplishments

I certainly don’t know what career achievements would be required for anyone to qualify as a “giant” in the *Realm of Development Leaders*. As I reflected on this, I recalled the various transitions in my life and jobs I held over the years, as visually represented by the “Biography Timeline” in the following graphic.



This timeline, however, highlights only the positions I held and doesn’t provide any insight into what I may have accomplished while working in those positions. This led me to taking another look back on a 40+ year career largely focused on addressing challenges to agriculture and rural development in the developing world, an exercise that resulted in preparing the following roughly chronological list of work products of which I’m particularly proud, including annotations about each product and, in some cases, its relationship to persons I have written about in this memoir’s vignettes.

1968 - *The Relationship of Dogmatism to Channel Preference and Learning in Classroom Communication* (M.A. Thesis, Michigan State University) - Some highlights from this thesis and the story behind it are recounted in this memoir's vignettes on David Berlo and Lawrence Sarbaugh.

1969 - *Sistemas de Información y Comunicación de Mercadeo en la Zona de Influencia de Cali, Informe #9*, Proyecto Integrado de Mercadeo Urbano Rural, Cali (PIMUR), Colombia. 1970 - "Information and Communication," pp. 328-337 in *Market Coordination in the Development of the Cauca Valley Region – Colombia*, Research Report No. 5, Latin American Studies Center, Michigan State University. On completing my Master's thesis I travelled to Colombia and was lucky to land a research assistant position from 1968-69 on the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project that was conducted by Michigan State University. Some highlights of this period are shared in the vignette on Kelly Harrison. PIMUR also is of special importance to me as this is where I met Sonia Gomez Naranjo in 1968 and, within a year, married her on August 30, 1969.

1969 - "Agricultural Extension and Education in Developing Countries" [pp. 326-351 in R. Weitz (ed.), *Rural Development in a Changing World*, M.I.T. Press, 1971. Also available in Spanish as "La Extensión y La Educación Agrícolas en Los Países en Desarrollo," Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical] - I am particularly proud of this paper as it was co-authored with my father, Francis C. Byrnes (see vignette), as lead author, although I did much of the research for and drafting of the paper during the period that I worked on the PIMUR project.

1975 - *A Construct of Social Action for Small Farmer Agricultural Development* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Iowa State University) - My dissertation provided a sociological analysis of the Puebla Project, analyzing it in terms of the Social Action Model developed by George Beal and colleagues at Iowa State University. References to my dissertation appear in the George Beal, Yen Yang-ch'u (James "Jimmy" Yen), and Huntington Hobbs vignettes.

1980 - "A Social Action Perspective on Small Farmer Agricultural Development" - While working with the International Fertilizer Development Center, I had the opportunity to recycle a chapter of my doctoral dissertation into this paper that I presented in Mexico City at the V Rural Sociology World Congress.

1980 - "Content, Criterion, and Construct Validation: Alternative Approaches to Validity Assessment of the Guttman-Type Scale of Community Differentiation," *Comparative Rural & Regional Studies* (Occasional Paper 2: Research on Rural Structure) - This paper was originally written as a term paper for a Iowa State University research methods course and turned out to be the first paper I wrote that was published in a professional journal.

1981 - *Diffusion and Adoption of Innovations in Fertilizer-Related Agricultural Production Technology in Developing Countries* - My first assignment with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) was preparing this review of the research literature on the adoption and diffusion of innovations in fertilizer-related agricultural production technology in the developing world. This review was inspired by the earlier *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962) literature review by Everett Rogers (see vignette) whom I had studied under while a student at Michigan State University.

1982 - Served as program manager (Indonesia) and assistant program manager (Bangladesh) in two of IFDC's fertilizer marketing training programs, including serving as leader for IFDC's *Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation*. A year later, in 1983, I was invited by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to conduct the *Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation* in Pakistan as a component of the Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program sponsored by FAO and Pakistan's National Fertilizer Development Corporation (NFDC).

1985 - "The Potential Role of Farmer Organizations in Increasing the Productivity and Income-Earning Capability of Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems in the Developing Countries: A Concept Paper" - This was the first paper I wrote for USAID after coming to Washington, DC in late 1984. Based on the paper I prepared a

prospectus for a research project that was included in a subsequent Congressional Budget Justification; however, USAID decided not to proceed with funding the project because the Agency already was funding the Communication for Technology Transfer in Agriculture (CTTA) project.

1988 - “A Review of AID Experience: Farming Systems Research and Extension (FSR/E) Projects--1975-1987” (pp. 363-368 in *Contributions of FSR/E toward Sustainable Agricultural Systems. Proceedings of the Farming Systems Research/Extension Symposium 1988*. Farming Systems Research Paper Series Paper No. 17. University of Arkansas/Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development) - At this symposium, the organizers scheduled my presentation as one of two to be given by speakers during the lunch. As the review’s findings and conclusions were a bit critical of work ongoing in the FSR/E field, I prefaced my remarks by apologizing that I wasn’t sure whether the audience, as they were eating lunch, would find what I had to say harder to swallow or harder to stomach. A couple of years later, in 1990, my assessment of USAID’s support for FSR/E projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America was published by USAID’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation as *A Review of AID Experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects* (AID Evaluation Special Study No. 67. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development).

1991 - “Problemas en la Sostenibilidad de Sistemas Tecnológicos Agrícolas en América Latina y Opciones para el Futuro” (pp. 87-103 en *Memorias del Primer Simposio Nacional. Agricultura Sostenible: Una Opción para el Desarrollo sin Deterioro Ambiental*. Montecillo, México: Comisión de Estudios Ambientales, Colegio de Postgraduados y M.O.A. International) - It was surprise when I received an invitation from USAID/Mexico to participate in this symposium and give a talk on constraints to sustainable agricultural technology systems. Even more surprising was learning, on arriving at the site of the symposium, that my presentation was scheduled to kick off the morning session as the keynote address.

1992 - “De la parcela melonera al puesto de mercado: cómo aprendieron a exportar un cultivo no tradicional” [pp. 105-130 in Mendizábal, Ana Beatriz and Jurgen Weller, *Exportaciones Agrícolas No Tradicionales del Istmo Centroamericano: ¿Promesa o Espejismo?*, Temas de Integración y Desarrollo 2. Panamá, República de Panamá: CADESCA-PREALC (OIT)] - This was a contributed book chapter and translation of an earlier paper reporting on research I carried out in the late 1980s for USAID’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation, focusing on the experience of entrepreneurs in learning how to grow and export melons as a non-traditional crop. That research is reported in “Central American Melon Exporters: 22 Case Studies to Accompany ‘From Melon Patch to Market Place: How They Learned to Export a Non-Traditional Crop’” (1991).

1992 - *Water Users Associations in World Bank-Assisted Irrigation Projects in Pakistan* (World Bank Technical Paper Number 173) - This publication was the result of spending a good part of the summer of 1987 interviewing farmers on the watercourses of three of Pakistan’s four provinces, an opportunity that came about because World Bank sociologist Michael Cernea had favorably reviewed my 1985 paper on “The Potential Role of Farmer Organizations in Increasing the Productivity and Income-Earning Capability of Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems in the Developing Countries: A Concept Paper.” Some memories of this experience are shared in the vignette on Montague Yudelman.

1992 - *A Cross-Cutting Analysis of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education (Ag REE) in A.I.D.-Assisted LAC Countries—Volume I: Technical Report, Volume II: Annexes* - This was the first desk study I undertook when I joined Chemonics in 1989 as the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Advisor on the USAID-funded Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) Project. The Albert “Scaff” Brown vignette shares experiences working on that project.

1994-2012 - *Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop* - This is the three-day workshop for developing country NGOs that I designed and conducted thirteen times in seven countries — once in English in Jamaica (1995) and twelve times in Spanish: 1994 (Peru), 1995 (Dominican Republic, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and twice in Colombia); 1998 (Dominican Republic); 1999 (Colombia); 2007 (Nicaragua); and 2012 (Paraguay). My work in this area for USAID proved to be pioneering in that it preceded the emphasis that the Agency began to place on Local Capacity Development (or Local Solutions) during the administration of President Obama. More details on the OMS Workshop are highlighted in the vignette on Robert Morris.

1995 - “Organizing and Financing Sustainable Agricultural Research in Latin America and Caribbean Private Sector Non-Profit Organizations” – This study, co-authored with Susan Corning, known as the Sustainable Private Agricultural Research in Latin America and the Caribbean (SPARLAC) study, was based on four case studies of private sector-based agricultural research programs in Jamaica (Jamaica Agricultural Development Foundation), Ecuador (FUNDAGRO), Colombia (FEDECAFE), and Chile (Fundación Chile). What I learned about some of these organizations was recycled into developing a case study on a hypothetical NGO (FAMA) in a hypothetical LAC country (Marisol). This case study became the core of the OMS workshop.

1995 - “La Extensión Agropecuaria Mundial: Desafíos y Oportunidades” (“Agricultural Extension Worldwide: Challenges and Opportunities”) - Presented at the *Foro de Discusión y Análisis sobre Investigación y Extensión Agropecuarias* (Agricultural Research and Extension Discussion and Analysis Forum) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, this paper was written at the request of Reed Hertford who had assisted the Government of Mexico in organizing this Forum. I was honored in being the only “gringo” invited to speak at the forum. Years earlier Reed had contacted me to ask if I would be interested in applying for one or another of two Ford Foundation representative positions in Mexico and Colombia. Sadly for me, the Foundation selected other candidates for these positions.

1996 - *Technology Institutions for Agricultural Free Trade in the Americas (TLAFTA): A Study on Agricultural Production Trends and Institutional Dynamics within the Evolving Western Hemispheric Free Trade Region* - This report was co-authored by David D. Bathrick, John G. Stovall, Kerry J. Byrnes, and Donna R. Podems. The David Bathrick vignette share memories of collaborating with him over many years.

1998-2005 - In 1998, following the destruction Hurricane Mitch (October 29 to November 2) wrought in Central America, I wrote a speech for Mark Schneider, Assistant Administrator of USAID’s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, to deliver on December 8 at the 22nd Annual Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Latin America. The speech was titled: “From Hurricane Destruction to Hemispheric Prosperity--Looking beyond Short-Term Relief and Longer-Term Reconstruction.” While not enthusiastic about writing speeches for the LAC Bureau’s Assistant Administrator, the next Assistant Administrator, Adolfo A. Franco (see vignette), apparently liked the first speech I wrote for him and came back several times with a request to draft a speech. Each time I tried to find a way to hook the speech’s introduction to the venue at which the speech was to be presented:

- “A Toast to Trade & Investment: USAID Trade Capacity Building Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean” (presented at a meeting of the Distilled Spirits Industry, Washington, D.C., May 9, 2002).
- “Harnessing Free ‘Trade Winds’ from ‘Economic Hurricanes’: Strengthening Central America for Trade and Investment” (presented at the launch of the negotiation of the U.S.-CAFTA Negotiation, January 8, 2003).
- “Sewing Trade Capacity Building, Reaping Hemispheric Prosperity: An Idea Whose Time Has Come” (presented at the Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America (AACCLA), Washington, D.C., May 8, 2003).

- “Building Trade Capacity, Strengthening Trade Corridors: USAID’s Role in Fostering Hemispheric Trade and Integration” (presented at the 26th Hemispheric Congress of Latin Chambers of Commerce and Industry, April 27-30, 2005).

2001 - “Farmer Organizations: Tapping Their Potential as Catalysts for Change in Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems” [pp. 209-228 (Chapter 13) in Frank L. Brewer (editor), *Agricultural Extension Systems: An International Perspective*, North Chelmsford, Massachusetts: Erudition Books] - This paper was a shorter version of the 1985 paper on farmer organizations that I wrote after starting my job with USAID in 1984. The reworking of that paper into the book chapter came about at the suggestion of William Rivera (University of Maryland) who had favorably reviewed the earlier paper and was collaborating with the editor (Brewer) in preparing this volume.

2002-2008 - “LAC Trade Matters” - From 5/17/02 to 12/15/08, I produced 60 issues of this news-letter about trade, development, and trade capacity building in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. The newsletter’s origin was a request by Adolfo Franco (see vignette), Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), to ensure that staff of USAID Missions in the LAC region were kept apprised of trade capacity building (TCB)-related issues and resources in connection with negotiating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and subsequent FTA negotiations with Central America, Dominican Republic, and the Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). The newsletter was recognized by USAID as a “best practice” and, in 2004, I received the USAID Meritorious Honor Award (“For increasing Agency awareness on free trade and improving the quality of USAID support for trade capacity building assistance”).

2005-2006 – During this period I collaborated with Dr. Jerry Haar, Florida International University College of Business Administration, to develop the Small and Medium-size Enterprises Center of Excellence (SMECE) to provide small- and medium-size enterprises from Central America with an innovative training experience combining on-line learn learning, a classroom-based workshop, field visits to export-oriented enterprises in the Miami and Dade County area, and professional evaluation of the business plans developed by the workshop participants.

2005-2014 - During the last decade of working with USAID, I played a lead, technical support, and/or activity manager role in developing and managing several assessments carried out by consultant teams including:

- An assessment of constraints to trade-led agricultural diversification (T-LAD) in Central America (conducted by David D. Bathrick under contracts with two consulting firms – Carana and Chemonics);
- An assessment of constraints to and development of a strategy to advance food security in the LAC region (conducted by Roberta van Haeften under the Equitable Growth Best Practices Project with Chemonics);
- An assessment of constraints to “doing agribusiness” in three countries participating in the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR): the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras (conducted by Robert Landmann and colleagues under a contract with Segura Consulting);
- An assessment of constraints to the growth of the horticulture sector in Central America (conducted by Alonso Gonzalez and Tito Livio Zuniga under a grant to the University of California - Davis); and
- An assessment of constraints to competition in the food security-related markets in Central America (conducted by the Federal Trade Commission).

2013-2014 - During my last year with USAID, I coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop the “Food Safety and Agricultural Sustainability Training (FAST)”

project that USDA began implementing in 2014 to help countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region to prepare for the FDA's implementation of the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

2014 - Also during my last year at USAID, I wrote "USAID Assistance to Agriculture and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Origins, Evolution, and Reflections" to share with the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Bureau of Food Security, and USAID more broadly a retrospective on the Agency's support to agriculture and rural development in the LAC region.

As in the Johnny Mathis song, "It's Not for Me to Say" (1957), it would be presumptuous of me to say whether my work in agriculture and rural development would come anywhere close to qualifying me for even an honorable mention in the *Realm of Development Leaders*. However, here is what my peers wrote as the justification for nominating me for the USAID Outstanding Career Achievement Award.

For decades now, Dr. Kerry J. Byrnes has been a fixture of trade and agricultural development programming in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Even before coming to USAID as a USDA PASA in 1993, Dr. Byrnes had a long history of collaboration with the Agency, dating back to his days as a student in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of his earliest research, at Iowa State and Michigan State, was supported by USAID funding. In fact, over his 40-plus year professional career, nearly every one of his jobs has been linked to USAID. After nearly 20 years at the Agency as a USDA PASA, he converted to Foreign Service Limited in 2012 and, in a fitting end to his outstanding career, will retire as USAID Direct Hire employee at the end of September 2014.

Dr. Byrnes has made his mark on USAID and the LAC region in a variety of ways. A search of the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) gives a sense of his prolific writing on a range of trade and agricultural topics in the LAC region and beyond. During the 1980s he made significant contributions to the Agency's knowledge base while working as a contractor for the USAID/PPC Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). His technical pieces covered themes such as agricultural technologies, farming systems, and agricultural research, including a range of case studies that provided evidence of successful approaches to inform future USAID programming.

By the time Dr. Byrnes entered USAID as a PASA, assistance for agricultural development had begun to decline, as he captured in his 1992 publication, "A Cross-Cutting Analysis of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education in A.I.D.-assisted LAC Countries." While he provided valuable support to Bureau leadership and LAC Missions on agricultural development, he also demonstrated his proficiency in the area of trade capacity building. Over the years he made valuable contributions in the interagency context dealing with trade, including discussions around a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and agreements like the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Dr. Byrnes kept USAID/Washington and LAC Mission stakeholders up to speed on the evolving trade context through his quarterly *LAC Trade Matters* newsletter.

While the focus of his work shifted largely toward trade capacity building, Dr. Byrnes continued to draw on his agricultural development expertise. He made insightful contributions by diagnosing and documenting how agricultural development intersected with free trade and impacted on important goals, such as economic growth and poverty reduction. In 1996, he co-authored "Technology Institutions for Agricultural Free Trade in the Americas (TIAFTA): A Study on Agricultural Production Trends and Institutional Dynamics within the Evolving Western Hemisphere Free Trade Region." Demonstrating the longevity of his dedication to the field, Dr. Byrnes followed this 1996 study by shepherding a 2008 publication entitled "Optimizing the

Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Benefits of CAFTA-DR: Accelerating Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD).”

Development work feels cyclical at times, as attention to a given theme ebbs and flows with changing administrations and events. Having witnessed a decline in attention to agricultural development during the 1990’s and early 2000’s, Dr. Byrnes found himself well placed to offer his expertise in the wake of the global food price crisis of 2007-2008. He was central to the early internal and interagency discussions that culminated in the launch of the U.S. Government’s Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, Feed the Future (FTF). Within this fast-changing context of standing up a Presidential initiative, including a new USAID Bureau for Food Security, Dr. Byrnes was a welcome presence and steady source of advice and context for LAC Bureau leadership and Missions.

Reflecting on Dr. Byrnes’ importance to USAID, a former LAC/RSD Office Director noted: “Since 2010, with the Feed the Future initiative, USAID has rediscovered the critical role that agricultural and rural development plays in poverty reduction. But this ‘rediscovery’ did not happen by accident. Since the 1970s, Kerry Byrnes has been an unwavering voice for agricultural and rural development investments and has played a critical role in helping ensure the success of such investments in the LAC region.” A current Mission Director in a Feed the Future focus country notes: “His insights into rural diversification helped forge high impact programs that are improving nutrition and creating higher incomes for people escaping poverty.”

In one of his last major undertakings for the USAID LAC Bureau, Dr. Byrnes took the lead on establishing an interagency agreement with USDA to support LAC countries that export agricultural goods to the United States. With a new U.S. food safety law in place, this assistance will be critical to ensuring the LAC countries are able to comply with regulations and maintain access to the U.S. market. Thus, in a sense, this assistance will help safeguard years of earlier USAID investments in the LAC agricultural sector, which Dr. Byrnes helped to shape in so many ways.

Above all, Dr. Byrnes has been a respected and valued colleague to those that have passed through the LAC Bureau and LAC Missions over the years. A former boss refers to him as “one of USAID’s strongest Latin American development officers.” His presence will be sorely missed by many USAID staff, both personally and professionally. (Dated: 06-27-2014)

The Outstanding Career Achievement Award, based on this nomination, was presented to me twelve days before I retired on September 30. With the clock ticking toward this date, the lyrics of two popular songs from back in the day played in my mind. I first reflected on Frank Sinatra’s cover of “September Song” (1938):

*Oh, it’s a long, long while from May to December
But the days grow short when you reach September...*

The second set of lyrics that came to mind was from the song “It Was A Very Good Year,” originally recorded in 1961 by Bob Shane of The Kingston Trio (see vignette) but popularized five years later by Frank Sinatra in 1966:

*But now the days grow short, I’m in the autumn of the year
And now I think of my life as vintage wine from fine old kegs
From the brim to the dregs, and it poured sweet and clear
It was a very good year*

For all the “brims” and “dregs” during my years working in Development, from Michigan State University to Iowa State University, from studying and living in the Philippines and Mexico to living and working in Colombia, from

IFDC in Alabama to a summer on the watercourses of Pakistan for the World Bank, from long-term employment with the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development to hundreds of short-term assignments in scores of developing countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and during days, months, and years not always “sweet and clear,” perhaps this sums it up best of all: “It was a very good career.”

Reflections on USAID Support for ARD in the LAC Region

Some Lingering Concerns

As much as I deeply appreciated the honor that USAID bestowed upon me on my retirement, during the last year or so before retirement, I was greatly frustrated by the Agency’s declining funding support for agriculture and rural development (ARD) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). During most of my professional career, my technical focus had been on helping USAID, or partners the Agency funds, to design, implement, and/or evaluate ARD assistance in the LAC region. While many countries in the region yet greatly need and would benefit immensely from such assistance, USAID’s geographic focus currently is on Africa and, within the LAC region, increasingly on Cuba and Haiti, with continued declines in funding for economic growth in most LAC Missions excepting Feed the Future (FTF) funding for Agriculture in Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras.

In my last job as Agriculture Development Officer (Foreign Service Officer-Limited) for USAID, I tried to focus my technical knowledge, skills, and experience on helping USAID’s Bureau for Food Security (BFS) to ensure that the FTF programs in Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras would be implemented in a developmentally sound way. At the same time, I was concerned that more ARD-focused assistance is still very much needed in many LAC countries where USAID already had reduced Economic Growth funding, closed Economic Growth offices in some Missions, or even closed Missions, most recently in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Panama.

To share my concerns, I wrote and shared with USAID a paper titled “USAID Assistance to Agriculture and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Origins, Evolution, and Reflections.” This paper, in its Reflections section, outlined the following three concerns about the Agency’s support for Feed the Future (FTF) in the LAC region.

1 - Feed the Future (FTF) Not Effectively Targeted

Under the FTF initiative, only a small portion of FTF assistance is provided to address the root causes of food insecurity in the LAC region, where FTF assistance is provided to only three countries (Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras). With USAID’s Agriculture funding no longer provided to any other LAC country, the Agency’s new mission statement challenged its staff to partner to end extreme poverty by 2030. At the same time the Agency was failing to recognize that most LAC country national governments yet needed and would benefit from donor support to articulate policies, strategies, programs, and projects essential for helping small-scale farms and firms in the rural sector, where extreme poverty is the most prevalent, to more effectively address the globalization and competitiveness challenges these countries’ rural sectors now face. This is especially the case in Central America where that region is now battling the scourges of continuing food insecurity, coffee rust, and, most recently, drought. If these countries don’t succeed in meeting these challenges, long-term prospects for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction are dim.

Much more could be done even in the FTF-assisted LAC countries to spur rural economic growth and poverty reduction. This, for example, could include giving greater attention to strengthening the enabling environment for trade and investment, yet USAID’s LAC Missions were no longer receiving Trade and Investment funds because this

was not an emphasis of the Obama Administration even though the Administration supposedly espouses a National Export Initiative. But another perhaps even more basic area that FTF assistance could address would be strengthening the enabling environment for participatory development. In this regard, over two decades ago, during the Clinton Administration, USAID placed a major emphasis on “participation” and encouraged staff to participate in “The Participation Forum.” Reflecting on staff contributions to that forum, I wrote a paper (“Say Hello to Sustainable Development: ‘How Do You Do Participation?’”) which summarized how the Agency was defining participation, the conditions required for development assistance to be participatory, and potential approaches to foster participation in development assistance. But this guidance raised more questions about participation than it answered. Most critically, the guidance simply did not get at the heart of the issue – **how** should USAID “do” participation?

One Agency colleague responding to my paper replied that one doesn’t “do” participation which, sadly, missed the point I was trying to make. That point was that advocates for participation or participatory development were putting the emphasis on participation and not on the development problem for which a participatory approach, depending on its appropriateness, may or may not be effective in helping to solve. I noted that uncritical acceptance of what I described as a supply-driven “participate or else” mantra that permeated USAID culture at the time reminded me of a memorable line of dialogue from the film *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956). Set in the village of Tobiki in American-occupied Okinawa in 1946, Colonel Wainwright Purdy III (Paul Ford), referring to the villagers, says: “they’re gonna learn democracy if I have to shoot every one of them” (MGM/UA Home Video M200665).



**Marlon Brando, Paul Ford (as Col. Purdy), and Glenn Ford from
*The Teahouse of the August Moon***

Now, as far as I know, no USAID administrator ever vowed that “they’re gonna learn participation if I have to shoot every one of them.” But every USAID administrator inevitably comes to the Agency with a vow to show that he or she has a better approach for “doing” Development—and the troops better fall in line, salute that approach, and obey orders to implement it, not unlike that classic dialogue line of Captain Queeg (Humphrey Bogart) in the film *The Caine Mutiny* (1954): “Mr. Maryk, you may tell the crew for me that there are four ways of doing things aboard my ship: The right way, the wrong way, the Navy way, and my way. They do things my way, and we’ll get along.”



Captain Queeg (Humphrey Bogart) in *The Caine Mutiny* (1954)

True to form, without skipping a beat, Feed the Future was designed within the USG in Washington, DC as the latest version of doing Agriculture “my way,” with field Missions being given a blueprint of how they were to design and implement their food security assistance programs.

While USAID Administrators have come and gone, rarely has any recognized that the only effective approach to sustainable development is unleashing a people’s pent-up or latent demand to participate in making Development happen. This took my argument to the next question: What are the causes of participation? I proposed that what impedes participatory development or demand-driven development from emerging is the lack of an enabling environment (the conditions that must be in place in order) to motivate or incentivize people to want to participate. “A proper enabling environment is key, because, without the appropriate services, infrastructure, and policy framework, people’s initiatives at the local level cannot be successful” (Source: The Development GAP, 1993, “Concept Paper on the Development of a Participatory Approach to USAID’s Strategic and Program Planning and Implementation,” Washington, DC: The Development Group for Alternative Policies).

Absent the requisite enabling conditions and the incentives they provide, people will not participate in and sustain the social groups, organizations, and institutions that are essential to supporting rural economic growth and poverty reduction – and, as a result, development will not be sustainable.

Applied to the BFS emphasis on scaling technology (being promoted at the time of my retirement), new technologies are not going to scale (be adopted by large number of farmers) unless target beneficiaries have incentive and capacity to participate in adopting those technologies. This, in turn, led me to ask: What are the enabling conditions for participatory development? The answer to this question which I feel is key to a sustainable development process is “growth and maturation of participatory organizational structures and effective support institutions, rather than specific projects or programs.” In essence, the growth and maturation of participatory organizational structures and effective support institutions is the hallmark of sustainable development, ensuring capacity is in place for local systems to continue to provide goods and services (e.g., extension) long after a given donor’s project funding has ended. But this answer only raised the next question: What are the causes of participatory organizational structures and effective support institutions?

I answered this question by pointing to the view that participation and the emergence of participatory organizational structures and support institutions is most effectively fostered by development assistance effective in removing or relaxing the following four constraints to participation:

- **The Inconsequentiality Problem** – which can be resolved by assisting the target audience (e.g., the rural poor) to see or learn how their participation in organizing themselves to solve a problem can make a difference;
- **The Cost of Organization Problem** – which can be resolved by assisting the rural poor to reduce the costs involved in organizing themselves;
- **The Free Rider Problem** – which can be resolved by assisting the rural poor to identify ways and means to provide incentives for the actual and potential members of an organization to support the organization; and
- **The Assurance Problem** – which can be resolved by assisting the rural poor to develop confidence or trust in the institutional framework within which their decisions are made.

To the extent that a donor organization such as USAID can assist the rural poor and the organizations and institutions that should be supporting agriculture and rural development (ARD) in resolving these four problems, the consequences of participation become abundantly clear:

True participation, in which people have real power to affect decisions, creates a sense of ownership, which in turn generates people's commitment to the activities at hand. That commitment can take the form of a significant contribution of time and expenditure of social energy, a willingness to take risks and make sacrifices, the development or expansion of local organizations, and the generation of local resources to complement, and eventually replace, external assistance (The Development GAP, 1993).

However, development assistance often falls short of the mark of being demand-driven. When I looked at the structure of Feed the Future (FTF), the USG's contribution to the global hunger and food security initiative, I saw an initiative that, despite having been sold as "country-led," is actually very much supply-driven rather than demand-driven, with no strategic guidance, program focus, and project resources being systematically targeted on addressing, reducing, and/or removing the four aforementioned constraints to participation.

Bureau for Food Security (BFS) leadership, rather than providing guidance on how field-based Missions can address these four constraints to participation, constantly pressed USAID Missions receiving FTF (Agriculture) funding to report on FTF implementation in accordance with BFS prescribed indicators and information identified as needed to monitor and evaluate FTF's implementation status. To illustrate, the following presents a list of information and reporting that BFS, since the inception of FTF, has required USAID Missions to submit to headquarters:

Fiscal Year 2010 Implementation Plan – how Missions planned to program (spend) that year's funding in accordance with FTF guidelines

McKinsey & Company-produced Draft Feed the Future Strategy – provision of sole-sourced assistance from this firm to bring in an external team to draft an assistance strategy in advance of the Missions having a chance to develop their own FTF implementation strategy in partnership with country-based stakeholders.

Strategic Review – a point in time PowerPoint presentation on the status of Mission progress in developing a "country-led" FTF multi-year strategy (MYS) and coordinating with host country governments on their progress in developing a food security country investment plan (CIP).

Multi-Year Strategy – a three-year strategy for achieving targets against the FTF goals of lifting 20% of the food-insecure population above the poverty line and reducing the prevalence of child stunting by 20%.

Population-based Survey – to provide baseline information on the levels of income and undernutrition in the FTF Zones of Influence (ZOIs), and to be repeated at subsequent points in time.

Feed the Future Monitoring System (FTFMS) – annual or more frequent reporting of data into the FTFMS against a list of require and/or custom indicators that Missions and implementing partners generate, based on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) information periodically collected and reported.

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) – a requirement that Missions implementing FTF-funded programs carry out a cost benefit analysis (CBA) to identify whether the proposed intervention would result in a benefit to farmers greater than the returns on the technology currently used by farmers.

Biweekly FTF Phone Call – a teleconference forum held every other week for headquarters-based and Mission-based staff to exchange information around Mission progress in implementing FTF and headquarters providing guidance on emerging aspects of FTF that will require Mission attention and support.

Mission Updates – monthly reports from the Missions highlighting the progress a country is making on addressing food insecurity, significant USAID-funded partner activities in carrying out the implementation of FTF-funded assistance in agriculture and/or nutrition, and updates on the status of progress with preparing new projects for procurement.

Annual Portfolio Review – a PowerPoint presentation providing an annual update on the progress of each country-specific FTF program in achieving its targets.

Regional Workshops and Global FTF Conferences – these periodic events are used by headquarters to interact with and inform Mission-based staff on FTF guidance.

Civil Society Action Plan – a request to missions to identify a point of contact to coordinate with BFS and the State Department's Office of Global Food Security on mission efforts to develop a consultative process with local civil society organizations to develop a FTF Civil Society Action Plan.

Policy Matrix and Agenda – An initial and updated report to headquarters on policy constraints to food security, prioritization thereof, and FTF progress in removing or relaxing the constraints.

Institutional Architecture Assessment – As a component of the policy matrix and agenda, a requirement that field-based Missions in the FTF-assisted countries facilitate and participate in an exercise whereby an external consultant team carries out an assessment of a country's capacity to formulate, implement, and evaluate evidence-based policy to address food insecurity.

Scaling Technology Plans – A headquarter requirement for Missions to identify up to three agricultural and/or nutrition technologies to be scaled and the Mission's plan for scaling up those technologies, that is, for achieving the adoption of those technologies by significantly larger numbers of farmers and/or households.

Organizing and Hosting Visits of Headquarters Staff – This entails Mission-based staff allocating time to organize and support an agenda of activities (e.g., meetings, field trips, etc.) for BFS leadership and/or staff to observe ongoing FTF activities in country.

Traditionally, USAID prided itself as being a decentralized agency with its strength residing in its field Missions. However, oversight and management of the implementation of FTF-funded programs has been heavily centralized. As a result, Mission staff at post share a major concern – that having to spend so much time responding to guidance

and information requests coming from BFS leaves Mission staff not having sufficient time to give adequate attention to their own programs (e.g., getting out to the field to observe partners implementing ongoing projects, developing new projects, and/or coordinating with host country government and private sector stakeholders). The reality of this supply-driven approach was also confirmed by a colleague who recently provided assistance to one FTF Mission and commented on my own assessment:

Very interesting your observations on FTF operations and this true top-down push, far more on process than substance. I recall when I did the [Country X] FTF program working under a separate security pass day in and day out inside the mission, I truly had to beg to get [a] few minutes with the USAID staff. They constantly complained about working on servicing USAID BFS needs. Not only was their time so dear but unfortunately, their substantive knowledge was so basic and process driven. Further, I was not provided much of anything to review re [Government of Country X] documents and [was instructed] definitely not to meet with [Government of Country X Ministry of Agriculture] officials. The USAID [Mission] was under such pressure to...have something they and AID/W felt comfortable with. The Acting Director profusely praised my work [saying that] after McKinsey [& Company], other consulting teams, and BFS staffers, they finally had a product they felt comfortable with to present to the [Government of Country X] and to AID/W.

An even more important concern, with all of the hustle and bustle that surrounds BFS' *modus operandi* in guiding Mission-based implementation of FTF, I felt that FTF's approach would fall short of addressing poverty's root causes because the approach likely will not be sustainable by host country organizations and institutions once USAID project funding ends.

To the extent that FTF fails to foster participatory development guided by sound economic and social analyses to identify the areas in which investment of scarce resources will have greatest impact on broadly based, sustainable rural economic growth, FTF will continue to miss opportunities to ensure that FTF provides will lead to long-term sustainable development, not just near-term reductions in the number of people in poverty in FTF's geographically-delimited zones of influence (ZOIs).

To be clear, FTF strategy and implementation has not focused on directing assistance at reducing the transaction costs associated with removing or relaxing the inconsequentiality, cost of organization, free rider, and/or assurance constraints to participation. USAID potentially could be doing much more to help assisted developing countries, communities, and organizations to design and implement interventions to remove or relax these constraints to participation. However, so doing would require providing operational guidelines on **how** to do participation. A clear set of operational guidelines would articulate:

- The procedures or steps required to conduct a sound economic and social analysis to identify the targets of opportunity for investment in participatory development; this is essential if participation is to be demand-driven rather than supply-driven;
- The interventions that can be taken in behalf of assisting the rural poor to remove or relax the most limiting constraints to participation; and
- A model of instigated social change that spells out the sequencing of steps required to design, implement, and evaluate demand-driven participatory development.

With respect to reducing poverty in the rural sector of LAC countries, where a significant portion of the poor reside and are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, FTF doesn't provide the cutting edge model to guide the

investments that Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti need to make to foster demand-driven participatory development as the only effective pathway to reducing rural poverty on a sustainable basis. FTF's approach to targeting relatively small numbers of farms/firms in a geographically delimited Zone of Influence (ZOI) only provides an interim "solution" to reducing poverty – and one that will not be sustainable once the supply side of donor (USAID) funding is removed from the equation.

For poverty reduction to become sustainable, a much broader effort to spur inclusive economic growth is needed, one based on improving the enabling environment to facilitate participatory development and address the longer-term challenge of supporting agriculture to be a more productive, remunerative, dynamic, and sustainable engine for economic growth. Even as BFS challenges Missions to "scale up technologies" to reach greater numbers of beneficiaries in the ZOIs and beyond via "more boots on the ground," "a greater density of activities," "spending down the pipeline of funding faster," and "horizontal scaling," ZOI-focused investments don't address the underlying structural – institutional, organizational, and human resource – constraints that impede LAC countries from mobilizing agriculture as a driver for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. For too long these weaknesses have been ignored even as LAC countries now begin to recognize, just as Chile did back in the 1970s, that special reforms, support services, and investments in agriculture and rural development are needed to ensure that capacity is in place so that benefits from USAID-funded assistance become sustainable after project funding ends.

USAID is not the latest USG agency with a mandate to implement USG development assistance, this also now being done by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). However, as was the case with prior USG agencies providing development assistance before USAID, MCC also had its birthing and growing pains, including addressing such challenges as standing itself up; getting its compacts designed, funded, implemented, and evaluated; and coming to grips with the reality that compact-funded benefits are not likely sustainable once a compact's funding ends. These challenges were not new to the MCC or USAID but were also wrestled with by predecessor agencies (TCA, FOA, and ICA) under Point IV (see Stanley Andrews vignette) and even their predecessors (IIAA and CIAA). Given the challenges of globalization and competitiveness, and that developing countries now must aggressively and systematically advance their national endowments in the most productive, efficient, competitive, and sustainable fashion, will USAID reverse the current trend of ignoring the need for increased attention to ARD in LAC region—and will FTF, BFS, and interagency leadership of FTF take stock of the initiative's flawed approach and make necessary course corrections?

BFS leadership already has expressed concern to staff that, despite progress made and highlighted in FTF Annual Reports, many county-specific FTF programs were falling short of achieving targets, which has been a factor contributing to grasping onto "scaling technology" as a near last ditch effort in 2014-2015, prior to the 2015 independent evaluation of FTF, to increase the density of FTF assistance so that the impact of FTF, when measured by the next population-based survey, will be found to have succeeded in raising the number of farmers who have been lifted out of poverty and in reducing the number of children who are stunted.



Lord of the Flies (1963 & 1990)

The near-term flurry of activities with BFS mobilizing teams to assist Missions in improving their plans for scaling technology is reminiscent of the film *Lord of the Flies* (1963), in which

the [signal] fire...represents [the] amount of civilized strength left within the boys [to attract the notice of passing ships that might be able to rescue the boys]. When the fire burns stronger, it means that they are getting closer to society and when the fire is not burning or is weak, they too are weakening. The signal fire becomes an indicator of the boys' connection to civilization. [When the fire burns low or goes out, we realize that the boys have lost sight of their desire to be rescued and have accepted their savage lives on the island.] . . . When Ralph realizes the power of the fire and admits that if everyone does not do their duty and cooperate in keeping the fire going, all hopes in contacting civilization outside are shattered. The fire is their only chance of survival and if it goes out, their destined to stay on the island forever. As long as the fire is well maintained, the boys show a desire to return to their civilization, but when the fire burns low or goes out, the boys lose sight of their wish to be rescued, because they have accepted their barbaric lives on the island. [Ironically, at the end of the novel, a fire finally summons a ship to the island, but not the signal fire. Instead, it is the fire of savagery—the forest fire Jack's gang starts as part of his quest to hunt and kill Ralph.] ([Source](#))



Lord of the Flies (1990) - Fire!

As applied to Feed the Future, “fire” is a symbol for the ongoing (but not sustainable) flurry of activity to urge Missions to burn down their pipelines, scale up technologies, get more boots on the ground, and increase the density of activity in the ZOIs in the hope that this will lead to achieving rescue from the island as a symbol for more farmers adopting improved technologies to improve food security. Ironically, “the fire of savagery—the forest fire” symbolizes the turmoil that Central America is going through (i.e., gangs and violence, coffee rust, unaccompanied children, and, most recently, drought) that has been a wake-up call to trigger the arrival of the rescue ship (i.e., a 2.38 billion supplemental requested by the Obama Administration to address the unaccompanied children problem).

I argued that the response of the Administration likely would fall short of what is really needed to address the underlying problems to the extent that assistance focuses on the problem's symptoms, not the problem's causes. In the meantime, USG interagency groups were meeting regularly to prepare the USG's proposed agenda for the 2015 Summit of the Americas, including a Global Competitiveness Working Group that had been preparing goal papers on infrastructure, trade facilitation, regulatory cooperation, and formalization, economic inclusion and development of SMEs but nary a mention of the great ARD challenge facing our LAC trading partners, especially with the World Trade Organization members stalled on reaching an agreement on Agriculture.



Captain Queeg (Humphrey Bogart) in *The Caine Mutiny* (1954)

The whole question of whether it makes sense to accelerate the burn rate of funds into obligations and sub-obligations is reminiscent of the “missing strawberries incident” in *The Caine Mutiny* and Captain Queeg losing it during the trial.

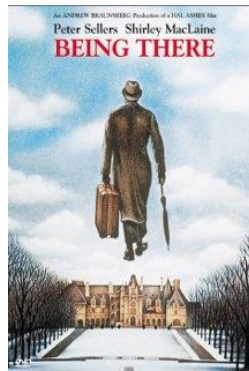


“Ah, but the strawberries! That’s where I had them. They laughed at me and made jokes, but I proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, and with geometric logic, that a duplicate key to the wardroom icebox did exist. And I’d have produced that key if they hadn’t pulled Caine out of action!” (Humphrey Bogart as Captain Queeg in *The Caine Mutiny*)

Applying this “strawberry” analogy to the “pipelines” in FTF:

“Ah, but the pipelines! That’s where I had them. They looked incredulous that the money could have been spent faster, but I proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, based on a review of the Agriculture funding pipeline in USAID’s financial system, that an abundance of un-sub-obligated funding did exist. And that money could have been spent faster had only the Missions worked harder to execute the funds.”

This analogy also raises the issue that accelerating the burn rate on obligating, sub-obligating, and/or spending funds, may result in achieving a short-term increment in the numbers of assisted farmers who are lifted out of poverty but the approach will not be sustainable or lead to sustainable development. Indeed, I found it troubling that FTF had recently adopted the mindset that key to achieving sustainable poverty reduction and food security in the FTF Zones of Influence would be to meet (or exceed) targets through accelerated and increased spending and getting “more boots on the ground” (i.e., more partners delivering assistance), thereby mobilizing a greater density of activity and scaling of technologies within the ZOIs (i.e., reaching more farms and firms with direct assistance). This mindset is reminiscent of the famous scene from *Being There* (1979), a film starring Peter Sellers as Chauncey Gardener (Chance the Gardener), in which the plausibility of stimulating “growth through temporary incentives” is questioned.



President “Bobby” (Jack Warden): Mr. Gardner, do you agree with Ben, or do you think that we can stimulate growth through temporary incentives?

[Long pause]

Chance the Gardener (Peter Sellers): As long as the roots are not severed, all is well. And all will be well in the garden.

President “Bobby”: In the garden.

Chance the Gardener: Yes. In the garden, growth has its seasons. First comes spring and summer, but then we have fall and winter. And then we get spring and summer again.

President “Bobby”: Spring and summer.

Chance the Gardener: Yes.

President “Bobby”: Then fall and winter.

Chance the Gardener: Yes.

Benjamin Rand (Melvyn Douglas): I think what our insightful young friend is saying is that we welcome the inevitable seasons of nature, but we’re upset by the seasons of our economy.

Chance the Gardener: Yes! There will be growth in the spring!

Benjamin Rand: Hmm!

Chance the Gardener: Hmm!

President “Bobby”: Hm. Well, Mr. Gardner, I must admit that is one of the most refreshing and optimistic statements I’ve heard in a very, very long time.

[Benjamin Rand applauds]

President “Bobby”: I admire your good, solid sense. That’s precisely what we lack on Capitol Hill.

As FTF moved into its fourth year of implementation, and with an independent evaluation of the initiative scheduled for 2015, a major evaluation issue that needed to be looked at is whether FTF put too much emphasis on achieving near-term targets rather than achieving sustainable poverty reduction and food security in the longer run. In the meantime, considerable emphasis was being placed on touting FTF's superiority over past USAID investments in agriculture. Whether this ultimately proves to be true, one is reminded that, in the mid-1990s, the car rental company Hertz ran an advertising campaign touting Hertz's superiority over its competitors, emphasizing the competition's shortcomings with the catch phrase "There's Hertz and Not Exactly!"



"There's Hertz and Not Exactly!"

Absent a more demand-driven approach and guidelines on **how** to **do** participation, FTF as a pathway to sustainable development risks becoming another "Not exactly!"

2 - The Urbanization Distraction

Thinking about USAID funding trends for ARD in the LAC region as of 2014, the high poverty rates in the rural sector of many LAC countries, and how poverty drives illegal migration, gang violence, and attracting the poor into illicit activities with their attendant negative consequences, I was struck by the Agency's release of USAID's new *Policy on Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World*. Introducing the policy, USAID Administrator Rajiv J. Shah wrote:

More people live in urban areas today than in rural areas. By 2030, we can expect another billion and a half people to be living in urban areas—primarily in developing countries. Because **cities are the engines of economic growth** [emphasis added], accounting for 70 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) we need to ensure that safe, sustainable cities improve the livelihoods of those who dwell within them and those who depend on the economic activity they generate.

To say that "cities are the engines for economic growth" flies in the face of – and is inconsistent with – the efforts that USAID was making under FTF to argue that agriculture is the driver for poverty reduction, rural economic growth, and food security. Indeed, as a recent USAID publication recently stated: "Over its first half century, USAID has been at the forefront of agricultural development, **the starting point of the process of economic transformation and growth** [emphasis added] (p. x, *USAID's Legacy in Agricultural Development*, 2013). For USAID to now state that "cities are the engines of economic growth" is a foreign policy disconnect that loses sight that productive and sustainable urbanization historically evolved when countries developed a dynamic agriculture linked to rural-based market towns that provide agricultural support services. Farmers turn to such towns to access support services such as agricultural credit, production inputs, value-added agro-processing, transportation, and other services. For many countries in the LAC region, such centers have yet to evolve to being sustainable, vibrant drivers of economic growth and poverty reduction. This, in part, is one of the results of two decades of decline in public sector and donor community support for agriculture in the region.

Further, when poor small-scale farmers are unable to eke out a sustainable livelihood, they turn to towns and cities in search of a better livelihood, thereby increasing the demand for urban “service delivery.” Focusing development assistance on constraints to urban “service delivery” misses the boat by addressing the symptoms, not the cause, of the problem, the latter being that the ARD sector of most LAC countries hasn’t developed sufficiently quickly to generate the on- and off-farm employment opportunities needed to absorb rural labor, largely due to the failure of these countries to support the ARD sector with a robust set of public goods investments. Rather than coming up with a strategy and policy to improve agriculture-related public goods delivery in the rural areas, the new misguided “wisdom” that cities are “the engines for economic growth” not only negates historical economic development realities but also perpetuates continued failure to address the real challenges to *Getting Agriculture Moving* ([Arthur T. Mosher](#))

3 - ARD Got “Busted”

The situation faced by poor small scale-farmers in many LAC countries, but especially in the smaller economy countries of Central America and in the highlands of the Andean countries, reminds me of Ray Charles’ classic song “Busted.”



Ray Charles’ “Busted”

*My bills are all due and the baby needs shoes and I’m busted
Cotton is down to a quarter a pound, but I’m busted
I got a cow that went dry and a hen that won’t lay
A big stack of bills that gets bigger each day
The county’ gonna haul my belongings away cause I’m busted.*

*I went to my brother to ask for a loan cause I was busted
I hate to beg like a dog without his bone, but I’m busted
My brother said there ain’t a thing I can do,
My wife and my kids are all down with the flu,
And I was just thinking about calling on you and I’m busted.*

*Well, I am no thief, but a man can go wrong when he’s busted
The food that we canned last summer is gone and I’m busted
The fields are all bare and the cotton won’t grow,
Me and my family got to pack up and go,
But I’ll make a living, just where I don’t know cause I’m busted.*

I’m broke, no bread, I mean like nothing. It’s over.

"Rusted" - A Parable on Coffee & Poverty in Central America

I summarized the despair of Central America's small-scale coffee farmers with my own versions of Ray Charles' "Busted" which I have titled "Rusted" (with interpretation of the lyrics in parentheses).

- *My bills are all due and the baby needs shoes and I'm rusted.* (I'm always in debt to someone (e.g., the "coyote") and can't afford to buy shoes for the baby.)
- *Coffee is down to a quarter a pound but I'm rusted* (Coffee prices are depressed and I can't afford to buy fungicide to spray my coffee trees that are dying of coffee leaf rust.)
- *I got a cow that went dry and a hen that won't lay* (I don't even own a cow and can't afford to buy feed for the few chickens we have.)
- *The county's gonna haul my belongings away cause I'm rusted* (The rural area is now so insecure that my fields and shipments are at peril of being robbed.)
- *I went to my brother to ask for a loan cause I was rusted.... My brother said there ain't a thing [he] can do* (Actual case in Guatemala: Three brothers and three sisters all have small coffee plots, of which all have been abandoned except for the plot of one brother due to coffee rust having killed the coffee trees. So far one brother has been able to pull together the cash to buy the fungicide to spray the coffee trees on his parcel. Apparently the other five brothers and sisters concluded "there ain't a thing [they] can do.")
- *The food that we canned last summer is gone and I'm rusted* (There probably was no food canned last summer and the upcoming "hunger season" (when the food has run out before the next harvest) will hit Central America's small-scale coffee producers particularly hard in the coming months as a result of reduced cash income due to depressed coffee yields and sales.)
- *The fields are all bare and the cotton won't grow* (Many coffee fields previously worked by small-scale coffee producers have been abandoned and the coffee trees have now died or are in the process of dying.)
- *Me and my family got to pack up and go / But I'll make a living, just where I don't know cause I'm rusted* (Even before the coffee rust crisis hit Central America in 2012, illegal migration continued from Central America as it has for over the past decade or longer but now, with the coffee rust crisis, the number of Central America's poor going to urban centers and onward to the north, voting with their feet, is likely to increase.)
- *I'm broke, no bread, I mean like nothing, It's over.* (For many the small-scale coffee growers most adversely affected by the coffee rust crisis, they will now face a food security crisis.)

Even my grandson quickly understands that, at the end of a ball game, one team wins and the other loses. As he says, the losing team "got beat." If we apply this "got beat" analogy to the ongoing situation of thousands of small-scale coffee growers in Central America, they clearly "got beat" in the wake of the coffee leaf rust that has wrought havoc on coffee quality and productivity in Central America and other coffee-growing countries of the LAC region, with the consequences even more severe when coffee prices drop, disincentivizing farmers from using scarce capital to invest in technologies (e.g., fungicide) to protect their coffee trees.

But the story doesn't end south of our border. When migrants from Central America, many of them once small-scale coffee growers until their fields were ruined by coffee rust, enter the United States illegally, they will be at risk not only of "getting beat" but also "getting busted" and being shipped (deported) back to their home countries—and not necessarily before getting caught up in illicit activities here. In short, if the LAC countries fail to generate economic growth and poverty reduction in their rural sectors, we suffer the consequences here in the urban areas of our own

country. While it's never too late to begin addressing the constraints to revitalizing the ARD sector in USAID-assisted LAC countries, the place to start is NOT to address "sustainable service delivery" in the cities of "an increasingly urbanized world." Rather the place to start is revitalizing agriculture in these countries' rural sectors, recognizing that agriculture, if the right long-term investments are made, is a proven driver for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in the developing world (e.g., Taiwan, Chile).

Now is the time for USAID to reengage – boldly, meaningfully, and with a long-term commitment – with interested LAC countries to help strategize, leverage, and target building a "new era" ARD support base for the region's countries. Further, given the evolving profile of the U.S.'s Latino demographic, with this population's family, business, and institutional ties to their home countries, an appropriately designed reengagement in the ARD sector of selected LAC countries holds potential not only to help revitalize agriculture and rural development in those countries but also to mobilize U.S.-based Latino support for this objective—a factor that our country's major political parties would be wise not to lose sight of, given the growing share of the Latino population among the American electorate.

Conclusion: "The Struggle Continues"

Reflecting on my professional career of 40+ years of working on ARD issues globally, including Africa and Asia, and since 1989 exclusively in the LAC region, I frequently asked if USAID could have been more successful in fostering effective strategic and programmatic investments in ARD in the LAC region. Looking back at my own limited contributions in this regard, compared with those made by other USAID Foreign Service Officers who worked on ARD issues over the years in the LAC region, I have taken some comfort, as earlier described, in the recent MSNBC cable channel public service announcement (PSA) delivered by Melissa Harris-Perry who shared the following memory about her father:

We grew up in the Jim Crow South. And [my father] would give me birthday cards and instead of signing them "Love, Daddy", [he] always signed them "The struggle continues, Daddy." And I was a little kid and I was like 'What is he talking about?' But what it means and what I've taken on as my own is you don't have to have all the answers and all the solutions to all the problems today. These problems have persisted, and lots of folks have been working on them. And you take up the banner, and you work on them during your lifetime, and then you pass it on to the next. (Melissa Harris-Perry, MSNBC)

The lesson I drew from Melissa's reflection is that, when it comes to working in Development, especially in the ARD area, it is helpful to remember not only that lots of folks have worked on the ARD challenge but also that this challenge persists, and that I as well as others do not have all the answers and all the solutions to the challenge of how to accelerate sustainable ARD in the LAC region or even elsewhere. But one can only hope that the consequences of past policies, strategies, programs, projects, and investments – as well as the insights provided here regarding the constraints to participatory development – will not be ignored. Paraphrasing Melissa, it is now up to the "next generation" to "take up the banner" to focus more strategically on the ARD challenge in the LAC region (and elsewhere) and do so in a way merits that the contributions of this new generation of leaders qualifies them to become part of "the greatest generation" in Development.

As my father (see Francis C. Byrnes vignette) often would say "We must never quit trying." That the LAC countries "must never quit trying" was brought home in a recent Charlie Rose interview on PBS and Bloomberg Television with Chile's President Sebastián Piñera who said that:

Chile can maintain growth of 6 percent as long as it doesn't rest on its past achievements. "You have to be taking measures all the time to innovate, to improve, to modernize the whole system," Piñera said. "So the worst danger is when you think that growth happens by chance, or falls from the sky." The four pillars of

growth will be education, innovation, science and poverty reduction, Piñera said (Source: Bloomberg News, October 4, 2013).

Chile is now coming to grips with the reality that its economy next year (2015) would grow less than the central bank and government had forecast as it “emerges from the ‘Disneyland’ of high copper prices and low global borrowing costs” (Source: Bloomberg News, October 4, 2013), a lesson that many other LAC countries need also to take to heart. Facing this reality, Piñera’s comments speak to the need not only for Chile but also governments in other LAC countries as well as donors to steer away from simple traditional project or campaign approaches to foster short-term achievement of targets and toward a more sustainable, longer-term approach, one focused on more effectively linking markets to small-scale farms and firms and supporting this mission with a sustained mix of policy, institutional, organizational, and human resource capacity building reforms and investments in support of participatory development.

For the LAC region, the most critical challenge, one that is underappreciated if not totally unappreciated, is the need to substantively redirect assistance more creatively and effectively toward helping interested USAID-assisted LAC countries to confront the challenge of systematically diversifying their agricultural sectors into more remunerative enterprises that mobilize greater farm, agribusiness, and inter-sector linkages.

This is ironic because Chile, compared with most of the other LAC countries, has made the most progress in diversifying its agricultural sector into an engine for rural (and national) economic growth and poverty reduction. Yet, decades later, Chile is still working on this challenge while most LAC countries (and their donor partners) have yet to take sufficient strides to address the fragility and non-competitiveness of the ARD sector in those countries, a situation made worse by weakened donor commitments and weakened national-level capacities to support countries in responding to today’s “new era” challenges.

The time has come for the LAC countries and their donor partners such as USAID with broader USG and private sector support to stop declaring victory on ARD (as measured by USAID zeroing out the Mission budgets for economic growth, especially for agriculture), and to recognize that the ability of most LAC countries to utilize agriculture as a driver for economic growth and poverty reduction is not only being underexploited but also largely ignored. On the other hand, with the appropriate mix and level of ARD assistance commensurate to the institutional, organizational, and human resource capacity needs now confronting the LAC region, USAID could be doing much more to help these countries revitalize their ARD sectors as drivers for economic growth and poverty reduction.

But for USAID to be doing more – and doing the right thing – will require that USAID adopt the right vision and respond with “true grit” to support LAC partner countries who are willing and eager to address this ARD challenge. However, the U.S.’s funding of foreign assistance to the developing world is always subject to the pleasure of the American people as represented by each President and the Congress. Just as one example, in the spring of 1969, at President Nixon’s request, Nelson Rockefeller and a team of 23 advisors visited 20 LAC countries during four trips to solicit opinions on U.S. policies toward the region and to determine the needs and conditions of each country.

The team’s report made recommendations on preferential trade agreements with LAC region countries, refinancing the region’s foreign debt, and removing bureaucratic impediments that prevented the efficient use of U.S. development assistance. However, the Nixon administration reportedly did little to implement the report’s recommendations. Yet two decades later, the Republican administration of President Ronald Reagan provided leadership to launch the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) that continues to provide the Caribbean Basin nations, not participant to the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), with preferential access to the U.S. market.

Today, however, while the Administration of President Obama's has on its agenda a National Export Initiative, USAID no longer provides its Missions in the LAC region with the economic growth funding needed to support funding Trade and Investment projects to assist our developing country trading partners to increase their exports and generate the foreign exchange they need in order to sustain and expand buying U.S. exports without racking up a trade deficit with the United States.

Perhaps the second round of the Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (QDDR) under the Obama Administration, plus discussions pursuant to refunding the Global Agricultural Food Security (GAFS) program and Feed the Future, could take note of how USAID is flinching and walking (running) away from assisting our LAC trading partners to diversify their agricultural sectors, build their capacity to trade with the United States, and grow their rural economies in ways that will lead to sustainable poverty reduction and reduce the risk of the spillover negative consequences of the BOBs (see below).



The BOBs (The Bag of Bads)

- **Food Insecurity**
- **Drug & People Trafficking**
 - **Illegal Migration**
 - **Gangs & Violence**
- **Environmental Degradation**
- **Backsliding on Democracy**

Not to put too fine a point on the argument, the BOBs now include not only illegal migration as this has conventionally been understood but also a historic surge in migration of children from Central America, their parents sending them north in hopes that their offspring will encounter a better life in the United States than continuing to live out their lives in poverty in the rural regions of Central America.

“Obama calls wave of children across U.S.-Mexican border ‘urgent humanitarian situation’”

President Obama on Monday declared a wave of unaccompanied children across the U.S.-Mexican border an “urgent humanitarian situation” and directed federal agencies to coordinate a response to provide housing and other services. ... According to the Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families, 24,668 unaccompanied minors were apprehended at the U.S.-Mexican border in fiscal 2013. Officials expect the annual number will jump to nearly 60,000 by the end of fiscal 2014. ... Officials said most of the children are from Mexico and Central America, and are fleeing violence and poor economies in their countries. ... Obama’s announcement comes after White House budget officials informed lawmakers Friday that the projected cost of caring for and resettling young migrants from Mexico and Central America could top \$2.28 billion in fiscal 2015 — more than double what the Office of Management and Budget requested for 2015 a few months ago. (Source: *Washington Post*, 6/2/2014)

“Child migrants driven to US by violence, poverty”

REYNOSA, Mexico — Before 14-year-old Brian Duran set out from central Honduras in mid-April, he heard that child migrants who turned themselves in to the U.S. Border Patrol were being cared for and not deported. ... Brian isn’t alone in trying to get into the U.S. In the past eight months, 47,000 unaccompanied children have been apprehended along the border in the U.S. Southwest. More than 11,000 of those were Mexican children, who are generally quickly sent back across the border. But nearly 35,000 were from the Central American countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. By contrast, just 6,560 child migrants were put in U.S. shelters during all of 2011. A variety of reasons put young migrants on the path to the U.S.

“The children don’t only travel because of poverty or reunification. In a recent study we have detected that another important theme is migration because of insecurity,” said Julia Gonzalez, coordinator of the nonprofit National Bureau for Migration in Guatemala.

A study released in March by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said about half of 400 kids interviewed reported they had experienced or been threatened with serious harm. About 300 of those interviewed were from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras — countries that accounted for about 90 percent of the children cared for by the Office of Refugee Resettlement last year.

Brian said he left Comayagua, Honduras, because “there is so much poverty there, the crime is tremendous. You’ve got to sort things out because if not, you’ll starve to death.”

He said his older brother got into trouble with gangs and drugs.

“I don’t like that,” Brian said. “I’m used to working, earning a living.” He sold agoutis, medium-sized rodents, as pets to earn enough money to make his trip north. But he arrived in Reynosa penniless and now hopes his sister in the Mexican state of Jalisco can send him money to cross the border.

Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador have rampant street gangs and a strong presence of organized crime and drug traffickers resulting in some of the highest homicide rates in the region and in the world. Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world, with 90.4 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, according to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Honduras’ economic growth of 3 percent in 2013 was largely based on money sent home by migrants. Almost 60 percent of the country’s 8 million people live in poverty, the World Bank says.

Often, child migrants from Central America face the greatest dangers in Mexico, where gangs prey on them as they ride trains and buses north toward the U.S. border.” (Source: *Washington Post*, 6/2/2014)

Unfortunately, while *Washington Post* articles such as the two referenced above, tell part of the story, referring to poverty and citizen insecurity, these stories fail to shed light on the reasons why rural life in Central America has gone south after decades of donor and host country government disinvestment. Here I have tried to bring into the light the backstory that helps to explain why Central America has now reached “the twenty-ninth day.”

A lily pond, so the French riddle goes, contains a single leaf. Each day the number of leaves doubles—two leaves the second day, four the third, eight the fourth, and so on. Question: If the pond is completely full on the thirtieth day, when is it half full? Answer: On the Twenty-ninth day. (Lester R. Brown, *The Twenty-Ninth Day*)

All too often within USAID, when I pressed the case that USAID should be doing more to assist the Central American countries to invest in agriculture, the response I got was that “youth are not interested in farming” or “youth see no future in agriculture” as if this easily absolved USAID from any obligation to continue trying to help the developing countries of that region do a better job in increasing agricultural productivity and incomes, growing their rural economies, and reducing poverty. Clearly, to the extent that the U.S. has given up (i.e., “quit trying”), it’s not the chickens who are now coming home to roost on our doorstep but rather a growing number of the children of Central America’s poorest rural inhabitants.

If the U.S. does not reverse its current path of disengaging USAID from assisting the LAC countries in preparing their ARD sectors to compete and benefit in our inter-connected hemisphere, surely negative repercussions for the U.S. will continue to follow, exacerbating the “BOBs” as illustrated above. Indeed, it is not only Central America’s coffee rust farmers who are now getting busted on their farms but also their children who are getting busted at the U.S. border.

As in the classic John Lennon’s song “Imagine,” imagine how much better off Central America would be today had the U.S., rather than President Obama’s requesting a \$3.7 billion supplemental to deal with the recent influx of the children of Central America’s poor, instead invested that same amount over the past decade in fostering well-targeted investments to spur greater agricultural and rural development in Central America. Clearly, United States foreign policy toward Central America if not also the overall LAC region on drugs, immigration, trade capacity building, and agricultural and rural development has failed not only the LAC countries but also, unfortunately, our own country.

Will USAID leadership within the current (or the subsequent) Administration reverse course and reengage on ARD in the LAC region? Short of a miracle, the recent op-ed by David Brooks does not offer much hope that such could happen.

The toughest part of governing is the effect on the mind of those who govern. As Henry Kissinger said, once you get in government you are not building up human capital; you are just spending it down. People in senior positions are simply too busy to learn fundamental new viewpoints. Their minds are locked within the ones they brought into power. Then there is the problem of myopia. People at the top of government confront such a barrage of immediate small issues — from personnel to scheduling — that it is hard for them to step back and see the overall context in which they operate. Finally, there is the problem of the bunker. People in power are hit with such an avalanche of criticism — much of it partisan and ill-informed — that they naturally build mental walls to protect themselves from abuse. (David R. Brooks, *New York Times*, 9/2/14)

Hopefully, those reading my concerns will not interpret my take on FTF and USAID's declining support for ARD in the LAC region as an abusive "avalanche of criticism" but rather as sharing constructive input that Development stakeholders will consider in addressing the current development assistance "myopia" that is overly focused on achieving near-term targets and not laying the foundations for long-term sustainable economic growth in the rural sectors of the LAC region's poorest countries.

The Next Leg of Our Journey

During our outbound flight from Guatemala City to Miami, we made virtual stopovers in several realms, including *Spartan Educators*, *Development Leaders*, and *Politicians, Statesmen, and Citizens*. These stopovers shared memories of my academic encounters during the years I was a student and subsequent professional encounters during the years I worked in the field or realm of development.

After our plane lands at Miami International Airport (MIA), and we clear immigration and customs, we'll stop by the Admirals Club for a drink and snacks—and, if you like, take a few moments to review this memoir's Annexes.

As the time for our connecting flight to Washington, DC nears, we'll head to the gate and board the plane for our inbound flight to National Airport (DCA). Once the plane has taken flight and we reach cruising altitude, we will resume our virtual stopovers in a variety of realms in which I have had a personal interest over the years. At least on our "Boeing Byrnes" flights, there's no shortage of material to read and pass your time.

Flight Segment 2

Inbound Flight

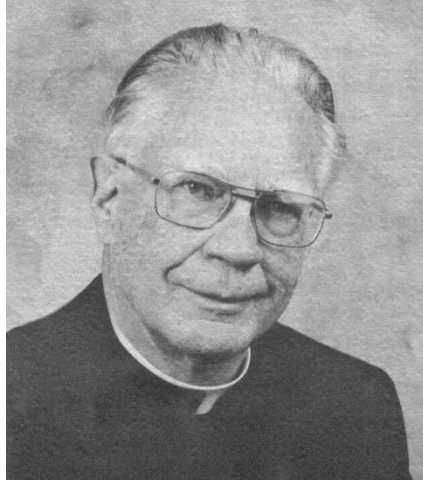
On the next leg of our journey, we'll meet a number of "giants" or celebrities across various realms in which I've had memorable experiences impacting on my personal life or, in some cases, also my professional career. Perhaps the earliest of those experiences were my *Clerical Encounters in the Realm of Priests and Popes*, which grew out of having been baptized and raised as a Roman Catholic, the teachings of which religion would have a great impact on my values and life path.

Chapter 5

Clerical Encounters in the Realm of Priests and Popes

Close encounters with two priests – Father Mac and Father Mel – directly impacted on my personal life if not also indirectly on my professional career. Many years later a close encounter with Pope John Paul II provided a lifetime memory of the only person with whom I have had a close encounter who, 32 years later, would be canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint.

Jerome Vincent Anthony MacEachin (12/6/04 – 12/2/87)



Rev. Jerome V. MacEachin

Have you been good to your mother?" & "Keep first things first.

The St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) parish in East Lansing, Michigan, was founded by Bishop Joseph H. Albers in 1940 to serve the spiritual needs of the students of Michigan State College (MSC). The original STA church, located on Abbot Rd. a few blocks from the MSC campus, was built in 1947. That building was replaced in 1957 by the St. John Neumann Student Center and parish, which then became a separate parish from the STA parish. But by 1988 the STA parish had become the largest parish in the Diocese of Lansing.

Forty years before, in 1948, the church had purchased property in East Lansing on Alton St. as the site for building a primary school that opened in September 1949. In 1968, the new STA church opened next to the school, with the church featuring a mosaic of the Miracle at Cana of Galilee and a 45-foot high faceted-glass window depicting Salvation History as seen by St. Thomas Aquinas. At the time of the dedication of the church, this faceted-glass window was the largest in North America.

During the years (1953-59) that I attended the STA primary school from 3rd through 8th grade, the head of the parish was **Reverend Jerome V. MacEachin**. The school, when it opened in 1949, enrolled a total of 95 students in six grades. Father MacEachin (Father Mac) oversaw building of a convent as a residence for the nuns who were the school's teachers (until lay teachers began to be hired during the 1950s), growth of the school to Grade 9 by the time I left STA at the end of the 8th grade, and expansion of the physical plant to include more classrooms, a gymnasium, and space next to the gym that served as STA's church until the new church opened in 1968. Over the years, the parish grew from 80 families in 1940 to over 2,200 by 1983, while the school grew from the initial 95 students in 1949 to 800 students by 1984.

Father Mac rose in the church to become the Right Reverend Monsignor Jerome V. MacEachin, elevated to monsignor on August 8, 1954 by Pope Pius XII. Born and raised in Ubly (Michigan), Jerome was the seventh of eleven children, eight boys and three girls. Attending Ubly Public Schools, the Sacred Heart Seminary (Detroit), and St. Mary's Seminary (Norwood, Ohio), MacEachin was ordained as a priest on May 22, 1932. He then served as assistant pastor (1932-38) at St. Paul in Owosso, Michigan and then assistant pastor (1940-41) at St. Philip in Battle Creek, Michigan. During this time (approximately 1938-40), Bishop Albers selected MacEachin to study for a MA in Education at the Catholic University of America (Washington, DC).

On completing his MA, Bishop Albers appointed Father Mac to serve as the first Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Lansing, a position he held for 15 years (1940-55). From 1941-43 Father Mac served as pastor to St. Mary in Charlotte, Michigan. On the death of STA's first pastor, Father Cecil Winters, Bishop Albers appointed Father Mac to be the pastor of STA in May of 1943. Father Mac served as STA's pastor until his retirement in 1978.

For 23 years (1943-66), Father Mac served as a theology lecturer at Michigan State, with thousands of students knowing him as the Newman Club chaplain and the priest who celebrated Mass in the basement church on Abbott Road. Others would remember him as Michigan State's director of Catholic student affairs.

Father Mac was well travelled, crossing the Atlantic Ocean 16 times, conducting pilgrimages to many of the religious shrines of Europe, the Holy Land, Mexico, and South America. He also was Dean of the Michigan State Police and Chaplain Corps, having been appointed to the corps in 1960. Father Mac was also a close friend of the MSU football coaches, including Hugh "Duffy" Daugherty (see vignette). For more than 30 years Father Mac served as the chaplain to the Spartan football team, accompanying the team to four Rose Bowls. During those years, he took pride in stating that *"there [are] more Catholics playing for Michigan State than for Notre Dame"* (reported by Dan Devine, former University of Notre Dame football coach).

During Father Mac's years as a priest, he had private audiences with five Popes, including Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, and Pope John Paul II. He retired from the priesthood on January 22, 1978, but continued serving in various capacities.

After his death on December 2, 1987, his funeral was held at the STA church on December 4, with Michigan State police officers as pallbearers. On December 5, 1987, his family held another funeral at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Ubly, following which he was buried in the family plot at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church Cemetery.

Flight Log Memories: While a STA student for six years from third through eighth grade, **Father Mac** was the friendly face one would see at Mass each day or on Sunday, in the school hallways, or when he visited our classroom.



Rev. Jerome V. MacEachin

Is everybody happy?" - "Keep smiling."

On many occasions I served as an altar boy to Father Mac or another parish priest, including the Rev. Donald L. Eder (d: 2/10/12); Msgr. William J. Fitzgerald (1/17/31 – 7/14/15) (I last saw “Father Fitz” when he said Mass in June of 2011 as part of a STA class reunion); and Rev. Robert Kavanaugh (deceased) who was the brother of Rev. James Kavanaugh (9/17/28 - 12/29/09), the author of the book *A Modern Priest Looks At His Outdated Church* (1967).

My most memorable encounter with Father Mac did not occur until ten years after graduating from STA in 1959. In the spring of 1969 I was near completing my courses for a MA in communication at Michigan State University (MSU). With the ongoing and controversial war in Viet Nam, I increasingly was concerned about getting drafted into the military.

As a freshman at MSU in 1964’s winter quarter, I had dropped out of the second quarter of the ROTC course I was taking because I didn’t like the way the instructor kept referring to the enemy as "slit-eyed" and "yellow-skinned" or something to this effect. This reference didn’t square with an experience that my family had during the late-1950s.

One Sunday, paying more attention to the STA Sunday Bulletin than to the Mass, I noticed an article stating that the church was seeking to identify a family willing to take in a Vietnamese student who was expecting a child and would no longer be able to live in her dormitory at Michigan State. I brought this to the attention of my parents and asked if our family could help.

As a result, my brother and I gave up our bedroom, and moved into our cold (or hot) attic, depending on the season, so the mother and newborn infant boy (Hoang Quoc Thai, born April 4, 1957) would have a temporary home before he and his mother returned to Viet Nam.

So I really didn’t look on someone with narrow eyes or yellow skin as the enemy—and holding such a prejudicial view was not consistent with my Catholic upbringing.



Kerry and Kevin with Baby Thai (April, 1957)

During 1967-68, I had explored what might be my legal options to avoid the draft, including going into Peace Corps during the summer of 1967, but that option dissipated when the Peace Corps training program’s psychologist and psychiatrist ganged up on me and kicked me out of the training program – this is another story for a separate vignette!

I also had explored qualifying to go into the military as a First Lieutenant but didn’t get a high enough grade on the mathematics portion of the exam. While I passed the exam’s verbal portion, I hadn’t taken any math courses during my four years as a MSU undergraduate student — and really didn’t recall all that much of the math I’d studied in high school, my last math course in high school having been six years before in 1962.

Considering all my options, as well as my evolving views about war and the military, it was beginning to dawn on me that I might be eligible to qualify for Conscientious Objector status, in which case I could provide alternative service to my country rather than getting drafted into the military.

To seek counsel on this matter, I made an appointment to meet with Father Mac at the STA church during the late spring of 1968. After greeting Father Mac at the appointed time, I reviewed with him my concerns about getting drafted and serving in the military. It turned out to be a short meeting as Father Mac did not ask a lot of questions and we didn't get into any philosophical discussions.

What I recall very clearly was that he felt, based on what I had told him, that I had, in his words, "more excuses than reasons" for not wanting to get drafted. In other words, I had more "excuses" to avoid getting drafted than I had "reasons" for being a Conscientious Objector. While this was not the outcome I was hoping for, I thanked Father Mac for taking the time to meet with me and left his office.

That meeting was the last time I ever spoke with Father Mac. However, that meeting with him turned out to have a positive impact on my life. This is because the meeting had a silver lining — his words got me to thinking whether I had "excuses" or "reasons" for not wanting to be drafted. This would stick in my mind and crystallize my thinking about my upbringing and my beliefs, preparing me for the day when I would eventually face a Selective Service order to report for military service.

That order arrived in the spring of 1970 as I was completing my first year of course work for a Ph.D. in sociology at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. By the time that order arrived in the mail, my mind was clear that I had to respond by advising the draft board that I was a Conscientious Objector (CO).

What happened next is the subject of our next virtual stopover to meet **Father Mel Hemann**.

Melvin Delphin Hemann (10/15/28 - present)



Rev. Melvin Hemann (1984)

When the power of love overcomes the love of power, there will be peace.

On 1/31/59, **Melvin Hemann** was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Dubuque (Iowa). Over the years he has served as an Associate Pastor, a member of several Team Ministries in the Archdiocese, Pastor, and Director of the Archdiocesan Family Life Office. During most of his years as a priest he has been involved locally and nationally in a variety of marriage and family life programs, frequently serving as a workshop presenter and retreat director throughout the country.



RV-6 N298MH – Hand Built & Flown by Rev. Mel Hemann

In addition to having responded to God's call for Mel to be a priest, his other passion is flying, which he continues at the age of 86 to pursue "to break the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God" ([Source](#)). Indeed, Father Mel is a Federal Aviation Authority (FAA)-registered pilot. Early in his career he "was torn between joining the Air Force and becoming a priest and after joining the military, he was discharged for having a heart murmur. He then turned to the priesthood because he figured "it was the Lord's calling" ([Source](#)). But Father Mel continued to fly and today is an Airline Transport Pilot and Certified Flight Instructor for Airplane Single Engine, Multi-Engine, and Instrument Airplane. He has been an Experimental Aircraft Association Flight Advisor and is qualified to provide tail-wheel instruction. He owns and flies the RV-6 aircraft (pictured above) that he built by hand and has landed in 50 states.

Featured in *Business and Commercial Aviation* magazine, Father Mel has been flying for 55+ years, has racked up well over 17,500 hours in the air, and given nearly 11,000 hours of dual instruction. On July 11, 2011, the FAA awarded him the Wright Brothers “Master Pilot” award, one requirement for which is 50 years of accident-free flying, a feat that only 1800 pilots in the USA have achieved, according to the FAA. Interestingly, Father Mel’s younger brother, John, is also a priest and a “Master Pilot” recipient. Father Mel and Father John are now retired and living in Cedar Falls, Iowa.



Father Mel (86 - left) and Father John (80 - right) with their “Master Pilot” Awards

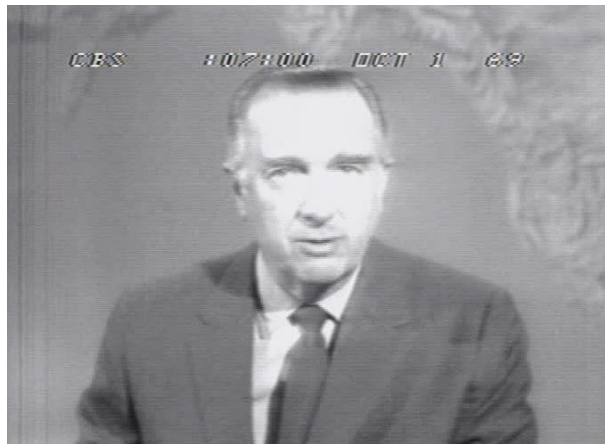
Flight Log Memories: As fall 1969 approached, I was in Cali, Colombia working on an agricultural marketing research project with Michigan State University (see **Kelly Harrison** vignette). It was on this project that I had met Sonia Gomez whom I married on August 30, 1969. With no certainty about when I might get drafted, I returned by myself to the U.S. a few days after our wedding to begin studying for a doctorate in Sociology under a research assistantship at Iowa State University (ISU) in Ames, Iowa. Less than two weeks later, I received a letter from the Selective Service System, dated September 10, ordering me to report for Induction on October 1, 1969, this being the second Induction Order I received, the first having been belatedly received while I was in Colombia. In late September I dropped out of Iowa State and traveled to Lansing to report for duty.

On reporting to my draft Board, I was told, as also separately communicated in a September 22 letter later received from the Board, that the Board had cancelled the earlier Order to Report for Induction the Board had sent to me in Ames. Talking with the Board secretary, I learned that, after the issuance of that Draft Order, a volunteer or two had stepped forward, thus the Board didn’t need to draft me in order to meet the Board’s October quota of new inductees into the military. Further, as I later learned, President Nixon had announced on September 19 that, in the wake of a 60,000-troop reduction in Viet Nam, the plan to draft 32,000 in November and 18,000 in December had been cancelled, and that the number previously to be drafted in October would be phased in over the last three months of year, thus furthering reducing the numbers to be drafted for October 1st induction into military service. As a result of this reduction in the numbers to be drafted over the coming months, the Board couldn’t tell me how soon it might issue me a new induction order, since that would depend on whether the Board could fill its monthly quota with volunteers.

Remembering the Board was drafting “oldest first” and had returned my folder to the front of the file cabinet’s top drawer, thus first in line to be drafted if there were not enough volunteers to meet the Board’s monthly quota, I could see no point in returning to Ames to re-enroll at ISU -- and then suddenly receive a new Induction Order. So I decided to wait it out by traveling even further east to stay with my mother’s sister Marie and her husband John Lamont in their home in Arlington, Virginia.

Not wanting to wait around any longer separated from my young bride Sonia who was still in Cali, I began making plans for her to join me in Arlington, with John and Marie giving permission that I could prepare a small basement room as a bedroom for Sonia and me. Part of the preparations was a decision to replace the wallpaper in the hallway outside the bedroom. On Wednesday, October 1 (the day I would otherwise have reported for military service had not my draft order been canceled), I drove Aunt Marie in the afternoon to a store to purchase the new wallpaper and, as so soon as we got back to the house, I started stripping the old wallpaper off the wall.

While I was working away, *Walter Cronkite and the CBS Evening News* came on. Seven minutes into the broadcast, I heard Cronkite report that Selective Service Director Lewis Hershey, who had opposed implementing a lottery draft, had changed his mind and now supported shifting the draft from “oldest first” to a lottery. But what caught my ear was what Cronkite next reported (see photo caption below):



On another aspect of the draft, the White House today assured graduate students who are doing satisfactory work that they will not be drafted at least until next June. The rule which permitted delayed induction only until the end of a semester has been extended to cover the entire school year (Source).

On hearing this, I dropped everything, leaped in two steps up half a flight of stairs from the basement to the kitchen, told the news to Aunt Marie, and then made a long distance call to Iowa to contact my major professor, Dr. Gerald Klonglan, to inform him of this news. I learned on reaching Klonglan's office or home, I don't recall which, that he was attending a meeting in Washington, DC. But his wife or secretary gave me the phone number of the hotel where Klonglan was staying.

Soon I was able to reach him, reported the news to him, and asked if I could return to Ames and re-enroll in my doctoral program. He approved and within a day or so I flew back to Iowa to get myself re-enrolled. After talking with Klonglan, I phoned my mother (see Ethel Byrnes vignette) in Cali, Colombia to share the news with her and ask that she convey the news to Sonia that the coast was clear for her to join me in Ames as soon as possible. My mother went over to Sonia's home to break the news to her and arrangements were put in motion for Sonia to fly to the U.S. in October.

In the spring of 1970, when a new (now the third) Induction Order to report for military service arrived, I was in my third quarter of coursework at Iowa State. With the arrival of this new draft notice, my mind began to revisit the issue of whether I could qualify as a Conscientious Objector (CO) status with the Selective Service. I sent a letter to my draft board to advise that I realized, on receiving the draft notice, that I was a CO, and requested the Board send the CO application form to me.

On receiving the form, I began to fill it in. While working on my answers to the form's questions, I contacted **Rev. James Supple**, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) Parish in Ames, where my wife Sonia and I attended Mass, to seek counsel. I didn't know at the time that, just a little over four years later, Father Supple would baptize our son, Shannon Alexander, after his birth on 8/28/74.



Rev. James Supple (STA Pastor – 1947-93) at Shannon's Baptism
(Ames, Iowa – October 9, 1974)

But, going back to contacting Father Supple in the spring of 1970, I also didn't know at the time that he was a senator of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dubuque and recently voted in support of an Archdiocese resolution to set up a draft information and education service. As a local newspaper reported, this service would be designed:

to show local draft boards that Catholic youths have the right to be conscientious objectors, where in the past the [draft] boards have felt they couldn't.... The Rev. Vincent Hatt, of the Sacred Heart Church in Dubuque, who introduced the resolution, said the information service is necessary "because of the confusion that exists in the minds of many young men concerning their rights and obligations as Christians regarding military service." (Spring 1969)

On meeting with Father Supple, he was supportive but suggested that I work with **Rev. Melvin Hemann** who was serving as the STA associate pastor (1965-72). When I met with Father Hemann, he had a very different reaction to what I told him than had Father Mac. After hearing me out, Father Hemann felt that I had a strong case to claim CO status. He wrote the following in his letter of support to my draft board:

It is my opinion that Kerry's position is not a fly-by-night, superficially adopted attitude. Rather, his outlook has been the result of a long-term, sincere, painful, and consistent development of basic Christian principles taken seriously to heart and lived with commitment. The opinion I hold is clearly substantiated in Mr. Byrnes' "Statement of My Position as a Conscientious Objector" dated June 7, 1970. (Rev. Melvin Hemann, June 24, 1970)

On balance, perhaps after thinking about what Father Mac said, I was better able when I met with Father Hemann two years later to more credibly communicate, based on "reasons" and not "excuses," why I felt I was a CO. In fact, Father Hemann told me that my statement to the draft board was the best defense he had ever seen for a Catholic to claim CO status. Here is how I answered the application's first question regarding the nature of my beliefs that were the basis of my claim for CO status and why I considered my claim based on religious training and belief.

God created me in order that I may know Him, love Him, and serve Him, so that after death I might be happy with Him. I believe that upon my death, I will be judged by God who will render to me according to my actions in this life. Because my ultimate end or purpose in life is to be with God upon death and because my actions in life will be judged and rewarded or punished in the degree to which they have brought me closer to or have kept me from God, it is incumbent upon me to live so as to bring myself closer to and not further from God. I am aided in this endeavor through the infinite wisdom of God who has indicated to men in the example of the life of Christ and in the statements of His Church, the ways in which men can know, love, and serve Him.

Since I believe as Christ taught that all men are my brothers, I cannot accept that human beings--individually or as a nation--should treat some peoples as brothers and fail to treat as such those who would or do live by different values and institutions; nor can I accept that we should take destructive action against any people, no matter what our differences be. To involve a people or peoples in war amongst themselves or against one another or to assist in doing so is to violate God's commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Even more specifically, God has commanded: "Thou shall not kill;" that is, God forbids man to cause death either to his brother or to himself, or to inflict on any human being any other harm, or to cooperate in doing so.

At no time in his life did Christ seek to accomplish the objectives of peace and brotherhood by destruction of those who disagreed with him. Indeed, Christ expressed his love for his brothers even in his crucifixion as he spoke out: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even as Christ was being arrested, he said to Peter: "Put up thy sword." With these words Christ demonstrated as he had taught that one must turn the other cheek when struck; that one must be willing to die rather than injure or kill another, in the belief that it is better to lose one's mortal body than to lose one's soul for eternity. Throughout his life Christ evidenced that his way to achieve peace and brotherhood is through conscientious practice of love of all human beings. Today, generations after Christ's physical presence on earth, this conscientiousness lives in Christianity as the most widespread community of brotherhood in history, seeking to be of even wider influence and strength through the ecumenical movement.

Since the time of St. Augustine to the present day Council of Bishops, Catholic theologians have clarified that in regard to war and the governments and/or peoples involved in such, the Christian is personally responsible for his moral judgments and may never abdicate his conscience into the hands of another individual or institution (e.g., the government of which he is a citizen). In applying this principle to my own life, if I am to follow in Christ's example of conscientious practice of love of all human beings, I must not and thereby will not abdicate my conscience and personal responsibility for moral judgments into the hands of those whose destructive means (i.e., war) to achieve peace are inconsistent with Christ's example of conscientious practice of love of all human beings. Thus, it is not surprising that the Second Vatican Council declared that a Catholic viewing his tradition, the message of the Gospel statements, could validly question and abstain from participation in war or preparation for war. Indeed the Catholic might even conclude that the doctrine of the so-called "just war" is not valid or at least that the "just war" is not possible today, citing Pope John XXIII's statement in *Pacem en Terris*: "in this age of ours which prides itself on its atomic power, it is irrational to believe that war is still an apt means of vindication of violated rights." Clearly, whether or not a particular war is "just" has become an academic question since Pope Paul VI's plea to the General Assembly of the United Nations: "No more war, war never again." This condemnation of war by recent popes was also expressed by the Second Vatican Council which declared that: "every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."

In their work A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults, the Bishops of the Netherlands consider alternative means to that of war to achieve peace in our world today. The Bishops urge[d] that “We must all revise our attitudes to take in the whole world and the tasks which we can all perform together for the good of the human race.” (p. 422) Rather than war as the means to peace, the Bishops emphasize that the Second Vatican Council expressed its conviction that international cooperation on the social and economic level (solidarity in the war on want) is the road to peace. (Church in the World, nos. 83-90) In travelling this road to peace, we should not count our mileage or progress in terms of the numbers of arms and rounds of ammunition captured but rather we should do as did the Good Samaritan--giving what is necessary to be of real help. The Bishops point out that while the Church very often has been so closely identified with the established political order that it failed to make the sanction of war evolve as it might have, they urge that the time is perhaps more than ripe to more and more exclude the element of retaliation, arguing in the spirit of Christ’s teaching and example that self-defense is not the last word. The faith of the Christian must be dominated by the thought of peace; his conscience must always try harder and harder to draw stricter limits to the permissibility of war. Rather than taking the easy way out--destroying the lives of other human beings on the questionable authority of the doctrine of the “just war,” as a Catholic I am committed to the belief expressed by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans that a Christian should extend charity even to his enemy.

If it is possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, Revenge is mine, I will repay saith the Lord. But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink. . . . Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good. (Romans, 12:18-20)

The preceding statements briefly outline the basis in religious belief of my position as a conscientious objector opposed to participation in or preparation for war. While I am most willing, as I have been in the past, to serve my country and the human community in a constructive capacity which expresses in a positive manner the example of Christ’s life and God’s commandments, I cannot in conscience and will not in action either participate in or prepare for war. In declaring myself a conscientious objector, I declare myself opposed not only to ALL WAR but also to the MILITARY which is organized in such a way that maximizes the probability of military victories and, in the process of doing so, impersonally destroys and embitters the lives of human beings who are my brothers under God. To either participate in or prepare for war would be to sin against God and to fail to follow Christ’s example of conscientious love of all human beings. By participating in war or by preparing for war, I would violate God’s commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself” and, thereby, would not bring myself closer to but rather further from God who in the time of judgment will take into account my actions in deciding whether I did while living all that I possibly could to bring myself closer to Him as my ultimate end.

Because God is my ultimate end, my first duty is to Him and precedes any obligation to any human being or institution. Consequently, I must not obey any individual’s or institution’s command if I would by obeying that command violate a commandment of God. That it is incumbent upon each Christian to decide whether or not to follow a particular command of his government was clearly indicated to us by Christ when he said: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s: and to God the things that are God’s.” To prepare for war or to participate in war in the name of the State and thereby destroy and embitter human life--rendering unto Caesar the life that belongs only to God--is to flagrantly violate God’s commandment: “Thou shalt not kill.”

After addressing the application’s first question, I went on to answer the other three questions, the answer to the second question explaining how, when, and from whom I had received the religious training and acquired the religious belief which was the basis of my claim. Here was my answer:

I attended parochial schools during the eight years of my primary education: St. Michael in Worthington, Ohio (grades 1-3) and St. Thomas Aquinas in East Lansing, Michigan (grades 3-8). Each school day during these years I received one hour of instruction and training in the Catholic religion, attended Mass, and frequently received the sacraments of penance and Holy Eucharist. To this day I continue to receive these sacraments and to attend Mass on Sunday. As an altar boy, I frequently assisted the priest in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Benediction and the Rosary, and during the Lenten season, the Stations of the Cross. Throughout most of those years, all of the courses relating to the study of religion and most of the other courses in fields not traditionally related to the study of religion were taught by nuns and not until the seventh or eighth grade were some of my classes taught by a lay teacher. Religious training in grade school consisted primarily of basic catechetical classes with emphasis given to recognizing and practicing fundamental beliefs. I feel that through the teachings and example of my educators in those early years I became aware of the role of service to others.

Several months later, on September 10, 1970, I appeared before my Selective Service Board in Lansing, Michigan to be interviewed by the Board members who would decide whether to classify me as a CO. As best as I can recall, I was only in the interview less than ten minutes, surmising that this interview was just a formality to check whether the claimant for CO status was as credible in person as he was judged to be based on review of my written answers to the application's questions. (I also had the feeling that they also may have been checking to see if I was a longhaired hippie; that I was not!).

I only remember one Board member asking me a question as he flipped through the documents I had submitted to support my claim: "Did you expect we would read all this material?" Realizing I needed to be careful how I answered that question, I replied: "Sir, I provided those documents as evidence to support my answers to the four questions on the CO application form."

On the other hand, I do recall asking one question. Given that I was already a VISTA Volunteer in Miami, I asked the Board if serving as a VISTA Volunteer would qualify, if I were classified as a CO, as meeting the Alternate Service requirement. On this one of the Board members said that such service would not qualify. And, with that, one of the Board members told me that I was free to leave. On leaving the room where the interview had been held, I was told that I could phone the Board's secretary the next morning to learn the Board's decision.

When I phoned the secretary the next morning, she told me that the Board had classified me as 1-O (Conscientious Objector morally opposed to serving the military in any capacity) and that I could stop by the Board's office later in the day to pick up my Selective Service Card with my new 1-O classification. That afternoon, on September 11, 1970 – my birthday, I picked up my new Selective Service Card from the draft board. That draft card was the best birthday card I have ever received!

As an interesting anecdote, as part of the process of applying for CO status, I had written letters to many people whom I felt would support my CO application by providing a reference letter on my character and the sincerity of my application. One person whom I wrote to requesting a reference letter was Mrs. Ila G. Wilson who, at the time, was the secretary of my draft board. During my years at Michigan State and thereafter, such as when I went to visit my parents in Colombia in 1968 (see Kelly Harrison vignette), I had always dutifully kept my draft board, specifically Mrs. Wilson, apprised of my mailing address so that the Board would be able to get in touch with me.

Thus, I felt that Mrs. Wilson could attest that I dutifully followed the law and was not one who would skip town on the Board (e.g., flee to Canada to escape military service). Of all the people to whom I sent a letter requesting that they write a letter in support of my application for CO status, Mrs. Wilson was the only one who did not reply.

On the day of my interview with the draft board, I was sitting in the lobby waiting to be called into the interview room when, all of a sudden, Mrs. Wilson walked up to me and said hello. I recognized her immediately and stood up respectfully to say hello, after which she invited me to sit down. I made a passing reference that I had written to her but hadn't received a reply from her.

She then told me that she had retired from her position as the Board's secretary. Congratulating her on the retirement, I quickly asked: "Well, if you are retired, why are you here today?" I certainly could not have predicted her response.

"Well," she said, "today I'm going to work for the first time as the first female member of a draft board in Michigan." I guess my response, being polite, was also to congratulate her for this but then, again, I couldn't have predicted what she next said. This was: "Now, when you meet with the Board, just be truthful in answering their questions. Be sure to tell them about how you worked on the reservation with the Indians."

Well, what could I say since I had never worked with any Indians on any reservation but I quickly responded: "Perhaps you are confusing me with another person applying for CO status. I am the one who had applied to the Peace Corps to serve in Costa Rica." She accepted my response and then invited me to follow her into the room where the interview with the Board was held. While Mrs. Wilson never sent me a letter to support my application for CO status, certainly her presence on the Board, and such interventions as she may have made in discussing my case with the other Board members, likely helped sway the Board's vote in my favor.

Surely what also helped were the many letters of support received from family, friends, professors, and students. While the Selective Service System finally did classify me as a CO, in the haste of returning to Florida to work in VISTA, subsequently returning to graduate school at Iowa State University in early 1972, and all the decades since, I was remiss in not following up to thank all those who wrote positive letters in support on my application for CO status. Therefore, I would now like to list them as a belated way of thanking each and every one of them, seven of who are the subjects of vignettes in this memoir, albeit of all of those who wrote letters only a few are yet alive.

Family, Friends, Professors, and Students

Who Wrote Letters in Support of My CO Application

- Dr. Francis C. Byrnes (deceased - see vignette)
- Dr. Richard J. Coehlo (deceased - family friend who knew me as a scout and altar boy)
- Dr. Jon F. DeFrance (a fellow student and friend during my M.A. studies at MSU)
- Dr. Kelly Harrison (see vignette)
- Rev. Melvin Hemann (see vignette)
- Dr. Homer D. Higbee (deceased - supervised my part-time work while a student at MSU)
- Mr. J. Howard "Pat" Jordan (friend and son of the family who lived next door)
- Dr. Gerald E. Klonglan (my advisor during my Ph.D. studies at Iowa State University)
- Father David Kurt (deceased – a fellow trainee during Peace Corps training)
- William J. Lamont (deceased - uncle married to my mother's sister Marie, also deceased)
- Dr. Mason E. Miller (deceased - a NPAC and graduate student colleague of my father)
- Dr. Everett M. Rogers (deceased - see vignette)

- Dr. Gordon A. Sabine (deceased - see vignette)
- Dr. Lawrence E. Sarbaugh (see vignette)
- Mr. William R. Schley, Jr. (deceased - a fellow student at MSU who also became a CO)
- Dr. James D. Shaffer (a MSU agricultural economist associated with the PIMUR project)
- Mr. Leonard M. Stuttman (deceased - see vignette)
- Dr. John F.A. Taylor (deceased - a professor of philosophy at MSU)
- Dr. Don E. Wells (deceased - a NPAC and graduate student colleague of my father)
- Dr. Mervin J. Yetley (a fellow graduate student at Iowa State University)

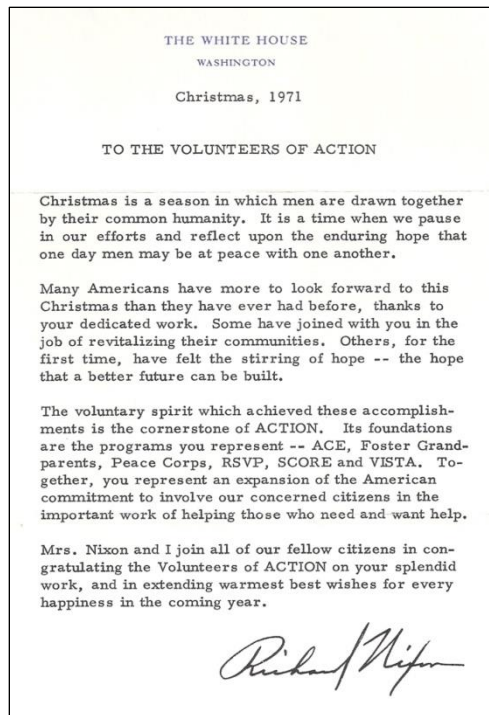
In total, I received 20 letters of support for my claim to be a CO, interestingly, all from men, save the letter I never received from Mrs. Wilson who went to work that fateful day (September 10, 1969) as the first female member to serve on a draft board in the state of Michigan.

Not even a response letter was received from **Rev. Jerome MacEachin** (see vignette), while three replied that for various reasons they felt they could not provide a letter of support. Looking back, while I was not able in the spring of 1968 to convey to Father Mac my “reasons” for feeling I might be a CO, it had become clear just two springs later in 1970 how eight years of parochial schooling [two at St. Michael (Worthington, Ohio) and six at St. Thomas Aquinas (East Lansing, Michigan)] and other life experiences, including being a Boy Scout who rose to the rank of Eagle Scout, had impacted on my “beliefs.”

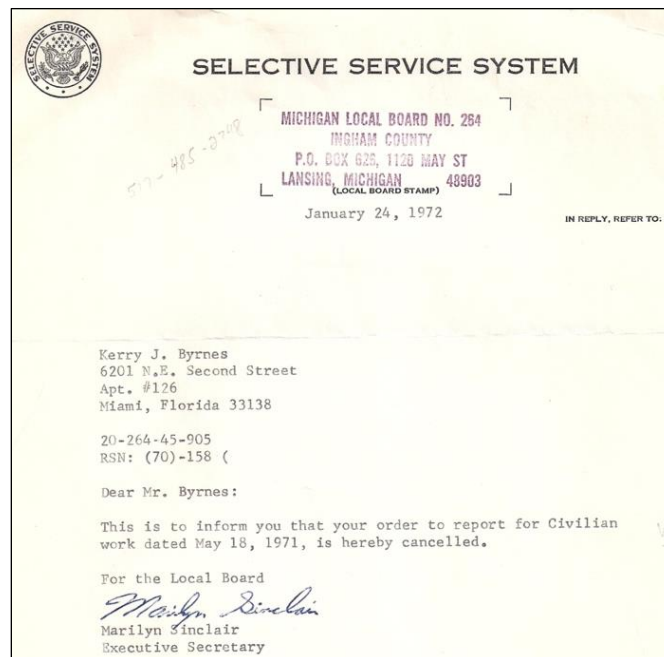
The credit for this lies in no small part to the moral character instilled in me by my parents, their own life examples, and the Catholic education and religious training that I received from the nuns and priests in the Catholic schools I attended from grades one to eight, especially knowing and serving as an altar boy for several STA priests, including Father Mac, Father Eder, Father Fitzgerald, and Father Kavanaugh.

Also, my own international experiences, from encounters with foreign students studying at MSU to my travels in the developing world, including the Philippines (where I studied for a semester), Mexico (where I lived with a Mexican family during the summer of 1964), and Colombia (where I had worked for almost one year), certainly did not leave me predisposed to feeling the world’s problems could be solved by going to war in another country (i.e., Viet Nam). But my memories of Father Hemann do not end with this vignette; they are picked up again in the next vignette on Karol Józef Wojtyła.

As a footnote on getting classified as a CO, a couple of months before securing my CO status, and as earlier noted herein, I dropped out of a graduate school so that Sonia and I could join VISTA. Assigned to Miami, we spent a little over a year-and-a-half working in one of the Miami communities, during which time I received two notable letters. The first arrived in December 1971, a Christmas letter (see next page) from President Richard Nixon (probably machined-signed).

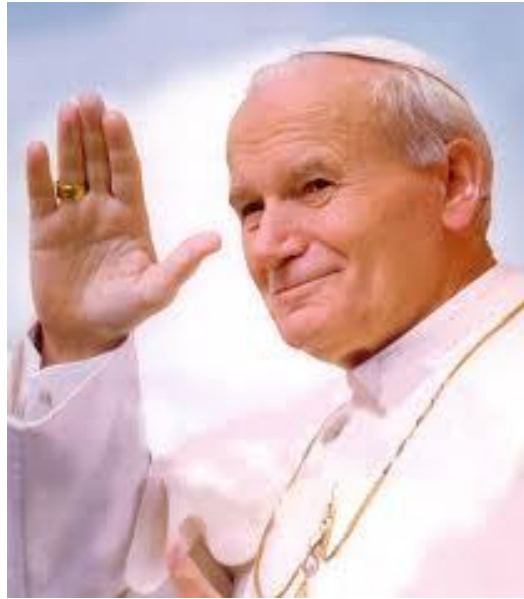


Given my opposition to the Viet Nam War and to serving in the military, this form letter from President Nixon was nowhere near as exciting as the letter (see below) that I received, less than a month later, from the Selective Service System, notifying me that an earlier (5/18/71) order to report for Civilian work was "hereby cancelled" because the Selective Service had illegally ordered me (my 4th induction order) into VISTA to do my alternative service.



With this "get out of jail" card firmly in hand, Sonia and I resigned from VISTA and returned to Iowa State so I could resume my graduate study for a doctoral degree, having each served a year-and-a-half in VISTA but technically receiving no credit for this as "alternative service."

Karol Józef Wojtyła (5/18/20 – 4/2/05)



Pope John Paul II

“War is a defeat for humanity.” & “The future starts today, not tomorrow.”

“Stupidity is also a gift from God, but one mustn’t misuse it.”

Karol Józef Wojtyła, better known as **Pope John Paul II**, served as Pope of the Catholic Church from 1978 until his death in 2005. He was the second-longest serving Pope in history and first non-Italian since 1523 to serve as Pope. On April 27, 2014, Pope Francis canonized Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II as saints.

Flight Log Memories: As I prepared to travel to Kenya in 1982, on an assignment for the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), I had my sights set on making a stop in Rome in route to Kenya. I made arrangements with Massimo Cardinaletti, a fellow film soundtrack LP collector, to meet the famous Italian film composer Ennio Morricone (see vignette), widely known as the king of the Spaghetti Western for his classic scores to the Sergio Leone-directed “spaghetti western” films *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More*, and *Once Upon a Time in the West*, among many others. Before my trip to Kenya, I told an IFDC colleague I was going to Rome to meet Morricone, to which my colleague replied: “Most people would make a trip to Rome, not to meet Morricone, but rather the Pope.”

Well, I was successful in meeting with the Maestro, a term of endearment among Morricone aficionados but that CECK is recounted in the vignette on Ennio Morricone. After meeting with Morricone, Massimo drove me in his car to Rome’s Leonardo da Vinci International Airport for my flight that night to Nairobi, Kenya. When I went to check in, I found the airline’s check-in was not yet open, so I loaded my suitcases onto a luggage cart to explore the terminal. I noticed that, at the other end of the lobby, a large crowd of people.

I pushed the cart toward the crowd to see what was happening. Just then I saw walking toward the crowd **Pope John Paul II** accompanied by the Alitalia pilot of the flight that had just brought the Pope back to Rome from a papal visit to Germany. The Pope proceeded to greet and shake hands with the nuns and priests in a reception line opposite to the line in which I was standing. After reaching the end of the other line, the Pope walked back to the beginning of the line in which I was standing and began working his way down that line, shaking hands with persons in that line.



Pope John Paul II with Alitalia Pilot (Rome) (1982)

Seeing this, I edged my way up to the rope that held the persons in this line from breaking rank. As the Pope neared, I took photos and prepared for this chance of a lifetime to shake the hand of the Pope. Then, just as the Pope was about to reach me, the man to my left reached out with his right hand to shake the Pope's right hand, and then with his left hand offered the Pope a pen which the Pope received in his left hand.

Not a problem except that this man didn't let go of either the pen or the Pope's hand. This surprised the Pope who, as gracefully as possible, let go of the pen as he extricated his right hand from the grasp of the Pope's all-too-eager fan. A bit put off by this overly enthusiastic fan, the Pope no longer reached out his right hand to shake hands with the next person in line (me!) and, instead began to walk away from the line, his hand trailing behind, though I was able, as I recall (or would like to think), to ever so slightly brush the Pope's hand.



Pope John Paul II Greeting Welcoming His Return to Rome (1982)

On returning home and back at work, I was able to report to the surprise of my IFDC colleague that not only had I met with Ennio Morricone but also that, on the same day, had my close encounter with Pope John Paul II, recalling that I earlier had told my friend before the trip that I'd make a trip to Rome to see Morricone but not the Pope! Surely, the good Lord, who works in mysterious ways, had another plan for me that fateful day in Rome. Now, more than thirty years since I saw Pope Paul II in the Rome airport, while I can't say that I've been *Touched by An Angel* (the former CBS TV series), I can say that I likely was touched by the Pope who would become a saint—even if I only almost got to shake his hand!

This vignette on Pope John Paul II has an interesting connection back to the prior vignette on Father Mel and how he supported my application for CO status. In researching the Father Mac vignette I was able to track down and contact Father Hemann by email to belatedly thank him for all his support in helping me to get my CO classification. I shared with him my draft of the Father Mac and Pope Paul II vignettes.

In response, he shared the following story about his own close encounter with John Paul II (JPII) that, with Father Mel's approval, I now share:

I went on sabbatical to Rome as part of my 25th anniversary celebration. It coincided with [the] 125th anniversary of the North American College and our class was invited to seven different commemorative celebrations. JP II was at five of them. ... At the end we were invited to a papal Mass and our class of 35 was granted a private audience with him before the Pieta statue in St. Peter's. Of course he came down the line, shook our hand while the photographers took the pictures we were able to purchase a couple hours later. I was pastor at St. Joseph in Preston, IA at the time and got home just before Christmas. I cropped the picture so it showed just JP II and me shaking hands and put it in the Christmas bulletin. Under it I put the caption "Mel, stop over later for a drink." After Mass two widows were in the entry reading the bulletin and one turned to me and asked if he really said that. I replied, "Alma, do you think I'd lie?" She simply said no and walked away. I sent a copy to our bishops but never heard from them (Rev. Melvin Hemann, personal communication).

I had hoped to include this photo of Father Mel and JPII in Father Mel's vignette but, unfortunately, he wrote back that he no longer had a copy. A few weeks later, I wrote to him to ask if he would contact the St. Joseph parish in Preston, Iowa, to see if the photo could be resurrected from the parish's archive of Sunday church bulletins. Sadly, when Father Mel contacted the church secretary about this, she informed him that in November 2012, she had thrown out all the pre-2000 bulletins, thus also the fugitive bulletin from 1984.

Then, a week later, while I was on assignment in Guatemala for USAID, Father Mel sent the following email that I received on March 12, 2013:

Kerry, last night I remembered a friend had made a 3-ring binder of my 25th jubilation. Included she had put a series of pictures from my time in Rome. I dug that out this morning and found the original pictures of the historic meeting with JP II. I have included two of those pictures. The one entitled my pictures.tif...is the one I cropped for the bulletin so that it just showed him and me shaking hands. Under it I put the title "Mel, stop over later for a drink." Peace! Mel



“Mel, stop over later for a drink.”

To give one pause to reflect, it was just the day before on March 11, 2013, the eve of the start of the Papal Conclave in Rome to choose the new pope, that the Lord reminded Father Mel where to look to find that three-ring binder with the photo of John Paul II shaking hands with Father Mel, the photo Father Mel had included in the parish Sunday bulletin some 30 years before.

The Lord does work in mysterious ways, so I now share (again with Father Mel’s permission) the now famous, but no longer fugitive, photo of Father Mel with Pope John Paul II.

Virtual Stopover Epilogue

My close encounters with two priests (two “men in black”) – Father Mac and Father Mel – impacted directly on my personal life. Father Mac put my early religious education at St. Thomas Aquinas to the test when he told me that he felt I had more “excuses” than “reasons” for being a Conscientious Objector (CO). Subsequently, as my personal beliefs crystalized over the next two years, my “reasons” for not wanting to serve in the military were again put to the test by Father Mel who found my beliefs (reasons) genuine.

Even though I ultimately was classified as a CO, as it turned out my year and a half in VISTA never technically counted (see Father Mel vignette) as “alternative service.” However, while the experience temporarily delayed my graduate studies for a doctorate at ISU, my VISTA experience was valuable in many ways, not the least of which sparing me from becoming yet another or possibly “the last man to die in Viet Nam” (see John Kerry vignette).

Years later, when I had my near miss close encounter with Pope John Paul II (i.e., didn’t get to shake his hand), that opportunity arose because, in the wake of earning a doctorate in Sociology, I landed my first post-Ph.D. job working as a Sociologist with the International Fertilizer Development Center during which time I had the opportunity to travel to Nairobi. It was during that trip that I made that eventful stopover in Rome where I almost shook the hand of the last person (Pope John Paul II) I had any expectation that I would see in Rome. Interestingly, on the day of that close encounter, an Alitalia pilot had flown the plane on which Pope John Paul traveled back to Rome. Ironically, it was a surprise to me to learn that Father Hemann (see vignette), who helped me in getting my CO status, was still piloting planes at the age of 86.

Knowing how much Father Mel helped me in obtaining my CO status, I know you'll be in good hands with him if you want to learn how to fly and obtain your pilot license. After all, God is Mel's co-pilot – and he (Mel) is available for instruction any time during the week by appointment. Who better than Father Mel to put in a good word with one of the Catholic Church's latest saints.

Indeed, when I was updating this vignette on the morning of Sunday, April 27, 2014, CNN was streaming the news that Pope Francis (born Jorge Mario Bergoglio) had canonized both Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII as saints.

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To think, as Don Adams' Agent 86 character Maxwell Smart would often say on the TV series *Get Smart* (debuted 1965) that I almost got to shake the hand of a future saint but “missed it by ‘that much.’” Now, as Agent Smart also would say, “Would you believe...?” that our next virtual stopover takes us back to the campus of Michigan State University for ***Athletic Encounters in the Realm of Spartan Sports***.

Chapter 6

Athletic Encounters in the Realm of Spartan Sports

Our nation's longstanding fascination with sports teams, their players, and coaches prevails at all levels of competition from professional teams down to college and high school athletics—and even youth leagues. Indeed, my seven-year old grandson Braden is the consummate competitor, no matter what ball you put in his hands or at his feet, and he takes winning and losing very seriously, unwilling to admit defeat, and was devastated when one of his favorite team, the Seattle Seahawks, “missed it by that much” of beating the New England Patriots in the 2015 Super Bowl.

While he is a fan of the Virginia Tech Hokies and Dallas Cowboys, I have been working hard to win Braden over to being a Spartan fan – and he's always on the lookout during Spartan basketball games to be the first to spot Sparty, the Spartan mascot, which brings us to now sharing my *Athletic Encounters in the Realm of Spartan Sports* (*Pigskin Encounters* and *Hoops Encounters*) with both Spartan coaches and athletes.

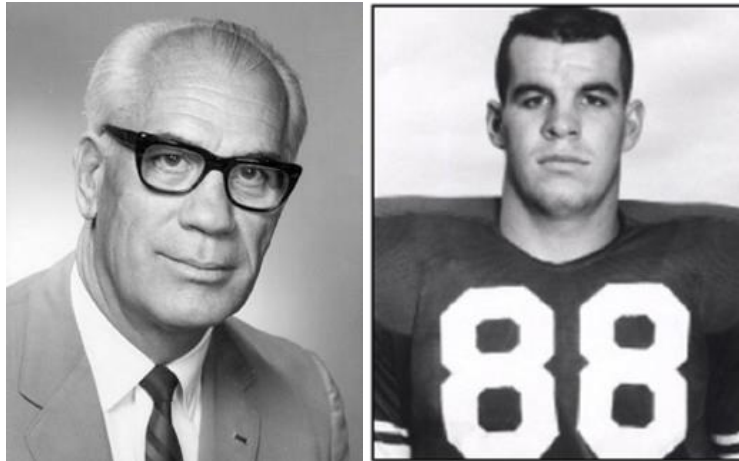
Pigskin Encounters

The November 19, 1966 football game between Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Notre Dame was hyped as “The Game of the Century”—and remains one of the greatest in the history of college football. Played in Spartan Stadium, MSU entered the game ranked #2 with a 9-0 record, with Notre Dame ranked #1 with an 8-0 record.

On the final series, Notre Dame elected to kick a field goal to tie the game rather than go for a win with a touchdown. The game ended in a 10-10 tie and both schools received national champion selections. Notre Dame received a majority of the AP and Coaches votes and earned a consensus national title, while Michigan State was selected as Football Research Poll national champion and Helms Foundation co-champion.

The “Game of the Century” was all the more meaningful because I was an undergraduate student at MSU from 1963 to 1967, attended that game, and recall that during my freshman year I had close encounters with two students who were members of the Spartan football team. But first, two earlier close encounters with other Spartan football greats!

Art Brandstatter (Jr. and Sr.)



Art Brandstatter, Sr. (MSC – 1933-1936) & Art Jr. (No. 88 - MSU 1959-1963)

...if police education is to achieve the stature it seeks in the academic community, it must be considered as a part of the criminal justice process which has its own area of human experience to analyze, its own body of factual and descriptive data to gather, [and] its own conceptual ideas to formulate and test. (Art Sr.)

I loved to compete. I still do. ... I love to win. (Art Jr.)

Art Brandstatter, Sr. was an All-American fullback for the 1936 MSU football team, went on to become a Detroit police officer, and years later chairman of MSU's School of Criminal Justice. The Brandstatter family lived just down the street from the Saint Thomas Aquinas (STA) elementary school that I attended from third through eighth grade. Brandstatter, Sr., as chair of the MSU School of Criminal Justice, was connected with the Michigan State Police Headquarters (MSPH), located across the street from the MSU campus, and often arranged for the STA Boy Scout Troop 293 to hold Saturday swimming practice at the MSPH pool.

Art Brandstatter, Jr. was four years ahead of me at STA and a better athlete than I ever became. Indeed, Art Jr. became a three-sport athlete, earning eleven varsity letters at East Lansing High School, in football (4), basketball (4), and baseball (3). In football, Art earned All-Conference and All-State, was named a High School All-American, and was selected to the All-American Team. In basketball, Art played at East Lansing High School where he was All-Conference and All-State, setting school and city scoring records. Art also earned All-City and All-Conference in baseball. On graduation, he attended Michigan State, where he played basketball for two years and football for four years. In 1960, Art Jr. led the Michigan State University football team in scoring. In 2012, he was an inaugural member of the East Lansing High School Sports Hall of Fame.



Flight Log Memories: Attending STA from 1953 (3rd grade) through graduating in 1959, I recall often seeing both Art Sr. and Art, Jr. One Saturday **Art Sr.** hosted Boy Scout Troop 293 for hamburgers, but only after our troop was pressed into service to clean up the yard of STA pastor **Father Mac** (see vignette) whose house was next door to the Brandstatter home.

In the fall of 1957, I tried to emulate the prowess of **Art Jr.** in football by trying out for the STA football team but quickly surmised I lacked the size or the stomach to play football. However, those swimming practices that **Art Sr.** arranged for our Scout troop at the MSPH pool, especially in the middle of cold and snowy winters, gave me a leg up on earning the Boy Scout rowing, swimming, and lifesaving merit badges, mile swim badge, and lifeguard badge (see image of badges at end of vignette).

Years later, as a freshman at MSU, I hoped to cash in on my swimming and lifeguard prowess in the Boy Scouts by working as a lifeguard at MSU's outdoor pool where I had spent many summer hours while in high school. On November 15 1963, I wrote to my parents in the Philippines to let them know that I planned during the winter 1964 quarter to enroll in "the Water Safety Instructors course which is required to become a lifeguard."

When I went to register for my winter quarter classes in early January, I learned that all of the course sections were already full. I tried to pull a fast one by asking the registration clerk if there was any chance that she could get me into the section taught by Professor "Smith" (I long ago forgot his name), commenting that I had heard that he was this course's best instructor. Just then, as "luck" would have it, Professor "Smith," who "unbeknownst" to me was standing behind the clerk, turned around and said, "Well, here is an enterprising young fellow who will go far in life!"

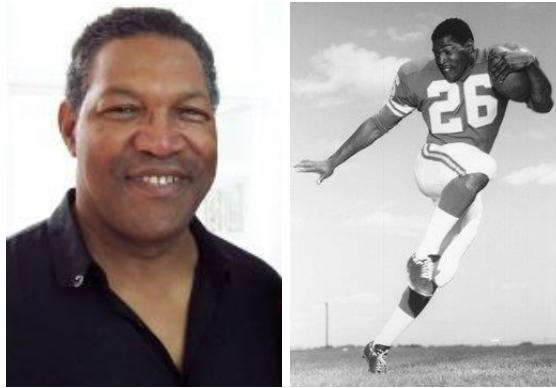
He asked what year I was in school and I told him that I was a freshman. That, he said, was the problem. With high demand from students to take this course in order to qualify as lifeguards, he had to give preference to upperclassmen but suggested I come back in a year or so to register for the course. But, as I later realized a little over a year later, when I was the substitute lifeguard at the IRRRI swimming pool (see **Sterling Wortman** vignette), being a lifeguard and waiting for someone to be rescued was not all I had expected (or hoped) it would be.

Indeed, one did not need to be a lifeguard in order to sit poolside and keep an eye on the young ladies sunbathing. Looking back, and paraphrasing Marlon Brando's Terry Malloy character in *On the Waterfront* (1954), if Professor "Smith" hadn't blocked me from enrolling in that Water Safety Instructors course, "I coulda had class, I coulda been a contender. I coulda been a lifeguard, instead of a beach bum." A gallery of my Boy Scout water-related badges is presented on the next page.



Kerry's Boy Scout Water-related Badges

Clinton Jones (5/24/45 – present)



Clinton “Clint” Jones (No. 26 – MSU football – 1959-1963)

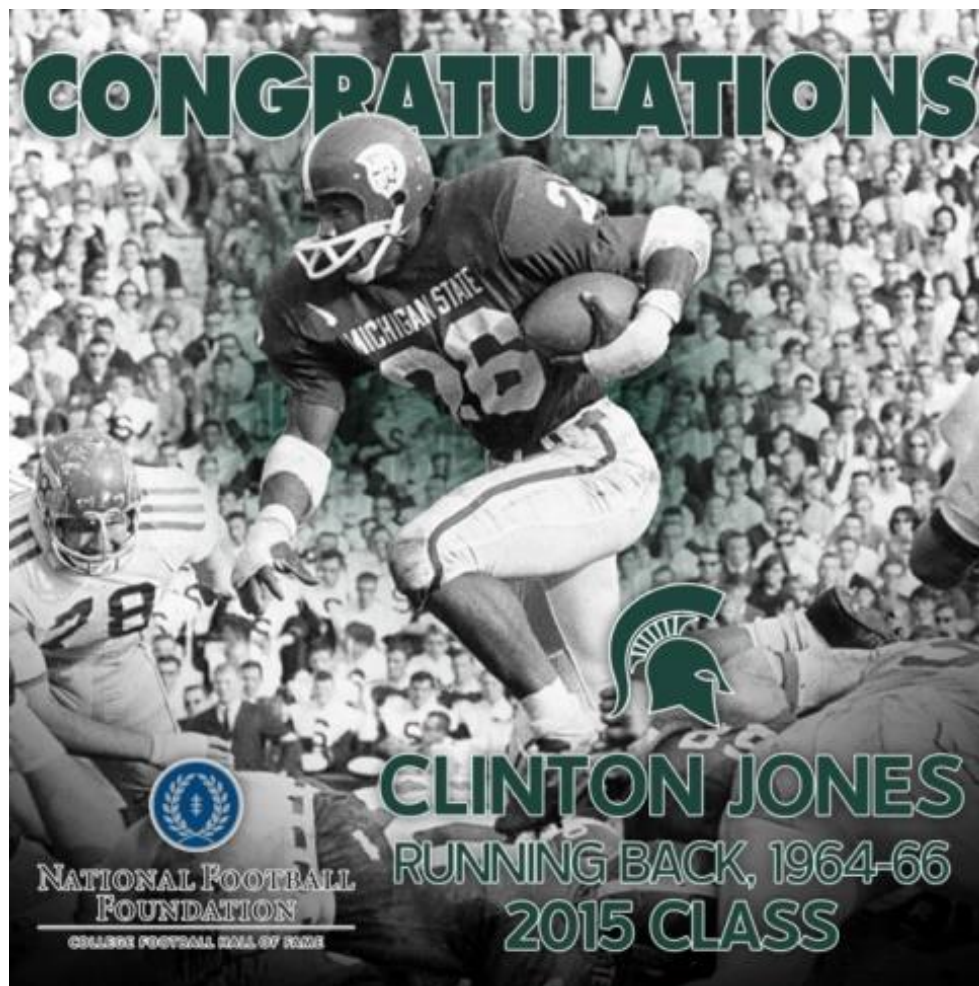
“I didn’t want to let anyone at Michigan State down, so I left everything on the field...I really think my boxing (Golden Gloves) and track backgrounds helped me develop as a football player. With the help of my coaches and teammates, everything came together at MSU and I became a complete back.”

As a junior at Michigan State, **Clinton Jones** would rush for 787 yards and 10 touchdowns on MSU’s 1966 Rose Bowl team, with the Cleveland Touchdown Club recognizing him as the nation’s most outstanding player and honoring him with the Joe Fogg Memorial Trophy. An All-American halfback in his junior and senior years, Jones’ star was at its pinnacle in 1966 when the Spartans earned a 9-0-1 record, refusing to flinch against #1 Notre Dame in the “Game of the Century” that ended in a 10-10 tie. During his career with MSU, Clinton racked up 2,549 career all-purpose yards and 23 touchdowns.



Clinton Jones Inducted into MSU "Ring of Fame"

He was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings as pick #2 in round 1 of the 1967 NFL Draft, that pick obtained by the Vikings from the New York Giants in exchange for sending Viking quarterback Fran Tarkenton to the Giants. In 2012, Jones was inducted into the MSU Hall of Fame; and in 2015, he was one of 15 players and two coaches named to the College Hall of Fame 2015 Class. Today, Dr. Clinton Jones runs the Jones Chiropractic Wellness and Sports Rehabilitation Center in Lake Balboa, California.



Flight Log Memories: It has always been a sore point with me that Notre Dame played for a tie in that “Game of the Century” rather than risk a loss by going for a touchdown, a coaching decision quickly dis-endearing me from any respect for Notre Dame Coach Ara Parseghian. But my close encounter with **Clinton Jones** didn't occur on a football field but rather in a class I was taking during my freshman year at Michigan State.

At first I didn't know who this young man was that frequently sat just to my left in the next row. However, from one day to the next, we would exchange a smile and say hello. It was only later that quarter that I realized that this young man with whom I had been exchanging greetings each class was Clinton Jones, one of the running backs on the Spartan football team.

Charles Aaron Smith (2/28/45 – 8/3/11)



Charles “Bubba” Smith (No. 35 – MSU football - 1959-1963)

The whole thing started when he hit me back.

I just tackle the whole backfield and throw guys out until I come to the one with the ball.



A Tribute to Bubba Smith

While **Charles Smith** was born in Beaumont, Texas, he was not allowed to play for the University of Texas because of his race. In those years, many top black players in the south were recruited by Michigan State's football coach Duffy Daugherty (see vignette), whose dominant teams in 1965 and 1966 had many African-American in the starting lineup. During the years that Smith played for MSU, the Spartans won the MacArthur Bowl one year and shared it another year with Notre Dame. The Spartans success on the football field may well have stirred teams like Texas and Alabama to desegregate.

In 1966, early in the “Game of the Century” with Notre Dame, Smith tackled the Irish quarterback Terry Hanratty who suffered a separated left shoulder. The backup quarterback Coley O'Brien played the remainder of the game. Smith recalled that as the game progressed, Hanratty's injury backfired on the Spartans: “That didn't help us any. It just let them put in that O'Brien who [was] slippery and faster and gave us more trouble. The other guy [Hanratty] just sits there and waits, and that's what we wanted.”

To those of us who chanted “Kill, Bubba, Kill!” in Spartan Stadium, [Smith] came to symbolize a special era in MSU history. Bubba was bigger than life, the most prominent figure on a two-time national championship team. He attracted the spotlight at a time when MSU was establishing itself nationally—as the newest member of the Big Ten, as a former agricultural college then boasting the nation's fastest cyclotron and a record number of National Merit Scholars [see Gordon Sabine vignette], and as a dynamic place of Bubba-size growth under the leadership of John Hannah [see vignette].

MSU might have had better players on the team, such as George “Mickey” Webster—a player so versatile Duffy Daugherty created the “roverback” position. Or perhaps fellow Texan Gene Washington, who also excelled in track. Or Charlie Thornhill, whose nickname “Mad Dog” may have inspired fear.

But no one attracted attention—or parking tickets—quite like Bubba. Not only did he drive a white Riviera with “Bubba” plates, he once parked his “Bubba-mobile” in President Hannah’s reserved space. He had a terrific, at times errant sense of humor, and that comedic flair certainly helped establish his Moses Hightower character in the *Police Academy* movie series. He was beloved by the Spartan nation. A sign I once saw in Spartan Stadium said it all: “Bubba for Pope.”

Bubba starred in the years just preceding the student unrest and social uprisings that characterized the end of the 1960s decade and beyond. But he clearly was socially conscious, given his eventual refusal to appear in a series of very popular beer ads. He also played a vital role in the desegregation of football in America.

[\(Source\)](#)

Smith, only one of three MSU players to have his jersey number retired, was a two-time All-America defensive end in 1965 and 1966, and is a member of the College Football Hall of Fame. He was the first player chosen in the 1967 National Football League (NFL) draft, the next seven picks including three of his Spartan teammates. Smith went on to play nine years in the NFL across three teams: the Baltimore Colts (1967-71), Oakland Raiders (1973-74), and Houston Oilers (1975-76). Smith played five seasons as the Colts’ starting left defensive end. Playing in Super Bowls III and V, on the winning side in the latter with the Baltimore Colts, Smith was named to two Pro Bowls and was a First-Team All-Pro in 1971. In the 1980s, Bubba went into acting, appearing on TV and in movies, notably in *Police Academy* and *Blue Thunder*. On August 3, 2012, Smith passed away at the age of 66. Six years earlier, in 2006, MSU retired Bubba’s No. 95 and the following year the Big Ten’s Defensive Lineman of the Year award began to bear his name. On May 9, 2016, ESPN.com named Smith the Big Ten’s “best defensive end of all time.”



Bubba Smith in Spartan Stadium When His Number Was Retired



Bubba Smith Interview

Flight Log Memories: I learned firsthand just how big **Bubba Smith** was as we both were enrolled one term in the same course at MSU. At the time, Smith played at 6'8" and 283-pounds but as a pro went over 300 pounds.

I've never forgotten the day that I was taking a blue book test in that course and went to the front of the room to ask the professor to clarify what was being asked in one test question. Then I saw that Bubba also was walking to the front of the room—about 133 pounds heavier and 7" taller than me.

As best as I can recall, Bubba told the professor that he forgot to bring a blue book to take the test. On hearing this, I just backed away. - steered clear of the big guy.

Given Bubba's physical size and intimidating presence, I suspect that the professor very quickly came up with an accommodation to ensure his own close encounter with Bubba did not result in bodily harm.

At least, as Bubba walked toward that professor, our classmates were not chanting "Kill, Bubba, Kill" as they did at Spartan Stadium to cheer Bubba on when he played against an opponent.

Hugh Duffy Daugherty (9/8/15 – 9/25/87)



Duffy Daugherty (MSU Head Football Coach - 1954-1972)

When you are playing for the national championship, it's not a matter of life or death.

It's more important than that.



Duffy Daugherty was head football coach at MSU from 1954 to 1972, compiling a career record of 109-69-5. Serving as head football coach for 19 years, the longest of any head coach in the program's history, the Spartans won national championships in 1965 and 1966.



Michigan State Football - Duffy's Giants (1965-1966)

But the 1967 season witnessed a decline in MSU's football program, with the late 60s and early 70s Spartan teams hovering around the .500 mark. Pressured by MSU's administration, Daugherty retired after the 1972 season. Just twelve years later, in 1984, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. After leaving Michigan State, Daugherty served as a TV color analyst for a number of years. Daugherty died at the age of 72 on September 25, 1987, after being hospitalized with heart and kidney problems.



Clinton Jones, Bob Apisa, Bubba Smith, Duffy Daugherty, Gene Washington and George Webster

They once asked Duffy: *"Who are you most happy to see coming back this year?"* Duffy: *"Me."*



Duffy Daugherty on The Jack Benny Program (January 1, 1956)

Flight Log Memories: While I never met or talked with **Duffy Daugherty**, I often saw his smiling face around the Saint Thomas Aquinas church where he attended Mass, having converted to the Roman Catholic religion after being raised as a Presbyterian. But I did have a memorable near-miss handoff from Duffy in the late 1950s. Back when I was at St. Thomas Aquinas School in 7th (1957-58) or 8th (1958-59) grade, I was assigned (or "volunteered") to clean out and organize the school's supply closet.

Over several days I spent hours on this task that did have the benefit of getting me out of some class periods. Sorting through the closet shelves I came upon a 1956 Michigan State Spartans football signed by Duffy Daugherty and many of the team's players. With the nun who appointed me to my task being pleased with my organization of the supply closet, I thought it would be no small compensation for my efforts to ask if I could have the ball I had discovered—and she agreed!

So that ball (see photos below), has been in our family for nearly 60 years. Fortunately, the nun didn't run my request by the school pastor Father Mac (see **Jerome MacEachin** vignette), as he likely, being a fan of Michigan State sports, would not have been so generous to allow me to run off the field (i.e., leave the school grounds) with this ball in hand.



But, Father Mac, do not fear, my brother Kevin and I never fumbled that football. In fact, recently in Richmond, Virginia, Kevin had a chance encounter with a man wearing Spartan green. After exchanging pleasantries about their respective connections to Michigan State, Kevin shared the story about how we came to have a 1956 Spartans football autographed by the Spartan players. The guy responded, “Oh, I’ve got one of those balls too! My father, John Matsko, was the team’s captain.” While Kevin had talked with Michigan State about gifting the ball back to the Spartans, no one responded to the offer, so he called an audible and asked the Matsko family if they might be interested in Kevin passing this bit of Spartans history to someone in that family. Finally, an open receiver was spotted down the field and Kevin threw a last second Hail Mary pass to Stephanie Matsko, the grand-daughter of the Spartans 1956 team captain John Matsko. She pulled in the ball as the clock ran out, sealing the victory for MSU!



Kevin Byrnes & Stephanie Matsko

Hoops Encounters

Forrest Aldea Anderson (3/17/19 – 10/25/99)



Forrest “Forddy” Anderson (MSU Basketball Coach – 1954-1965)

An average player can become outstanding...by simply learning ways to get a defender out of position or off-balance.

(Forddy Anderson, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/10/62)

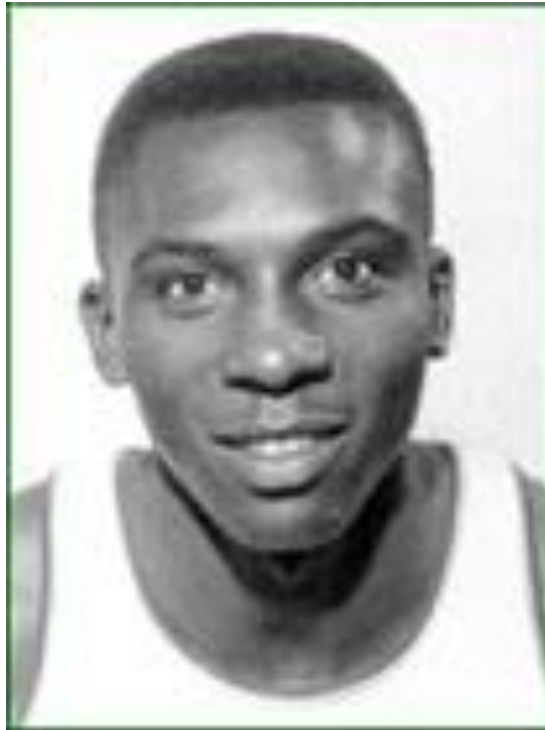
Long before MSU’s current basketball coach Tom Izzo and his predecessor, Jud Heathcote, the Spartans were coached from 1954-65 by **Forddy Anderson** who guided his team to its first NCAA appearance and Final Four in 1957, a second NCAA appearance, and two Big 10 Championships. He was the first coach in NCAA history to lead two different teams to the NCAA Final Four. However, after a losing season in 1964, MSU fired Anderson’s and hired John E. Bennington as the Spartan’s head basketball coach from 1965 until 1969, when he died of a heart attack and was succeeded by assistant coach Gus Ganakas (see vignette).

Flight Log Memories: From time to time, after seeing **Forddy Anderson** coach the Spartans on Saturday night, our family went to the Kellogg Center’s State Room for a blueberry pancake breakfast – and would see **Coach Anderson** also having breakfast there.



Of the Top 50 Players in Michigan State Basketball History, as reported in a Bleacher Report article, the following provides vignettes on three of those players – Jumpin’ Johnny Green, Pete Gent, and Magic Johnson – two of whom (Green and Gent) played for Forddy Anderson, plus a vignette of the Spartan head basketball coach (Gus Ganakas) who succeeded John E. Bennington as Michigan State’s head basketball coach.

John Mitchell Green (12/8/33 - present)



Jumpin' Johnny Green

You have to remember, I was really small...I was under 6-foot when I graduated from high school. I didn't think I'd make the team, so I didn't even go out for basketball.



Jumpin' Johnny Green Scouting Video

Born in Dayton, Ohio (where I also was born), **John Green**'s rise to basketball stardom:

took a strange route, for he never played the sport in high school. His play was limited to church league and community center basketball. After holding several odd jobs following graduation, he joined the U.S. Marines in 1952. At the Atsugi Air Base in Japan, he led the basketball team to the All-Central Command and All-Navy Far East titles. After his discharge in 1955, Green enrolled at Michigan State University [then College] and reported for freshman basketball practice as a walk-on. Although a raw talent, he exhibited amazing jumping ability. A surprised Forddy Anderson [see vignette] immediately saw Green's greatest potential. Although playing in only 18 of 26 games as a sophomore, the six-foot five-inch, 200-pound Green scored 238 points (13.2 point average) and grabbed 260 rebounds (14.6 per game). The 16-10 Spartans captured a share of the 1956-1957 [Big Ten Conference (BTC)] crown with Indiana University before suffering an NCAA tournament 74-70 triple-overtime loss to the eventual champion University of North Carolina. Green, a center, made the NCAA tournament All-Star Team, AP Third Team All-America, and First Team BTC.

In Green's 1957-1958 junior year, Michigan State improved with a 16-6 record, but finished second to Indiana for the BTC title. Green topped the Spartans with 397 points (18.0 point average) and 392 rebounds (17.8 per game) and set a BTC record with a .538 field goal shooting percentage. His honors included selection to the AP and UP First Team BTC, INS and UP Second Team All-America, and AP Third Team All-America. Green elected co-captain of the Spartans his senior year, led the team to a 19-4 mark and their first undisputed BTC crown, scoring 427 points (18.5 per game) and seizing 382 rebounds (16.6 per game).

The Spartans were upset by the University of Louisville 88-81 in the NCAA Midwest Region final, despite a 29-point, 23-rebound game by Green, who was named the regional tournament MVP. The 1959 physical education graduate also earned First Team All-America and First Team and MVP BTC honors. Green was elected a charter member of MSU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1992, had his number 24 retired in 1995, and was presented a Distinguished Alumni award in 2001 ([Source](#)).

Writing on Green's career as a Spartan, Jack Ebling (longtime writer and radio broadcaster in Lansing, Michigan) dubbed Green as "the greatest non-recruit in college basketball history."

On Green's basketball talent, Coach Anderson once stated: *"He's worth at least 50 points a game to us.... Combine his scoring and defensive play with a bunch of psychological intangibles, and I'm sure he's worth more than half our point total in any game we play."*



Johnny Green (Michigan State University, 1956-1959)

Green went on to a distinguished career in the National Basketball Association (NBA) where he played for the New York Knickerbockers, Baltimore Bullets, Philadelphia 76ers, Cincinnati Royals, and Kansas City-Omaha Kings, retiring in 1973.

As of 2005, Green owned a McDonald's franchise and was living on Long Island in Dix Hills, New York.

Flight Log Memories: While at Michigan State from 1953-63, my father often took my brother Kevin and me on Saturday afternoons or evenings to Jenison Field House to watch a Spartan basketball game. Over the 1956-1959 seasons that **Jumpin' Johnny Green** played for the Spartans, I always looked forward to his exciting dunks and rebounds – and propelling the Spartans to another win.

In addition to Green, I remember two of the Spartans' other star players from their 1958-59 Big Ten Championship team – guard Dave Fahs and forward Horace Walker.



After Green's graduation from MSU, Spartan basketball was never as exciting until nearly two decades later when **Earvin "Magic" Johnson** (see vignette) arrived on campus and led the Spartans to the Big 10 conference championship in 1978 and the NCAA championship in 1979.

George Davis Peter Gent (8/23/42 – 9/30/11)



Pete Gent (MSU Basketball Player, NFL Wide Receiver, & Novelist)

Better football through chemistry.

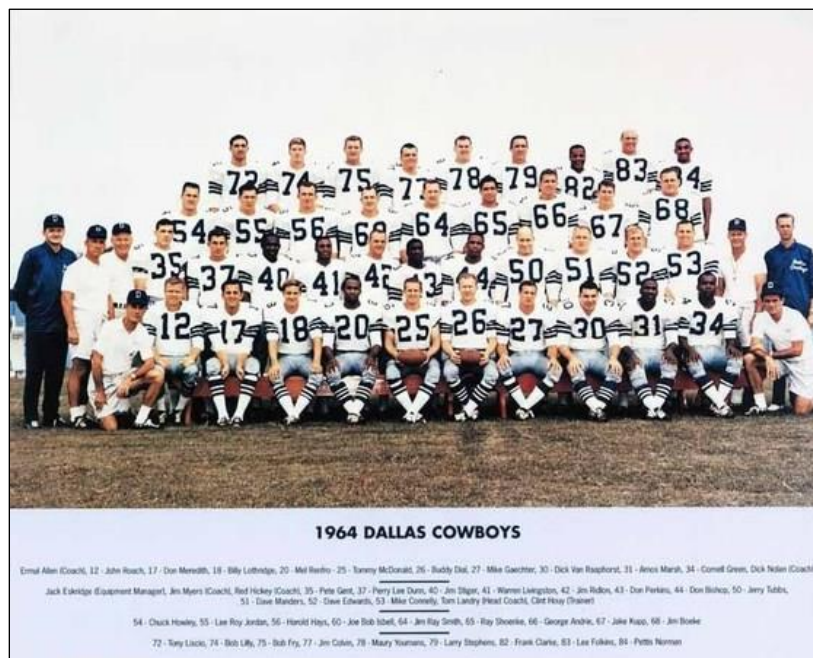


Another standout basketball player during Forddy Anderson's years as the Spartan basketball coach was **Pete Gent** who played three seasons (1961-64) for the Spartans. At Bangor High School in Michigan, Gent was a four-sport athlete (football, basketball, baseball, and track) and led the Bangor Vikings basketball team to the 1960 state Class C Championship with a 22.6 scoring average. The Vikings team was known as the Cardiac Kids for pulling out late-game victories in District, Regional, Quarterfinal, and Semi-Final games. Then, in the final game against top-ranked Grand Rapids Lee, the score was tied 41-41 after three quarters but Bangor went on to win it 57-45, with Gent leading his team with 21 points and being named to the All-Tourney Team chosen from schools of all sizes throughout the state.

Since 1981, Michigan's Basketball Coaches Association, in association with the *Detroit Free Press*, has sponsored the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award, given to the state's top prep senior. Eventually Gent was honored with the "Retro" Mr. Basketball award, given to pre-1981 players who would have been named Mr. Basketball if the award had existed at the time.

At Michigan State, Gent played center and forward during three seasons (1961-64), becoming the first player in school history to lead the basketball team in scoring three consecutive seasons. In Gent's senior year, he averaged 21 points per game, leaving MSU as the school's second career scorer, with a total of 1,146 points. While at MSU, he averaged 17.4 points per game and was named third team All-Big Ten in 1963 and second team All-Big Ten in 1964. In 1964 Gent was awarded the Big Ten Conference Medal of Honor, an award given each year by the Big Ten Conference to a male and female athlete from each Big Ten school who demonstrates the greatest proficiency in scholarship and athletics. Gent graduated from MSU with a BA in advertising, and was the recipient of MSU's 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

While Gent never played a down of college football at MSU, a Dallas Cowboys scout was so impressed by Gent's athleticism that he offered Gent a tryout with the Cowboys. When Gent heard the Cowboys were paying \$500 to players attending the Cowboys training camp, he decided to give it a shot. After trying out Gent as a defensive back, the coaches decided that his best chance at making the team would be as a wide receiver. Gent made the team and, in the process, turned down a contract offer with the National Basketball Association Baltimore Bullets who had drafted him in the 14th round of the 1964 NBA Draft. In his second year (1965) with the Cowboys, Gent caught 16 passes for 233 yards and two touchdowns. The next year he had 27 receptions for 474 yards (averaging 17.6 yard per catch) and one touchdown.



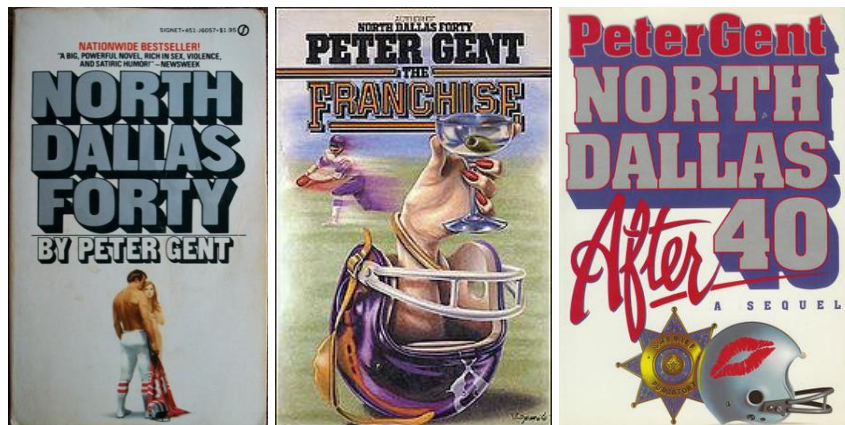
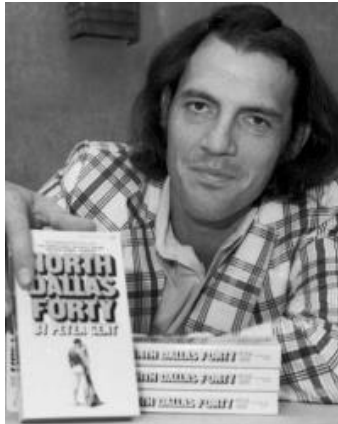
Pete Gent (#35 - Dallas Cowboys, 1964-68)

In 1967, and coping with injuries (including two knee operations) and constant back pain, the Cowboys moved Gent to tight end. Then, in 1969, the Cowboys traded Gent to the New York Giants but he was cut before the regular season started, thus ending his NFL career. His departure from the Cowboys may have been contributed to by his relationship with Coach Tom Landry and General Manager Tex Schramm, as reported by one source:

Landry and...Schramm probably rued the day [the Cowboys had recruited Gent] because Gent went on to form an unholy alliance with quarterback Don Meredith as they challenged the authoritarian ways of their bosses. Gent grew his hair long, smoked pot and indulged in other extracurricular activities. It was the sixties, after all. ([Source](#))

After playing professional football, Gent wrote *North Dallas Forty* (1973) a semi-autobiographical novel exposing the seamier side of American football and examining the National Football League's hypocrisy regarding drug use, with painkillers heavily used to keep players on the field, while at the same time the NFL frowned on the use of marijuana and narcotics. As one blogger summarized the book, Gent

tells a sordid tale of professional football's win-at-all-costs mentality, with greedy team owners and victory-obsessed coaches doping up players so they can play with crippling injuries. It's also a tale of brutish machismo; the players live in a testosterone-fueled, disgustingly misogynistic world where the biggest and meanest among them make the rules. ([Source](#))



Peter Gent (Author of *North Dallas Forty*, *The Franchise*, & *North Dallas After 40*)

North Dallas Forty was made in a movie of the same name in 1979, with Gent writing the screenplay. In two other novels, *The Franchise* (1983) and *North Dallas After 40* (1989), Gent examined the corruption deriving from the huge sums of money involved in modern professional sports.

On September 30, 2011, at the age of 69, Gent died of complications from pulmonary disease in his home in Bangor, Michigan.

Flight Log Memories: My junior and senior years at Okemos High School and freshman year at MSU in the early 1960s overlapped with the years that **Pete Gent** played for Michigan State. On a number of occasions, my father took me to the Spartan basketball games at Jenison Fieldhouse.

With Gent leading the Spartans in scoring during his sophomore and junior seasons (as also his senior season), he was a key component of the Spartan offense. On December 1, 1963, I sent to my parents, then in the Philippines (see Francis Byrnes vignette), a letter reporting on the first game of the Spartan basketball team's 1963-64 season, played the night before against Northern Michigan University.

MSU won by the score of 109-86. State had led by 30 points at half-time 61-31. NM only brought 9 players and many of them ran into foul trouble early in the game. State has some real jumpin' jacks this year. Pete Gent, Fred Thomann, Marcus Sanders, Bill Schwarz, and Stan Washington (knocked Bill Berry out of the starting lineup) are the starters. The combination that really clicked was Gent, Berry, Sanders, Washington, and Curtiss—another top sophomore. You know how Gent, Berry, and Sanders can jump. Well, Curtiss is a better jumper than these three and Washington is a still better jumper – 36" – the best since Johnny Green's 37". Washington was blocking shots all night. State is a much better team this year because they have balanced scoring, a tighter defense, better offensive rebounding, and a better fast break.

What I remember about Gent was not that he was Spartans' leading scorer but rather how he released his jump shot. Gent didn't have the conventional jump shot—where a player dribbles the ball, stops, and jumps up to take the shot. Gent's jump shot more often than not was taken as a set shot, where he would deeply bend his knees (almost crouching) and jump up to shoot the ball at the height of his jump. When you factored in that Gent at 6'4" was tall, and add the extra height gained by his style of jump shooting, he often had a clear advantage over the player defending him, thus reducing the chances of his shot being blocked and increasing the chances his shots would go through the hoop.

One year, when I tried out to make the Okemos High School (OHS) basketball team, I had adopted Gent's style of shooting the jump shot. Despite whatever proficiency I developed with that approach, in the end it didn't contribute to making the team. I was probably further ahead with the jump shot style I had when I first tried out for the OHS freshman team.

During one of the scrimmages, I twice dribbled the ball down the court and launched a long range jump shot that, today, would easily be beyond the college or professional 3-point line – with the ball both times going through the net – Swish! But that lone wolf approach to playing offense probably didn't endear me to Coach Robert Baker (see Annex 2) who may have already surmised that those two shots were lucky flukes and not in any way indicative of me having the ability to consistently score a high percentage of baskets relative to shots taken even at close range.

Earvin Johnson Jr. (8/14/59 - present)



Earvin “Magic” Johnson

I wanted to do two things when I was growing up.... I wanted to play in the NBA, and I wanted to be a businessman after my basketball career was over, and that is what I am doing now.



Earvin Magic Johnson - The Tonight Show (1985)

Just as I was preparing in August of 1959 to start my freshman year at Okemos High School (where I never made the basketball team), the basketball career of a future MSU and NBA superstar was dawning in nearby Lansing, Michigan with the birth that same month of **Earvin Johnson, Jr.**

The son of Earvin Sr. (General Motors assembly worker) and Christine (school custodian), Earvin Jr. grew up in Lansing and took an early interest in basketball, practicing “all day” and idolizing NBA stars such as Earl Monroe and Marques Haynes. One night, as a 15-year-old sophomore for Lansing’s Everett High School and recording a triple-double (36 points, 18 rebounds, and 16 assists), Fred Stabley Jr., a sports writer for the *Lansing State Journal*, gave Earvin the nickname “Magic”—and that moniker has stuck to this day.

Johnson recalled in an interview how he decided to enroll at Michigan State:

One of my concerns about State had to do with the coach there. Gus Ganakas [see vignette], then the head coach, was fired before my senior year at Everett, and that changed everything. I'd been friendly with Gus and was looking forward to playing for him. The new coach was Jud Heathcote, a short, hot-tempered guy who reminded me of a bulldog. While Heathcote had been at MSU only a year, and I didn't really know him, I saw the way he yelled at his players, and I didn't like it. As I was getting close to a decision, Heathcote came to see me. "I know that you've narrowed it down to Michigan and Michigan State," he said. "It seems to me that your head is saying Michigan, but your heart is saying State. Michigan is a great school, no question about that. And they have an outstanding team. But if you go there, you'll be one of several great players. And with your height, they'll probably have you playing center. You're not a center, Earvin. I've seen you play, and you're definitely a point guard. I want you to run our offense. I see you as the key to our fast break. Greg Kelser can really move. You've seen him play, so you know how good he is. I'm telling you, he'd be even better if you were running the plays. If you came to Michigan State, you'd make a tremendous difference."

When Heathcote left, I thought about what he had said. He was certainly right about the battle going on between my head and my heart. I had been going to games at Michigan State since I was ten -- and not just basketball, but football games, too, watching the Spartans in the rain and the snow. That night, I dreamed that I was in Jenison Field House at Michigan State. The arena, which holds about ten thousand people, was filled with screaming fans. I had been to dozens of games at Jenison when the place was mostly empty. But in the dream, I was running down the court in a green-and-white uniform. And the whole crowd was on its feet cheering. The next morning I had a visit from Vernon Payne, Jud Heathcote's assistant. "The first thing I want to tell you," Vernon said to me that morning, "is that I'm leaving. Nobody knows it yet, but I've just accepted a job at Wayne State. So I have nothing to gain by trying to get you to come to MSU. But I think you should. And I've heard that you have reservations about Jud Heathcote." "You heard right," I said. "But I don't really know him." "Well, I do," he said. "And if I didn't like him, or I thought he was a bad coach, I would tell you. But he's good, Earvin. Really good. I think you should play for him. I know you've seen him yelling at the guys. But that's because he's intense, and he wants to win so badly. Behind all that yelling and screaming, Jud Heathcote is a terrific coach and an excellent teacher. I've known you for years, and I've seen how committed you are to improving your game. This is the guy who can help you do that. Besides, if you come to MSU it'll be a great team. We've got Greg Kelser and all the other guys from last year. And you know we've signed Jay Vincent."

After listening to Vernon Payne's description of Heathcote, I shocked myself -- and him too. "Let's do it," I said. "Give me the papers and I'll sign." As soon as I made the decision, I felt good about it. My parents were overjoyed. The University of Michigan would be a contender with me or without me. But Michigan State would be a lot better with me. A couple of days later, [Everett High School basketball] Coach Fox organized a press conference in the Everett auditorium. When I got there I was shocked to see reporters and film crews from as far away as Chicago and even New York. I was very nervous, but this was such an exciting moment that I was determined to enjoy myself. When I got up there to make the announcement, I started by saying, "Any questions?" That broke the ice. Then I said, "I have decided to attend Michigan State University." The auditorium exploded with cheers and applause. "When it came down to making a decision," I said, "I don't think I could have gone anywhere else. I was born to be a Spartan." ([Source](#))

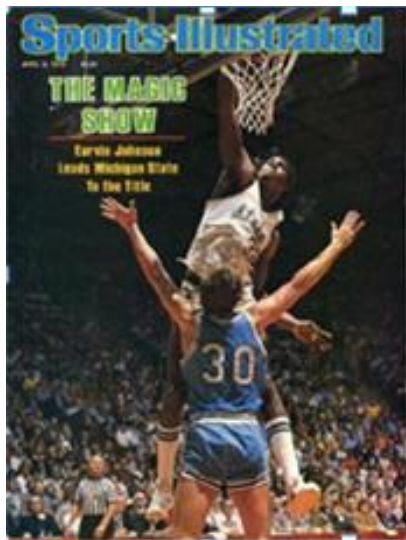
Over a four-year span (1976-1980), Magic Johnson would lead his team to four straight championships:

- In his senior high school season (1976-77), Johnson led Lansing Everett to a 27–1 record, averaging 28.8 points and 16.8 rebounds per game, and an overtime victory in the championship game of the 1977 Michigan Class A basketball tournament.
- In his MSU freshman year (1977-78), Magic led the Spartans to the 1978 Big Ten Championship but lost to the University of Kentucky in the NCAA Mideast Regional final game.



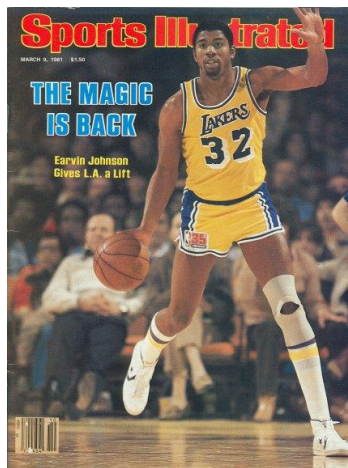
Magic Johnson (MSU Super Sophomore at Start of 1978-1979 NCAA Season)

- In his MSU sophomore year (1978-79), Magic led the Spartans to the 1979 NCAA Championship as the Spartans beat Larry Bird's Indiana State Sycamores in the tournament's final game.



Magic Johnson Dunks on Indiana State's Bob Heaton, 1979 NCAA Championship Game

- In his rookie year (1979-80) with the Los Angeles Lakers, Magic not only led the Lakers to the 1980 NBA Championship, having been selected first overall in the 1979 NBA Draft, but was also named the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player.



Magic Johnson, Los Angeles Lakers (1981)

Magic's Lakers went on to win four more NBA championships in the 1980s, but Johnson retired abruptly in 1991 after announcing he had contracted HIV, though he returned to play in the 1992 NBA All-Star Game and won the All-Star MVP Award. While Magic was away from the NBA for four years after fellow players protested the NBA allowing a player with HIV to continue to play, he returned in 1996, at age 36, to play 32 games for the Lakers before retiring for the third and final time.

Magic's career achievements with the NBA include three MVP Awards, nine NBA Finals appearances, twelve All-Star games, and ten All-NBA First and Second Team nominations. Magic is the NBA's all-time leader in average assists per game, leading the league in regular-season assists four times. Further, Magic was a member of the United States' 1992 Olympic basketball team that not only won the Olympic Gold medal but was also dubbed the "Dream Team" or greatest basketball team of all time.

In 1996, Johnson was honored as one of the 50 Greatest Players in the history of the NBA and was enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2007, ESPN rated Johnson as the NBA's greatest point guard of all time. Since his retirement from the NBA, Johnson has not only advocated for HIV/AIDS prevention and safe sex but also become an entrepreneur, philanthropist, broadcaster, and motivational speaker.

While playing for the Lakers, Johnson returned to MSU in the offseason to resume his studies and earn his undergraduate degree. In 1987, Johnson founded Magic Johnson Enterprises (MJE) which uses strategic investments, partnerships, and endorsements to spur the provision of products and services for ethnically diverse urban communities. Over the years, Johnson built a portfolio that includes businesses such as the Canyon Johnson Urban Fund, a billion-dollar real estate fund; Yucaipa Johnson, a \$500 million private equity fund; SodexoMAGIC, a food and facilities management company; thirteen 24 Hour Fitness Magic Sports Clubs; MAGIC Workforce Solutions, a staffing company; and a strategic alliance with Best Buy. Further, through MJE, Johnson established brand-name businesses in underserved communities, training and hiring local residents, employing local contractors, and opening the door for other businesses to find success in diverse communities.

In 1991, Johnson founded the Magic Johnson Foundation (MJF) that has awarded more than \$1.1 million to community organizations addressing HIV/AIDS education and prevention. MJF focuses on developing programs and supporting services that address the educational, health, and social needs of ethnically diverse urban communities. Johnson is the first African-American to receive the prestigious doctorate of humane letters degree from Mount Sinai Medical School. On December 11, 2010, MSU awarded Magic Johnson an honorary doctor of business degree.



Earvin "Magic" Johnson laughs with MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon as he receives a honorary degree at MSU's commencement ceremony Dec. 11, 2010

Flight Log Memories: I had not followed Spartan sports after leaving the MSU campus in the summer of 1968, my attention turning during the interim years to working on a USAID-funded agricultural marketing study in Colombia (see Kelly Harrison vignette), getting married, going back to graduate school at Iowa State University (ISU), joining VISTA for a year-and-a-half in Miami, returning to ISU to complete my doctorate, and starting work with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in 1975 (see Per Pinstrup-Andersen vignette).

However, just before the start of MSU's 1977-78 basketball season in the late fall of 1977, I was looking through the *TV Guide* and saw that Home Box Office (HBO) was going to show a pre-season exhibition basketball game between the MSU Spartans and Russia's national basketball team. Since my cable subscription didn't include HBO, I asked Manual Sanchez, an IFDC colleague and friend who did have HBO, if I could come over to his apartment to watch the game – and, wow, what a game!

This was my introduction to **Magic Johnson** and his pre-Lakers "ShowTime" style of fast-break basketball and razzle-dazzle passes as he orchestrated his Spartan team to a lopsided victory over the Russian team. In effect, Magic had put on a clinic to show the Russians how basketball is played.

After that game, I was hooked on MSU Spartan basketball but quickly realized that it was a bit difficult, in those days, living in northeast Alabama, to pick up a radio signal of broadcasts of the Spartan games. At that point, I went out and purchased a GE Super Radio that, with good atmospheric conditions during the evening, made it possible to turn in the broadcasts of Spartan games. Also, while traveling overseas for IFDC, I would take along a small SONY ICF shortwave radio in hopes of catching a Spartan game on the Armed Forces Radio and Television Services (AFRTS) network.

But that GE Super Radio did allow me to listen to Spartan games broadcast in the evening. In fact, that radio's reception was so powerful that one evening, when Magic was playing for the Lakers, I listened on that radio to a Lakers-Philadelphia 76ers game on two different radio stations, one from Philadelphia and the other from Los Angeles.

In 1982, while working for IFDC, I traveled to Indonesia to serve as the manager of a Regional Fertilizer Marketing Training Course held November 6-19 at the P.T. PUSRI fertilizer facility in Cikampek, about an hour by car from Jakarta. For my return stateside, I had arranged with David Kraft, who lived in the Los Angeles area and was a kindred collector of film soundtrack LPs, to spend some time talking shop about our hobby of collecting soundtrack LPs, before catching a flight the next day to return to Alabama.

Everything went according to plan except for a few surprises, one of which is that David, who was the evening news editor at KTLA, the television station owned by Gene Autry (see vignette), had secured tickets for the two of us to go that evening to the Fabulous Forum for a NBA game between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Denver Nuggets. As exciting as it was to attend my first NBA game, no less than a Laker home game at the Fabulous Forum, by that evening, after the long flights from Jakarta to Tokyo to Los Angeles and then spending the day with David, I was exhausted and fighting to keep my eyes open. But there we were in the Fabulous Forum, soaking it all in, including spotting Hollywood star Jack Nicholson sitting in his regular courtside seat.

I had begun following the LA Lakers from the day the Lakers selected him as the #1 pick in the 1979 NBA draft which resulted in Magic leaving Michigan State at the end of his sophomore year. Now, after watching so many Lakers games on TV, there I was live and in person watching Laker coach Pat Riley and his team warming up for the game.

Hard to imagine that this Laker team, that had won the NBA championship the year before, beating the Philadelphia 76ers 4-2, would end the season losing 4-0 to the 76ers in the NBA Finals. But on this night, Sunday, November 21, 1982, the Lakers were on their game, beating the Nuggets 143-129, with a top-notch roster of basketball talent that filled that game's box score as follows: Jamal "The Silk" Wilkes (29 points), Kareem "Big Fella" Abdul-Jabbar (Lew Alcindor) (22 points), Kurt "Clark Kent" Rambis (21 points), Bob "Can Do" McAdoo (18 points), Norm "Stormin' Norman" Nixon (17 points), Earvin "Magic" Johnson (10 points), Michael "Secretary of Defense" Cooper (10 points), Eddie "Thief of Baghdad" Jordan (9 points), and James "Big Game James" Worthy (5 points).

Before the start of the game, I realized that our seats were at the opposite end of the court from where the players would head to the locker room. As halftime approached, I told David I was going to head over to the other end of the court so that I might have a chance to greet Magic Johnson as he went to the locker room at halftime. By the end of the first half I was in place and ready to high five Magic but was in awe as the Lakers walked by, most a half-foot or more taller than me. While I got a quick glimpse of Magic as he passed me, my offer of a high five fell short of making contact with Magic – it just happened so fast!

Before the game I had tried to call home to my wife Sonia to let her know that I was going to be at the Laker game that evening and that there was a remote chance that she and my son Shannon might catch me on camera during the game. Unfortunately, they didn't hear my message in time to watch the game. Ironically, Larry Hammond, an IFDC colleague and also MSU graduate, was watching the game when his wife Jenny suddenly exclaimed: "Larry, look, there's Kerry on the TV!"

My next close encounters with the Los Angeles Lakers—and Magic Johnson and his teammates—occurred on March 2, 1984, when Sonia, Shannon, and I drove early Friday from Florence, Alabama to Atlanta, Georgia to see the Lakers play the Atlanta Hawks that evening.

The Lakers again were "on game," beating the Hawks 98-94, with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar scoring 30 points, Jamaal Wilkes 24, Magic Johnson 12 (and 9 assists), James Worthy 12, and Byron Scott 10. Also contributing were Mike McGee (4 points), Swen Nater (2), Michael Cooper (2), Mitch Kupchak (2), and Kurt Rambis. The Hawks were led by their own stars, notably Dan Roundfield (28 points), Dominique Wilkins (18), and Doc Rivers (15).

With the Lakers victory under our belt, we returned to the hotel and the next day drove around Atlanta to see the city's sights. On Sunday we departed Atlanta early with the objective of getting back home to Florence in time to catch that afternoon's NBA game between the Lakers and the Detroit Pistons.

On arriving home I checked our mailbox where I found a note to call Manuel Sanchez, IFDC's visitor relations officer, who shared with me the sad news that he had learned on Saturday from my father that my mother (see Ethel Byrnes vignette) had passed away that day. Unfortunately, we had made a late in the week decision to drive over to Atlanta to see the Lakers-Hawks game and had not left with anyone -- my parents or IFDC -- the hotel phone number where we could be reached. After a phone call to my father, we began to repack our bags to leave early the next morning to drive to Reston, Virginia to be with my father and attend the funeral.

Later that same year, in late October, my family pulled up stakes from our home in Florence and drove to Reston, this time to move in to my father's home and for me to start a new job with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). During those early years that we lived in Reston, both Shannon and I would continue to follow the Lakers, from time to time catching a Washington Bullets game when the Lakers came to town. But after making several treks around the Washington Beltway (I-495) to get to the Capitol Center that hosted the Bullets game, I tired of the traffic and parking hassles involved with going to a game and was content to catch the Lakers' games on TV.

Also, it was a bit risky to purchase tickets in advance because it was difficult to predict whether my job would allow me to be home when the Lakers were in town to play the Bullets. In fact, in November of 1991, I happened to be in Guatemala, assisting USAID's Regional Office for Central American Programs (ROCAP) with a concept paper for a proposed Sustainable Environmental Protection and Agricultural Trade (SEPAT) project.

On the evening of November 7, the phone rang in my hotel room. On answering it, I discovered that it was my wife whose voice was quite distraught—and I was struck with the thought of a possible death in the family. But Sonia proceeded to tell me that she and Shannon had just watched the press conference at which Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV-positive and was immediately retiring from playing basketball for the Lakers.

As much as I always hope for the Lakers to win a NBA Championship, since Magic's departure from the team, the Lakers have not been as exciting to watch, especially recent seasons when the team has been so injury-riddled, suffering from a lack of consistent coaching, and exiting early from or not even making the NBA Playoffs.

Nor have the games been as interesting to listen to after the 2002 passing of **Chick Hearn**, the legendary Lakers broadcaster, who called the game with the CHICK-ISMS that he had created.



Chick Hearn, Legendary Los Angeles Lakers Broadcaster (1961-2002)

Bloooows the layup! : Missed a very easy layup.

He has two chances, slim and none, and slim just left the building: The player has no chance of success with this play.

No harm, no foul (*no blood, no ambulance, no stitches*): A non-call by an official when varying degrees of contact have occurred.

Slam Dunk!: Hearn's most famous phrase; a powerful shot where a player forces the ball through the rim with one or both hands.

The mustard's off the hot dog: A player attempts an unnecessarily showy, flashy play which ends up in a turnover or is otherwise unsuccessful.

Throws up a prayer (... it's answered!!!): A wild shot that will need a miracle to score (and does).

This game's in the refrigerator: the door is closed, the lights are out, the eggs are cooling, the butter's getting hard, and the Jell-O's jigglin'!: The game's outcome is set; only the final score is in question.

But hope springs eternal and one can only pray that, with a few good trades here, a few good free agent acquisitions there, and a few high draft picks, that the Lakers will someday rebound (no pun intended) to be good enough to win another NBA Championship.

I fear, however, that NBA games will never again be as exciting as they once were back in the days of Magic Johnson and the Showtime Lakers!

Augustus George Ganakas (7/2/26 – 1/11/19)



Gus Ganakas, MSU Basketball Coach (1969 – 1976)

“Gus, how can you be so nice to me?” Jud Heathcote said;

Jud, you didn’t fire me, the president fired me.” (Gus Ganakas)

A native of New York, **Gus Ganakas**, after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, attended Michigan State College (MSC) from 1946 to 1950. After graduation, he coached basketball at East Lansing High School (ELHS), where his 1958 team won Michigan’s Class B State Basketball Championship. Ganakas later started working with Michigan State, coordinating the Ralph Young Fund—MSU’s athletic fund-raising organization. In 1966, he became an assistant coach to MSU’s head basketball coach John E. Bennington. Three years later, following Bennington’s death, Ganakas became the Spartans’ head coach. He coached the Spartans over seven seasons (1969-76), compiling an 89-84 record, before stepping aside when MSU hired Jud Heathcote as the head coach. But Ganakas continued working with MSU. From 1976 to 1998, Ganakas served as assistant athletics director and from 1998 to 2000, he was special assistant to head coach Tom Izzo, directing the activities surrounding Michigan State basketball’s centennial in 1998–99. Further, off the court, Ganakas was an analyst and commentator on the Spartan Radio Network, a role he filled for 33 years until health issues force him to step down a year or so before his passing on January 11, 2019. In 2002, he became the sixth recipient of the Men’s Basketball Distinguished Alumnus Award. Ganakas also was an inaugural member of the East Lansing High School Sports Hall of Fame (see video further below).

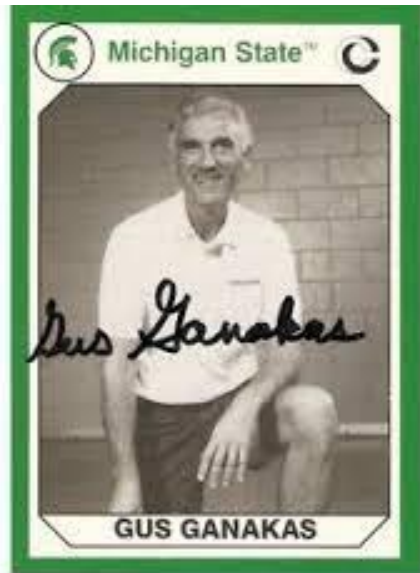


Gus Ganakas (left), Will Tieman, Adam Ruff, Matt Steigenga (NCAA Tournament 2009)



ELHS Hall Of Fame 2012 - Gus Ganakas

Flight Log Memories: My first close encounter with **Gus Ganakas** happened on a basketball court but not at MSU or ELHS but rather at East Lansing's St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) primary school, where STA pastor, the Reverend Jerome V. MacEachin (see vignette), had reached out to Gus in 1957 to ask if he would serve as the school's first basketball coach. At the time, I was in 7th grade at STA and decided to try out for the basketball team, with a pre-MSU coach Ganakas being my first (and last) basketball coach.



While making the team, I had no prior experience playing basketball and even less talent, and mostly rode the bench that season and the next before moving on to 9th grade at Okemos High School, where proof of my great lack of basketball talent was reconfirmed from one year to the next as I was never quite good enough four years in a row to make the team coached by Robert E. Baker (1920 - 6/26/11).

But, for the two seasons that Ganakas was my STA coach, he put us through our paces during practices. Once, after a practice, when I walked up behind him to ask a question, he abruptly turned around, not realizing I was standing behind him, and our heads collided. During one game that we were winning and with the clock winding down, he signaled for me to go to the scorer's bench to check into the game. This turned out to be one of the most embarrassing moments of my life, as I was unable with the clock running out to undo the knot in my warm-up pants, thus preventing me from getting my pants off and checking in at the scorer's table before the game ended. Years later, coaching my son Shannon in YBA basketball, our team had a 9-1 season, losing the championship game by one point. Given the average talent of the boys I was coaching, I like to think that what I learned about coaching basketball under Coach Ganakas was not an insignificant factor in our team almost winning the championship.

Back in 2007, during some down time while on an assignment in Bogotá, Colombia, I was surfing the Internet and came upon an email address for Ganakas and sent an email to him. Some weeks later, he wrote back to thank me for getting in touch with him and providing him an update on where life had taken me after playing for him at STA. A year later, in 2008, my son Shannon, South Lakes High School Junior Varsity Basketball Coach in Reston, Virginia, got tickets for the two of us to attend a MSU basketball game at Penn State. On arriving at the game site, we found that our seats were on the opposite side of the arena from the booth where the MSU sportscasters would call the game for the radio audience. We made our way around to the other side of the arena and talked our way into the booth, hoping that we might get a chance to visit with Ganakas before the start of the game – and soon he arrived!

Shannon and I introduced ourselves and I reminded Ganakas of the email I sent to him in 2007. Ganakas was most gracious and, after a short chat, we wished him and the Spartans well and headed back to our seats. Unfortunately, the Spartans were not on their game that night and were beaten severely by Penn State. During the ensuing basketball seasons, I would listen to Ganakas and his colleagues when they broadcast Spartan basketball games on the Spartan Sports Network, even following the Spartans and Gus, via the Spartan Sports Network (SSN), on my Samsung Galaxy SIII smart phone when on assignment in various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

But Penn State was not the most recent – nor necessarily the last – time I saw Gus. On Saturday, March 29, Shannon stopped by our house to propose going up to New York City the next day to see the Spartans play the University of Connecticut in the 2014 NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball East Regional Championship Game at Madison Square Garden. It was a long day, leaving Rosslyn, Virginia at 6:30 a.m. for 4+ hour bus trip to the Big Apple and later that day not getting back to Rosslyn until 11:15 p.m.

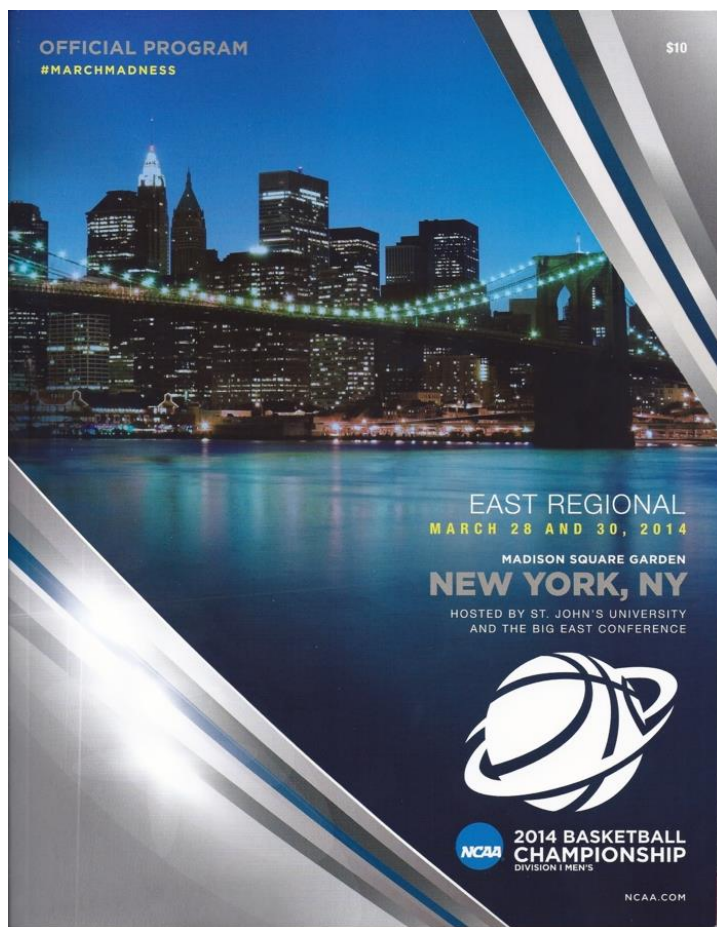
As Shannon and I walked around the perimeter of the Garden before the game, we watched the Spartans warming up – the first time that I had seen this team live, everyone from its starting five (with stars Gary Harris and Adreian Payne) to the team's other players, including Senior Dan Chapman who had attended Okemos High School. While touring the concession area on the level where our seats were located, we asked at the information desk how we might get down to the court level where Gus would work the game. When told that one had to be credentialed to access that area, the best I could do was to get a photo Gus from afar which I share below as well as some photos of Spartan Coach Tom Izzo.



Ticket to NCAA East Regional Championship Game & Gus Ganakas (left) Pregame



Spartan Coach Tom Izzo Watching the Spartans Warm Up Pregame



2014 NCAA East Regional Tournament Program & My Ticket



Spartans Warming Up for the Battle with the Huskies



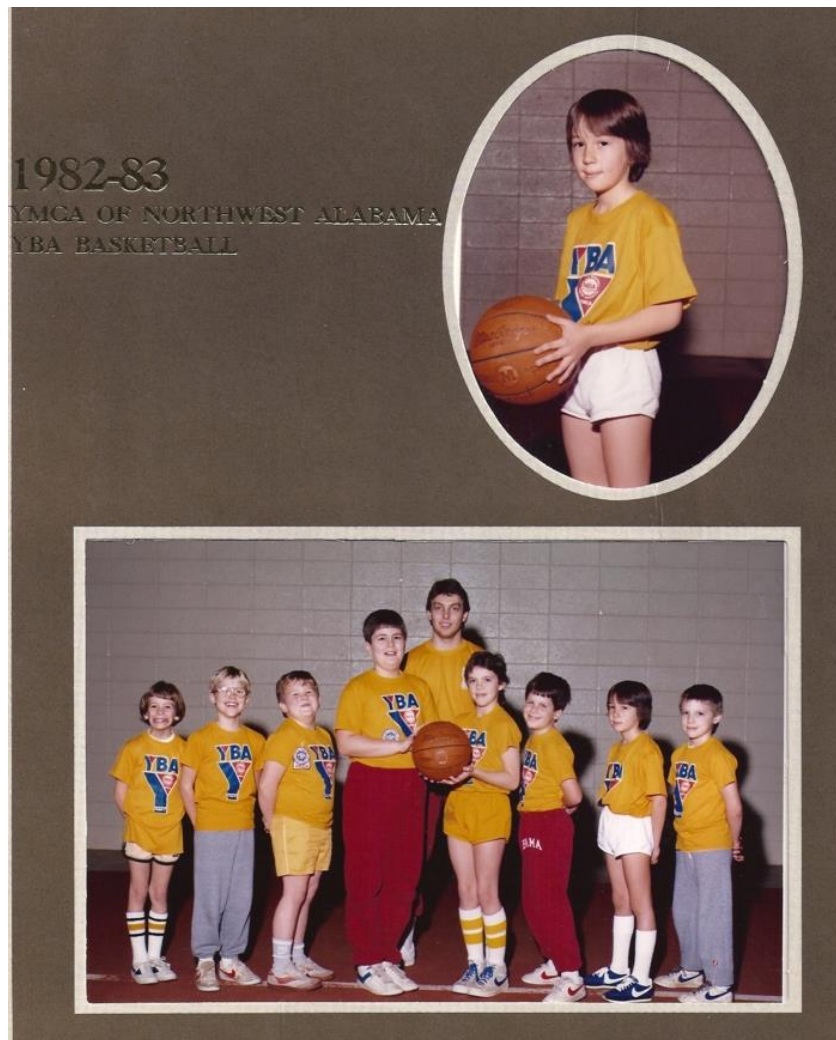
The 2013-2014 Michigan State Spartans Basketball Team

Sadly, however, the Spartans, after coming back from a double digit deficit in the first half and taking a four point lead at half-time – and then building that lead to nine points during the second half, ended up losing the game. But while that was the end of the Spartan’s 2013-2014 season, Gus’ impact on my life started even earlier. Back in the fall of 1982 my wife Sonia signed up our eight-year old son Shannon to play basketball in the YMCA Youth Basketball Association (YBA) league in Florence, Alabama.

On getting home from work one day, I took Shannon to the first practice, where I observed that the “coach” (a father of one of the other boys on the team) really didn’t have a clue as to what he needed to be doing to coach a group of young boys. What caught my attention, when the boys huddled around him at the start of the practice, was that several boys were dribbling basketballs while the coach spoke and were not paying any attention to him. From what I saw the coach’s idea of coaching was to ask the kids: “Hey, what do you guys want to do today?”

After the practice, I introduced myself to the coach, only to discover that my suggestions (as tactfully as I tried to make them) were seized upon by him to pass the coaching baton to me – and that’s how I got into coaching basketball for the first but not the last time. My coaching philosophy was to get the boys to play together as a team– and to shuffle one or two of the weaker players into the lineup throughout the game so that all the boys got a chance to play and feel they were part of and contributing to the team. This approach did not go unnoticed by the parents as, one occasion, a mother came up to me after one game and told me that she really liked the way I made sure all of the boys got a chance to play.

Photos of Shannon with his teammates are presented below. Unfortunately, coach Kerry is not in the photo because I was traveling on a business trip outside the country on the day the photo was taken.



Shannon's YBA Team (1982-83) in Florence, Alabama (Shannon - 2nd from right)

Our team went into the league's championship game with a 9-0 record. In the game's final 10 seconds, our team scored a basket which pulled us to within one point of the other team. We could have won the game were it not for the YBA having a rule that the team on defense is not allowed to guard a player who has the ball in the backcourt, hence can't put defensive pressure on the other team until one of the other team's players brings the ball across the mid-court line into the front court or passes the ball to another team member in the front court.

With the clock counting down, Shannon was at the ready, his toes just short of the half court line, leaning as far forward as he could to be ready to try to steal the ball as soon as the other team's guard dribbled the ball into the front court. With less than 10 seconds left, and the other coach knowing that his team had up to 10 seconds to bring the ball across mid-court, he was yelling at the boy bringing the ball up the court to just dribble the ball in the back court to run out the clock. Shannon was so frustrated that he suddenly dashed across the mid-court line to try to steal the ball before the clock ran out, at which point the referee blew his whistle, stopped the action, and gave the ball back to the other team to inbound in the back court. On so doing, the other team's guard just dribbled the ball until the time expired.

A year or so after our family moved from Florence, Alabama to Reston, Virginia in late 1984, I took on coaching Shannon's team in a Reston Youth League. This time I tried to use the rules to our advantage, noting that the league did not allow a team to play a zone defense. One implication of the rule was that a coach could instruct four of his team's players to pull over to the left side of the court, with each of the other team's players also having to move to the other side of the court to guard those four other players, thus making it possible to isolate our team's best ball handler and scorer on the right side of the court to go one-on-one against the defender. During one game in which our team had fallen behind, I kept my players spread out until the father of one of the boys on our team kept urging me to exploit the no zone defense rule by having all our players except Shannon shift to the left side of the court so that our team's arguably best player (Shannon) could go one-on-one against the player trying to defend him. I finally agreed to do this, the tactic worked, and Shannon started to score until the referee cautioned me to tell my team's players to spread out. When I didn't comply, the referee called a technical foul on me, the other team scored the free throw, got the ball back, and won the game.

Lesson learned: Life isn't fair even when you follow the rules! Yet I tried to bring to coaching my son's two teams the same basketball practice drills I learned nearly 30 years before when I played for Coach Ganakas. But the more interesting story is that the basketball-coaching bug I caught from Coach Ganakas was passed on to my son Shannon who has risen at South Lakes High School, where he played his high school ball, from Assistant Freshman Coach to Freshman Coach to Junior Varsity Coach and now to Assistant Varsity Coach in charge of coaching the team's guards.



SLHS Varsity Coach Andrew Duggan & Assistant Varsity Coach Shannon Byrnes (left of ref)

But the story doesn't stop with Shannon as the basketball-coaching bug also jumped to grandson Braden who, since being an infant, has been a constant fixture at SLHS basketball games and practices. Indeed, I recall holding Braden in my arms during a good part of a SLHS-Herndon basketball game in late 2008 or early 2009 when he was only several months old. Short of Braden's 3rd birthday he already was running wind sprints, dribbling the ball, scoring layups, shooting free throws, pounding the floor, and shouting "Defense!" — and all this in his grandparent's bedroom where until recently—before re-carpeting the court (our bedroom floor)—we had a youth-sized basketball hoop for Braden to practice shooting the basketball.

Braden's early mimicking of what he saw older basketball players doing is the clearest example I have ever seen of the sociological concept of "anticipatory socialization":

Anticipatory socialization is the process, facilitated by social interactions in which non-group-members learn to take on the values and standards of groups that they aspire to join, so as to ease their entry into the group and help them interact competently once they have been accepted by it. It is the process of changing one's attitudes and behaviours, in preparation for a shift in one's role. Words commonly associated with anticipatory socialization include grooming, play-acting, training and rehearsing (Source).

By the time Braden was five years old, his repertoire included twirling the ball in both hands before he shot a free throw, throwing no-look passes, dunking the ball (this is when we realized we needed to get him a higher hoop), and coaching the players – Abu (Kerry) and Aba (Sonia) as we sat on the bench (our bed) at half time – with Coach Braden telling us that we need to do a better job with our defense in the second half!



Shannon and Braden with SLHS Varsity Players Nick DeAtley & Dre Puryear

During South Lakes' 2011-12 basketball season, Braden at three years old became an integral part of Shannon's Junior Varsity team, the 16th player and "final piece" of the puzzle in the bonding of the team as recounted in the below article from that year's SLHS yearbook.

THE FINAL PIECE

Sixteen players on the team but one makes a difference

Coach Byrnes and Coach Millar not only showed the boys how to behave and act on the court; they also showed them how to be responsible and model citizens everywhere they go.

Both coaches were elementary school teachers. Coach Miller taught at Terraset Elementary School and Coach Byrnes taught at Navy Elementary. This helped them to know how to get along with their athletes, and how to communicate with them.

Coach Byrnes also gave the boys the privilege to interact with his three year old son, Braden. The boys took the opportunity to get to know Braden, who taught them how to interact with younger children who were interested in the sport.

At every home game and most away games Braden was there to support and cheer the team on. The little boy had a special whistle that he blew every time the opposing team went to shoot their foul shots. When the team had won Braden would come down from the bleachers and celebrated every

moment with them.

"After every game we win, every single one of us gives him a fist bump, but I give him a double fist bump," said sophomore Akram Gibreel. Braden was also included in the teams huddles before and after the games, Coach Byrnes said that at home he would chant, "Daddy, Ready. 1-2-3, Family," in order to imitate the teams cheers.

The whole team always had team dinners before games where they ate pizza. From the 16th player, Braden, to the team dinners, the team was able to bond on and off the court. "Braden is the final piece in our puzzle, the one that is always there every home game and after every win we celebrate with him," said sophomore Nicholas De Atley.

"We always have each other's back in and out of school, and before each game we get in to a big circle and we huddle to pray that everything goes well," said sophomore Benjamin Bush.

by Yosselyn Martinez

As Braden approached his sixth birthday, he asked that his birthday party be a basketball game, with Braden and his friends on one team and their fathers on the other. Not surprisingly, the children's team won, with Braden making the buzzer beater-winning basket. A couple of pictures are shared below, one with Braden taking a rest on the bench and the other of Braden receiving his trophy.



This past year Braden asked Abu (grandpa) for a Michigan State Spartan shirt which he now proudly wears on Spartan game day. Who knows, perhaps a future Spartan point guard when he grows up! Below I share a recent photo of the three generations of Spartan basketball fans. Go Spartans!



Kerry, Braden, and Shannon Byrnes

Some months later, on January 17, 2015, the above three Spartans, along with Kerry's brother Kevin went to the MSU-Maryland basketball game. The Terrapins had already beaten the Spartans in overtime a few weeks before in East Lansing but a "revenge" win was not to be. However, the four Spartans on that afternoon, some 57 years since Kerry played for Coach Ganakas back in 7th grade at St. Thomas Aquinas, scored a memorable photo with Coach Ganakas who also autographed the game's program. The Spartans went on to be seeded 7th in the National Tournament and made it to the Final Four before losing to Duke in the semifinal game.



From the right: Kerry, Gus, Shannon, Kevin, and Braden

JANUARY 17, 2015 - 4 P.M.

MICHIGAN STATE 2014-15 ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown/Previous School
0	Marvin Clark Jr.	F	6-6	230	Fr.	Kansas City, Mo./ Sunrise Christian Academy (Bel Aire, Kan.)
2	Javon Bess	G	6-5	215	Fr.	Columbus, Ohio/Gahanna Lincoln
3	Alvin Ellis III	G	6-4	210	So.	Matheson, Ill./Chicago De La Salle
5	Bryn Forbes	G	6-3	180	Jr.	Lansing, Mich./Sexton (Cleveland State)
10	Matt Costello	F	6-9	245	Jr.	Linwood, Mich./Bay City Western
11	Louarwa (Tun Tun) Naim Jr.	G	5-10	170	Fr.	Nassau, Bahamas/Sunrise Christian Academy (Bel Aire, Kan.)
13	Trevor Bohndorf	F	6-7	225	Jr.	Saginaw, Mich./Nouvel
14	**Eron Harris	G	6-3	180	Jr.	Indianapolis, Ind./Lawrence North (West Virginia)
15	Keenan Wetzel	G	6-4	210	R.Sr.	Monroe, Mich./St. Mary Catholic Central
20	Travis Trice	G	6-0	175	Sr.	Huber Heights, Ohio/Wayne
22	Brandon Dawson	F	6-6	225	Sr.	Gary, Ind./Lew Wallace
25	Kenny Golins	F	6-6	215	Fr.	Troy, Mich./Warren Mott
30	**Matt Van Dyk	F	6-5	205	Jr.	Imley City, Mich./Imley City
34	Gavin Schilling	F	6-9	240	So.	Chicago, Ill./Findlay Prep (Henderson, Nev.)
41	Colby Wollenman	F	6-7	230	R-Jr.	Big Horn, Wyo./Big Horn
45	Denzel Valentine	G	6-5	220	Jr.	Lansing, Mich./Sexton

** Will sit out the 2014-15 season due to NCAA transfer regulations.

Head Coach: Tom Izzo (20th Year)
 Assistant Coaches: Dwayne Stephens (12th Year), Mike Garland (15th Year), Dane Fife (4th Year)
 Director Of Basketball Operations: Kevin Fausga

*With regards,
Kerry Sandberg*

During two recent basketball seasons (2014-2015 and 2015-2016), Braden played guard on a church league team and led his team in scoring, although the score wasn't kept during games – but parents and grandparents do keep a mental score. Even when Braden's team actually "lost" the game, he wouldn't admit defeat – a true future Spartan! To top off his pre-primary school ball achievements, he has participated in the South Lakes High School Summer Basketball Camp the past three years (2015-17), in the first of those years being the camp's youngest player at 7 years old, competing against the older rising 2nd and 3rd graders.

While one technically needed to be 8 years old to be eligible for the camp, this rule was waived for Braden because his father (Shannon) was the camp supervisor. For Braden it was a dream come true to be able to attend the camp as a participant rather than just as a sideline observer which had been the case the previous summers. But his diligent practice shooting the basketball in his home's basement hoop as well as in the bedroom of his grandparents Kerry and Sonia paid off handsomely as he won his age group's hot shot competition trophy (see photo below).



In June of 2018 I had the opportunity to travel back to East Lansing and, among other things, arranged to stop by the home of former St. Thomas Aquinas, East Lansing High School, and Michigan State University head basketball coach Gus Ganakas—with Gus and his daughter Gail graciously allowing the below photo of my visit along with Okemos High Class of '65 friend Rod Ellis.



Kerry, Gus, and Rod – Lifelong Spartan Fans

Over the summer of 2018 Braden participated in various summer camps and winning numerous individual trophies, with his teams winning summer camp and community league championships. However, the highlight was his AAU 9 years of age and under (U9) team (NOVA94) going to Orlando to compete in the AAU U9 tournament, winning all seven games, and bringing home the U9 AA national championship trophy.



Braden with His AAU U9 National Championship Medal

Non-Spartan Encounters with Other Basketball Giants

Before heading to the locker room for post-game interviews, let me share several close encounters I had with basketball celebrities in the Washington, DC area.

Grant Henry Hill (10/5/72 – present)



People don't realize the amount of stress you put on your body both physically and mentally from just the wear and tear of a season.



Grant Hill Interview With Bob Costas (1996)

At Duke University **Grant Hill** helped the Blue Devils to win two consecutive NCAA championships in 1991 and 1992 during his freshman and sophomore years. On graduating from Duke in 1994, the Detroit Pistons drafted Hill third overall in the National Basketball Association (NBA) draft. He and Jason Kidd of the Dallas Mavericks shared Rookie of the Year honors, and Hill was named to the all-rookie first team that year, becoming the first rookie to lead the league in All-Star fan balloting. During his career, Hill also played on three other NBA teams: Orlando Magic, Phoenix Suns, and Los Angeles Clippers, though his playing time during many of those years was hampered by injuries.

On June 1, 2013, at the age of 40, Hill retired from the Los Angeles Clippers as the NBA's oldest player. He had played 19 seasons in the NBA, was a seven-time All Star, and three-time winner of the league's sportsmanship award. He was a member of the 2000 USA team that won the Olympic Gold Medal. During his NBA career, Hill averaged 16.7 points, 6.0 rebounds, 4.1 assists and 1.2 steals per game. In the 2010-11 campaign, he was the seventh player in NBA history to average 13 or more points at the age of 38 or older. In 2018 Hill was inducted into the [Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame](#).

Flight Log Memories: Before going to Duke University, **Grant Hill** went to South Lakes High School in Reston, Virginia, the same high school that our Shannon was attending and played basketball for three years--on the freshman team, on the junior varsity (JV) team his sophomore year, and on the varsity team his senior year. During Shannon's JV games, I frequently saw Grant around a school's hallways or on the sidelines as he and his varsity teammates waited for half-time of the JV game, at which point the varsity team players headed to the locker room to dress for the varsity game. One evening my wife Sonia and I went to a South Lakes varsity game to see Hill playing. Once Hill took the court, I immediately saw his great skill and agility as he moved around the basketball court like a cat playing with mice, none of the other players having anywhere near his talent.

Shannon got to know Grant during summer pickup games at the high school. On one occasion Shannon and Grant were playing on the same team. On a fast break, Shannon threw an alley-oop pass to Grant that he caught in mid-air and dunked. During one semester that Sonia was teaching Spanish at South Lakes, Grant was enrolled in Sonia's Spanish course. One day, talking to Grant, Sonia asked if he was going to the prom. Grant replied that he was not going because he and his girlfriend had recently broken up. Grant then asked: "Mrs. Byrnes, would you go to the prom with me?" My wife politely declined but that pair at the prom would have been quite the sight with Grant at 6'8" (without shoes) towering above Sonia whose height barely reaches 5 feet.

Scottie Reynolds (10/10/1987 - present)



Scottie Reynolds

You go through a season not expecting to get All-American. You just go out there every day and try and do the best you can, try and play Villanova basketball. It's in the back of your head, but if you concentrate on that, that stuff will never come.



Scottie Reynolds' Life Story

Scottie Reynolds was born in Huntsville, Alabama to an unwed, unemployed teenage mother who reluctantly gave him up for adoption to Rick and Pam Reynolds who subsequently moved to Herndon, Virginia, where he played high school basketball for the Herndon Hornets, becoming

one of the most prolific scorers in Virginia basketball history, and the best player in the competitive Northern Region since Grant Hill [see vignette] (South Lakes High School, Class of 1990). He led the...Hornets to the state finals in the 2005–06 season, and the team became state runner-up. [That season he averaged 40ppg.] A three-time Player of the Year for the region, Reynolds is known for his three-point shooting and clutch performances. During his senior year, Reynolds was named a McDonald's All American, the first player in the Northern Region to be so honored since Joey Beard (South Lakes High School, Class of 1993).



Reynolds owns many Herndon Hornets basketball records, including most points in a year, most points during a high school career, and most points in a game with 53 against I.C. Norcom High School in 2005. Reynolds is 16th all-time in Virginia high school career scoring. He was at one point ranked the fourth best point guard in the nation. Reynolds averaged 28.4 points per game, 4.5 assists per game, and 4.0 steals per game as a senior, and 34.7 points as a junior ([Source](#)).

Reynolds played college basketball for the Villanova Wildcats, becoming the Wildcats' primary scoring threat by the end of his freshman year. He was named the 2006–07 Big East Rookie of the Year. During Reynolds' sophomore year, Villanova made the Sweet 16 in the 2008 NCAA Tournament before losing to eventual champion Kansas. He led the team in scoring with 15.9 points per game.

During his junior year, Reynolds led Villanova to a 26-7 record and a #3 Seed in the NCAA Tournament. During Villanova's Elite Eight matchup versus #1 seed Pittsburgh in the 2009 NCAA Tournament, Reynolds made a game-winning shot with 0.5 seconds to go to send Nova to the 2009 Final Four in Detroit. However, The Wildcats lost in the Final Four to the North Carolina Tar Heels.





While Reynolds declared for the 2009 NBA Draft, he subsequently decided to withdraw from the draft and return for his senior season at Villanova. In the 2009-10 season, the 6'1" Reynolds

averaged 18.5 points and shot 40 percent from 3-point range in becoming the Wildcats' go-to player with several spectacular second-half efforts. He led the Wildcats to a 25-8 season (13-5 Big East) and a #2 seed in the NCAA tournament, which culminated with a 75-68 loss to St. Mary's (CA) in the second round of the 2010 NCAA Tournament. Reynolds ended his career as the second-leading scorer in Villanova history with 2,222 points.... He finished his College career with 472 assists and 203 steals (Source: Wikipedia).

Reynolds, who also played for the U.S. team in the 2007 Pan Am Games, was named to the 2010 AP first team All-American. While Reynolds had a stellar career playing high school and college basketball, he was the first AP All-American to not be selected in the NBA Draft since the NBA-ABA merger in 1976. While Reynolds has had tryouts with NBA's Phoenix Suns and Utah Jazz, since college he has played professional basketball in Europe and the Philippines. He currently plays for Beşiktaş of the Turkish Basketball League.

Flight Log Memories: After my wife Sonia had taught Spanish for several years at South Lakes High School, the high school at which Grant Hill (see vignette) and my son Shannon had played basketball for the Seahawks, she was offered an opportunity to teach Spanish at the Seahawks' rival, Herndon High School, home of the Herndon Hornets. Sonia was teaching at Herndon High during the years that **Scottie Reynolds** attended Herndon High. During Scottie's senior year, the Hornets' 2005-2006 season, Sonia proposed that we go to a Hornets home game so I'd have a chance to see Scottie play. It was an exciting game that the Hornets' won in large part because of Scottie's leadership, pushing the ball quickly up the court, hitting a number of long shots, and dishing assists to his teammates to help them score.

Later in the season, before the Hornets team departed for Richmond for the state championship game in Richmond, the school held a dinner to honor the basketball team, after which Sonia and I said hello to Scottie and wished him well. Just as I had years earlier with Grant Hill, I found Scottie off the court also a quiet and reserved person. The next day Sonia, Shannon, and I drove to Richmond to watch the game. Sadly, the Hornets lost to another team, in spite of a courageous effort by Scottie to lead the Hornets to victory in the face of the other team's defense that constantly was harassing him, with two defensive players on Scottie to make it difficult for him to get to the basket for a layup, get a shot off from the perimeter, or even pass the ball to an open player. Despite this loss, Scottie had a successful college career playing for Villanova, though subsequent efforts to land a position on an NBA team have remained elusive.



As a footnote, when Sonia and I moved from our former house of 22+ years to a condo in Reston Town Center, we soon discovered that our new next door neighbor was Sonia's former Herndon High School colleague and Scottie Reynolds' high school coach -- Gary Hall!

Gary Allen Lancaster, Jr. (11/11/70 - present)



Well, I'm here! I may as well make the best of it.

Gerry Lancaster, Jr. was born on November 11, 1970, to Diane Hall and Gerry Lancaster Sr. Gerry, the eldest of three children, was raised by his mother and her family. Up until the age of nine, he grew up in the inner city of New London, Connecticut, living in a low-income, high-rise apartment. After his mother moved the family out of the Crystal Avenue projects, he experienced a culture slightly different from that of his early childhood years, particularly enjoying being in the YMCA basketball program. While he took an interest in other sports during his childhood, family members who had played basketball throughout their lives encouraged Gerry to also play the game, taking advantage of his natural talent as well as his height (6'7"). By the time he went to high school, where he played shooting forward, he had received just about every award you could possibly achieve at that level. Living in an area that was statistically low for black males to graduate high school, he graduated from New London High School in 1989 and was offered several college basketball scholarships.



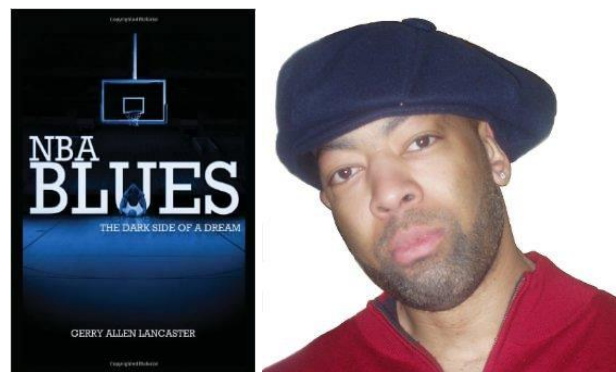
Gerry with Family Members (Champlain Junior College – 1988-89 Season)

The following year, Gerry attended Champlain Junior College in Burlington, Vermont. During two years at Champlain, his basketball team went to the national tournament twice. After earning an associate's degree in social science, he attended James Madison University (JMU) from 1991-93, with a full scholarship, playing two positions (forward and guard) as a junior. But he decided in 1993 to leave JMU early to pursue a basketball career in the European league, playing four years with Roanne (France) as a swingman before a knee injury ended his career. On returning to Connecticut, Gerry went to work for a childhood friend who was then playing basketball in the NBA. While working eleven years as a personal assistant to this NBA player, Gerry was exposed to the life of a professional athlete, witnessing many an unfortunate situation as a result of the poor decision making of NBA players.

Gerry's life experiences, including a recruiting issue while in junior high and later working as a personal assistant to the NBA athlete, led him in 2009 to begin writing a book that he titled *NBA Blues: The Dark Side of A Dream* (2011).

I'm writing a book about my life experiences as a professional basketball player on and off the court. (Gerry Lancaster, @HalfCourt on [Twitter](#) in 2009)

NBA Blues is a cautionary tale that can serve as a handbook for any young athlete and their families facing the bittersweet taste of success in professional sports. Along with entertaining the reader, this book acts as a guide to help understand the pitfalls that come with financial success in professional sports. Most have a greater chance of becoming a business professional before he or she becomes a professional athlete, however, whether a young person has the talent and opportunity to become a professional athlete or a productive citizen in society, the proper guidance is necessary to maintain their success. Told in a compelling and engaging voice, this urban contemporary is creatively written with authentic characters. Although based on actual events, names and scenarios have been changed slightly to protect the innocent, and not so innocent. The message of the book is being presented in an educational and entertaining platform as author, Gerry Lancaster, renamed Gary Allen, shares his experiences while working as a personal assistant to a childhood friend who became a professional athlete. The real baller, renamed Vaughn Fisher (an Olympic Gold Medal Winner and four -time NBA All-star Player with earnings of over 100 million dollars) is the subject of the book. Vaughn was a talented athlete who attained his dream of playing professional basketball in the NBA, but the fame and fortune disappeared quickly as the thrill of making a basket was replaced by the thrill of getting a high from prescription drugs and alcohol. His story is told through the words of a friend who knew him from his humble beginnings, to the great heights of fame and back down the slippery slope of drugs, promiscuity and financial ruin. No one could tell the complete story unless they were actually there, and Gerry was ([Source](#)).



Gerry's experiences also nurtured a desire to focus his attention on children facing challenges as they grow up. In 2007, he founded and became the executive director of the [Raise Our-Selves Effectively \(ROSE\)](#) Organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the mission of which is to teach youth the fundamentals necessary to develop into productive and contributing members in their communities. Whether a child dreams of becoming a professional athlete or a successful member of society, Gerry wants to help each understand that he or she has the ability to achieve his or her goals. ROSE's programs assist youth to develop a strong mind, body, and soul to enable them to not only achieve their goals but also protect and appreciate what they have accomplished.



Lancaster now works with Lifetime Fitness in Reston, Virginia and, when not focused on work, enjoys physical fitness activities, reading self-help and inner-peace books, and spending time with his wife and three children. He currently is working on turning *NBA Blues* into a screenplay for a proposed film of the same title.

Flight Log Memories: Our two prior vignettes on Grant Hill and Scottie Reynolds highlighted how fate can put a damper on a promising young basketball player's prospect to have a career in the NBA. While Grant Hill played nearly two decades in the NBA before retiring, his career was frequently hampered by reoccurring foot and ankle injuries which prevented him from achieving what he otherwise might have accomplished in the NBA had he remained injury free. On the other hand, after nearly a decade playing in Europe and at times on minor league NBA teams, Scottie Reynolds has yet to play for a team in NBA. Even though a First Team All-America in college, no NBA team elected to draft him, perhaps because, at 6'1", his height put him at a disadvantage to play point guard in the NBA, especially as his prior experience in high school and college was as shooting guard. So, while both Grant and Scottie each had their own "NBA Blues," those blues were not due to such issues as sex, drugs, and/or poor money management as Gerry Lancaster highlights in *NBA Blues*.

During the spring of 2014 I had my own "health blues" due to dizziness and, as a consequence, had slacked off my post-heart surgery exercise regime of walking at least five times a week for at least 30 minutes each time. I just didn't feel up to walking while I was still experiencing what the physical therapist called "peripheral vestibular weakness" which had left me with a feeling that I couldn't walk a straight line without feeling that I looked like a drunken sailor stumbling down the street. Once the dizziness abated with the help of physical therapy, I resumed my walking, which I did early to mid-morning at Lifetime Fitness in Reston. As I was yet apprehensive about getting on a treadmill while still feeling some lingering effects of the peripheral vestibular weakness, I restricted myself to 20+ laps in 30 minutes around the perimeter of the gym's two basketball courts. One day I was alone in the gym except for one other person who was shooting baskets. After walking past him several times, I stopped to say hello and introduce myself, and learned his name was **Gerry Lancaster**. Given that he towered over me by some six inches, I asked if he played basketball in college, to which he replied that he had at James Madison University.

I shared that while I rode the bench when I first played on a grade school basketball team, I never made the team in high school. I further mentioned that my son had played basketball at South Lakes High School (where Grant Hill played) and that my wife had taught Spanish at Herndon High School (where Scottie Reynolds played). I mentioned that my son's potential career playing ball at the university level ended when he tore his right ACL one year playing summer league basketball and then the next summer the left ACL. But Shannon did continue in basketball, over the years working his way up the coaching ladder, starting as assistant freshman coach at SLHS, then freshman coach, then junior varsity coach, and then became one of the assistant varsity coaches, focusing on working with the guards. Of course, I added that Shannon's son, Braden, is a budding point guard and scorer albeit he has only been playing several years and at the time in kindergarten.

On several subsequent occasions, I would see Gerry at Lifetime and each time would greet and visit with him. During one conversation he shared that he wrote *NBA Blues* (I hadn't known of this book) and was working on getting a screenplay written to turn the book into a film. While Gerry's potential to make it to the NBA had been derailed by a career-ending knee injury, I could see that he had applied the old adage that, when life gives you lemons, turn the bitter in the sweet by making lemonade. In this regard he has been working with young athletes and other youth to help them to be better prepared for life, has written a book (*NBA Blues*), and is turning this book into a screenplay for a film. While not a *Spartan Educator* (see this book's first chapter), Gerry grew up not only to be 6'7" tall but also an educator working with youth through R.O.S.E., book author, and budding film producer—all rolled into one! Look for Gerry's *NBA Blues* at your local bookstore, on the internet (e.g. Amazon.com), or perhaps even soon on the silver screen in your local movie theater!

John Robert Thompson, Jr. (9/2/41 – present)



Let me ask you a question....



My first encounter with a basketball celebrity at Washington, DC's National Airport occurred at the airport's original terminal as I waited for my luggage to be returned to me after an aborted flight. After having buckled into my seat for my flight to Miami, the pilot announced that because of a mechanical problem, the flight was being cancelled. So I had to get off the plane and go back to the terminal, both to rebook another flight to Miami (and onward to Lima, Peru) but also to claim a suitcase of personal effects that a Peruvian friend (Aurora Alcalá—see vignette) had asked me to deliver to her family in Peru. I don't normally travel with checked bags but, on this occasion, had to reclaim that suitcase, haul it back to my home in Reston, and take it back to the airport the next morning. To make matters worse, on arriving in Lima, there was a labor strike at the airport and I had to stand around for over an hour waiting for that suitcase to eventually be delivered to the baggage claim area. But I digress.

While waiting to claim that suitcase at National, I noticed that I was surrounded by a dozen or more sharply-dressed African Americans, much taller than me at 6'1". I wasn't sure who they were until I saw that the group was accompanied by an older African American. I was pretty sure I recognized this older gentleman as **John Thompson, Jr.**, the Georgetown University basketball coach. Years later, as I exited the elevator at the lobby level of the Hotel Intercontinental in Miami, Florida, I again spotted Thompson and asked him "Aren't you John Thompson?"

Without any great enthusiasm he replied, "Yes" but quickly proceeded to the lobby. By this time, he was a commentator for NBA games on cable channel TNT, so his short response may have been because he was in a hurry to get to the nearby American Airlines Arena to announce a Miami Heat basketball game that evening. In 1984, Thompson was the first African American head coach to win a major collegiate championship when his Georgetown University Hoyas basketball team won the NCCA Men's Division 1 Basketball Championship.

But the cancellation of my flight to Miami and having to wait to fly Miami (and onward to Lima, Peru) had two unanticipated benefits. The first was that I got back home in time to watch **Magic Johnson** (see vignette) play in the NBA All Star Game; the second was that American Airlines bumped me up to first class for the flight to Miami the following morning.

Hubert Jude Brown (9/25/33 – present)



Hubie Brown

No one is bigger than the team. You're going to be on time, you're going to play hard, you're going to know your job and you're going to know when to pass and shoot. If you can't do those four things you're not getting time here and we don't care who you are.



The second encounter at National Airport occurred years later at the airport's new terminal as I again was waiting for my luggage. This time I quickly recognized that I had just sighted **Hubie Brown** who had led the Kentucky Colonels to the American Basketball Association championship in 1975. Brown was twice named NBA Coach of the Year—in 1978 as the coach of the Atlanta Hawks, and in 2004 as the coach of the Memphis Grizzlies. Inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2005, Brown is now a basketball commentator for ABC-TV and ESPN.

Virtual Stopover Epilogue

During our virtual stopover in the ***Realm of Spartan Sports*** you met various Spartan “giants” as well as a few other athlete, coach, and sports broadcasting luminaries with whom I had close encounters not far from the football field or basketball court.

As we exit the post-game locker room interviews, we now head from the athletic arena to the big silver screen and small screen tube for our next virtual stopover for some ***Off-Screen Encounters in the Realm of Film and TV Personalities***.

Chapter 7

Off-Screen Encounters in the Realm of Film and TV Personalities

My early years were spent in Ohio. At the time of my birth on 9/11/45, my father was serving in the Army Air Force at the Wright-Patterson Air Base in Dayton, Ohio. Following military service, my father took a job with Ohio State University and moved the family – Francis, Ethel, and Kerry – to a house on Selby Boulevard in Worthington, Ohio.

During those years, my earliest exposure to the performing arts, broadly defined as including stage, screen, radio, and television, came over the airwaves from the speaker of a radio in our home or car, with programs ranging from news and music to what are now known as old-time radio classics (e.g., *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*).

Listening to the radio in the evening swept one's imagination into the great "theater of the mind" until I came home one day from the house of our next door neighbor – home of my best friends, Phil and Tom Keck – to report excitedly to my parents that the Keck's had a television.



The Keck Family (Andy, Dorothy, Phil, Tommy and “Ko-Ko” (circa early 1950s)

My parents, probably mindful of the household budget, hadn't twisted my arm for permission to buy a TV. However, probably not without ceaseless urging on my part, and my parents having a measure of concern about the amount of time I was spending at the Keck's watching their TV, the day finally arrived when a decision was made above my pay grade that my father and I would go to the store to buy a TV in living black and white.

Now, one could tune in the world of entertainment not only by a twist of the radio dial but also by changing the channel on the TV, though in those days one's TV could pick up at most only a few channels as television stations were few in number compared with the bounty of radio stations across the dial.

But if quality is more important than quantity, our family TV did bring in the one channel that really mattered, that one being the NBC channel that carried Buffalo Bob and the *Howdy Doody Show*.



Kerry's First TV (1952)

That TV and visits to local movie theaters over the years were my off-the-screen introduction to the *Realm of Film and TV Personalities*. When I set out to write this chapter, it was with the intent that I would share memories of film and TV personalities who, because they are (or were) so widely known, would be instantly recognizable as celebrities.

However, along the way, I realized that I had met, known, and worked with professional colleagues who had themselves appeared as an extra or even a starring role in this or that film or TV show. So I decided to also include vignettes about them.

Hence what follows are vignettes about the “famous” and the “not-so-famous” film and TV personalities with whom I’ve had close encounters.

The Famous

Robert Emil Schmidt (11/27/17 – 7/30/98)



Buffalo Bob Smith and Howdy Doody (1972)

"Say kids, what time is it?"



Born in Buffalo, New York, [Robert Schmidt](#)* learned at a young age to play the piano and organ. By the time he was 15, he was singing on a Buffalo radio station.

He worked his way up from local radio stations to NBC's television network. He changed his name to Robert E. Smith and launched a children's TV show called [Howdy Doody](#) that ran Monday to Friday at 5:30 p.m. on NBC.

Smith hosted the show as Buffalo Bob Smith, wearing a fringed cowboy outfit. Howdy, a freckle-faced boy marionette with 48 freckles, one for each state of the union, wore jeans, a bandanna and a checkered shirt.

Each show led off with Buffalo Bob asking: "Say kids, what time is it?"

The 40 kids in the Peanut Gallery shouted in reply—"It's Howdy Doody time!"—and then sang the show's theme song by the same name to the tune of "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay." Many other TV programs copied the show's format, a pioneer in children's television programming.

The show also was a pioneer in early color television. NBC, owned at the time by TV manufacturer RCA, used the show in part to sell color television sets in the 1950s. People gathered in front of appliance store windows to watch the show just as they did with baseball games and wrestling matches.

Kids whose families had a television set – or, if they didn't have a TV did have friends whose parents had a TV - looked forward each day to coming home from school to watch *Howdy Doody*, Howdy and the show's other puppet members lived in the town of Doodyville. Favorites were Mayor Phineas T. Bluster, Dilly Dally, Princess Summerfall Winterspring, and Flub-a-Dub—a combination of eight animals: a duck's bill, a cat's whiskers, a spaniel's ears, a giraffe's neck, a dachshund's body, a seal's flippers, a pig's tail, and an elephant's memory.

The show's cast also included human actors, notably Bob Keeshan who played Clarabell the Clown, a mute who communicated by honking a Harpo Marx-type horn on his belt and/or squirting Buffalo Bob and other cast members with seltzer water. Keeshan later became Captain Kangaroo.

Some ten years after the show's run on NBC ended, September 30, 1960, Buffalo Bob Smith embarked in the early 1970s on a tour of college campuses, with live shows providing a mix of contemporary humor and nostalgia.

In 1976 he reunited with Roger Muir, longtime producer of the *Howdy Doody Show*, and several original cast members to create *The New Howdy Doody Show*. The show ran on Atlanta's WTBS-TV and nationally with that channel's satellite feed to local cable systems across the United States. The cast included Happy Harmony (played by Marilyn Patch).

After retiring to North Carolina, Smith's last live TV appearance was on July 3, 1998, when he made an infomercial appearance on the QVC cable-shopping channel to promote Howdy Doody memorabilia. Sadly, less than a month later, Smith died at the age of 80 in Hendersonville, North Carolina on July 30, 1998.

Flight Log Memories: After having watched the *Howdy Doody Show* for some period of time at my neighbor's house, our family finally purchased its first TV in the early 1950s. I'd look forward to getting home from school and watching *Howdy Doody*. My close encounter with Buffalo Bob Smith occurred not long after.

At the time, *The Howdy Doody Show* ran a daily contest in which Buffalo Bob drew a post card from a bowl filled with post cards that children had sent to the show from across the United States. Each card provided a child's name, address, and phone number.

One afternoon, while I was watching *Howdy Doody*, Buffalo Bob drew a post card from the bowl and dialed the phone number on the card. At that moment our phone rang and my mother, on answering it, called me to the phone. I put the phone to my ear, said hello, and heard Buffalo Bob congratulate me as that day's lucky winner of the phone call from *Howdy Doody*. While I clearly remember that phone call, I have forgotten what the prize was that the show sent to me by mail.

When Buffalo Bob revived the *Howdy Doody* show as *The New Howdy Doody Show* in 1976, I watched it on our local cable system in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where I had begun working in mid-1975 with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC). But I only saw a few episodes of *The New Howdy Doody Show* because it aired at 7:30 a.m., the same time I had to be at work. Another reason for missing the show was that I often was away on travel overseas. It was not possible to "tape" the show because we didn't own either a Sony Betamax or VHS videocassette recorder (VCR).

Thus, *déjà vu* all over again – before my parents felt they could afford to buy a TV, I couldn't watch *Howdy Doody* unless I went to the neighbor's house to view the show on their TV. Now, two decades later, I again wasn't able to watch *Howdy Doody* because I had to be at work and we didn't own a VCR.

Sony and VHS competitors probably could have sold a ton more of those Betamaxes and VCRs in the 1970s if they had only advertised on *The New Howdy Doody Show*, just as RCA (owner of NBC) had fueled color TV sales in the late 1950s and early 1960s by broadcasting the original *Howdy Doody* in color on NBC.

Given my childhood close encounter (albeit by phone) with Buffalo Bob, you can understand what a bummer it was for me to have to go off to work each day and not be able to stay home with my almost two-year old son Shannon to watch the daily adventures of Buffalo Bob and his *Howdy Doody* sidekicks – except, of course, on those days when I suddenly came down with a cold and decided to play hooky!

It was then a surprise, less than a year after I retired in September 2014, to discover one Sunday morning in May 2015 that my cable supplier, Comcast (Xfinity), was carrying *The New Howdy Doody Show* on Sunday mornings on the COZI channel, nearly four decades after the show premiered in 1976. Now I have the time to watch the show at any time after recording it on my Comcast Digital Video Recorder (DVR).

When I introduced my six-year old grandson, Braden to the *New Howdy Doody Show*, his interest in the show was challenged by having to watch, on a 40” HD TV, a show originally taped in the mid-1970s, a combination that results in a noticeably blurry image. The first time Braden watched the show he asked: “Abu, why is the TV so blurry?”

I already heard the same type of question from my son Shannon who often asked how I could listen to oldies songs on an AM radio station that had a lot of static interference. Of course, he was not used to hearing static on the radio because he grew up listening to rock’n’roll music on static-free FM stations.

J. Fred Muggs (3/14/52 – present)



J. Fred Muggs (left) and Phoebe B. Beebe (right)
with Dave Garroway on *The Today Show* (1950s)



Flight Log Memories: My next encounter with a TV celebrity came on July 15, 1955, when our family was in New York City in route to a consultancy that my father took on that summer in Europe. Dad had arranged for the family to make an early morning visit to the NBC TV studios to see *The Today Show*. Unfortunately, on that day, host Dave Garroway was not on the set.



Faye Emerson (7/8/17 – 3/9/83)

While the lovely **Faye Emerson** was present, the “celebrity” my brother Kevin and I wanted to see wasn’t Emerson but rather **J. Fred Muggs**, the chimpanzee who was the show’s mascot from 1953 to 1957.

I don’t recall if on that day Muggs was up to his infamous antics such as biting the show’s cast members or guests. Looking back, however, it didn’t occur to me at the time to ask if we could get a photograph of Muggs with us.

As of January 12, 2012, Muggs was still alive in Citrus Park, Florida (Wikipedia.org).

Orvon Grover Autry (9/29/1907 – 10/2/1998)



Gene Autry and Champion (1952)

I'm not a good actor, a good rider or a particularly good singer, but they seem to like what I do, so I'll keep on doing it as long as they want.



Orvon Grover Autry, better known as **Gene Autry**, was an American performer who became famous as a singing cowboy on the radio, in movies, and on television for more than three decades beginning in the early 1930s. He recorded more than 600 songs, wrote or co-wrote more than 250 songs, and starred for 16 years in his successful weekly radio show (*Gene Autry's Melody Ranch*). From 1934 to 1953, he appeared in 93 films and produced and starred in 91 half-hour episodes of the *The Gene Autry Show*, personifying “the straight-shooting hero—honest, brave, and true” ([Source](#)).

Autry and his horse Champion toured extensively for public performances, with Autry becoming one of the most influential artists in increasing the popularity of country music. Autry's signature song “Back in the Saddle Again” is legend as also his Christmas holiday songs, including “Here Comes Santa Claus” (which he wrote), “Frosty the Snowman”, and his biggest hit – “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

After his recording, film, and television career, Autry turned his attention to business, becoming the owner of a TV station (KTLA in Los Angeles—see Magic Johnson vignette), several Southern California radio stations, and from 1961 to 1997 a Major League Baseball team—the Los Angeles Angels (now Anaheim Angels). A member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, Autry is the only person with a star in all five categories on the Hollywood Walk of Fame – film, television, music, radio, and live theater/performance. Autry died of lymphoma at the age of 91, his death coming less than three months after that of Roy Rogers, another celebrated silver screen, radio, and TV cowboy.

To the people of Kenton, Ohio Gene Autry was more than just a popular singer and actor: He was the town's personal hero and rescuer from economic disaster. In 1937 the town was suffering extreme financial hardship due to the effects of the Great Depression on its leading industry, the Kenton Hardware Company. Founded in 1894 (it had been in existence for the four prior years as Kenton Lock Manufacturing Company) the company, well known for its successful line of cast iron toys and toy banks, was reeling under serious financial strain. Formerly one of the biggest makers of iron toys in the world, poor sales were badly damaging the company's finances and causing the former giant to limit its employees to only working a couple of days a week. When Gene Autry agreed to allow the struggling company to make a toy cap gun based off of his own pistols and bearing his name, the company's fortunes turned around almost overnight. The popularity of the first model of the cap gun gave birth to other models, and the Gene Autry cap gun became known as the toy that saved a town. ([Source](#))

Flight Log Memories: The other day I wrote to my brother Kevin to ask if he remembered our mother taking us to a personal appearance of **Gene Autry**. My brother, who was only three years old at the time, has no recollection of this. However, at the time, while I was only nine years old, I remember going to this appearance as well as listening to Autry's Christmas holiday songs on the radio and watching his films and TV show on our black and white television (see photo below). On discovering the above anecdote about the Kenton Hardware Company, I also remembered that my brother and I had cap guns. While I can't say for sure if our cap guns were models of a Gene Autry pistol, I do recall loading those red caps in the gun and reliving the adventures of Gene Autry and/or Roy Rogers as I fired off the gun until it was "empty" and it had to reload it with another roll of caps.



Kerry, Grandpa John Byrnes, & Kevin Watching That First TV (circa 1959)

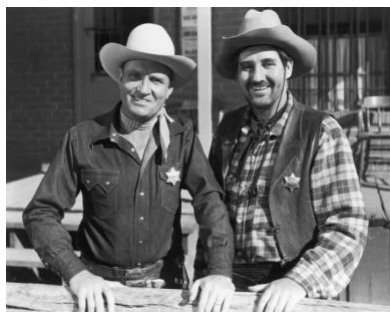
When I first started writing the vignette about film composer **Henry Mancini** (see vignette), the memory of my mother taking Kevin and me to see Gene Autry's appearance came back to me—but I wasn't able to put an exact date on when Autry rode into town, more precisely, into the Auditorium of Michigan State College.



Later, as I was searching the Internet, I discovered that [The Concert Database](#) listed that Gene Autry had appeared at the MSU Auditorium (see middle photo below) on [January 25, 1954](#). While I've not been able to track down material promoting Autry's appearance at Michigan State, the two posters below illustrate the promotion of later Autry appearances in Helena, Montana (1955) and Waterloo, Iowa (1957).



Unfortunately, I don't have a clear memory of actually seeing Gene Autry and Champion or Pat Buttram, Autry's longtime sidekick, who may also have appeared that day. However, many years later, watching Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, I recall guest Pat Buttram talking about Autry's success as a businessman, quipping: "Gene Autry used to ride into the sunset; now he owns it."



Gene Autry and Pat Buttram

Valerie Anne Bertinelli (4/23/60 - present)



There's going to be stress in life, but it's your choice whether to let it affect you or not.



Valerie Bertinelli is an American actress best known for her work in made-for-television movies and television series, including *One Day at a Time* (1975-84), *Touched by an Angel* (2001-2003), and *Hot in Cleveland* (2010-2015).

Flight Log Memories – Over the years, **Valerie Bertinelli** has starred in a number of made-for-TV films, notably, for the purposes of this vignette, in *Shattered Vows* (1984). Bertinelli plays the role of real-life Mary Gilligan, a young woman called to be nun. While Mary tries to honor her vows as a nun, she falls in love with a handsome priest (actor David Morse). Ultimately, with a desire to marry and raise a family, Mary leaves her order before taking her final vows. In real life, Mary Gilligan Wong later became a clinical psychologist and her autobiography—*Nun: A Memoir*—was the basis for the film *Shattered Vows* which first aired on NBC TV on October 29, 1984. On that evening, I sat down in my father's home in Reston, Virginia to watch *Shattered Vows*.



“At Sixteen She Became A Nun, Now She Must Face The World”

Just a year or so before, my parents had moved from New York City to Reston, Virginia and, in late October 1984, I had moved my family (wife Sonia and son Shannon) from Florence, Alabama to Reston, Virginia, temporarily moving in with my father for several months before selling our house in Alabama and purchasing a townhouse in Reston in early 1985. During 1983, while my parents still lived in New York City, I visited them in their NYC apartment – and one afternoon went out to visit the city's record stores.

Suddenly, as I walked down the street, I noticed a camera crew filming. I asked someone what was going on and was told that the crew was filming a movie starring Valerie Bertinelli. In fact, the scene being shot was the one where Bertinelli's character, Sister Mary, has arrived in New York City and is walking down the street. I quickly spotted Bertinelli dressed as Sister Mary but whom I had known from her role in TV's *One Day at a Time*.

Just as suddenly I realized that this was my chance to break into Hollywood if I could get myself into the scene being shot. I saw that the scene was going to be reshot, so I walked quickly down the street to a point just past where Bertinelli was to start walking up the street. When the shoot began and Bertinelli started to walk up the street, I trailed along, possibly even walking past her when she stopped and turned toward the camera. I tried to "act" as nonchalantly as possible, as if I was totally oblivious that the crew might also be filming me in a "scene" with Valerie Bertinelli.

When the cameras stopped rolling and I could see that Bertinelli was being sent back to the starting point for this scene, I knew they were going to reshoot the scene, so I hustled down the street to my "mark" and, when the command "Action!" was given by the director and Bertinelli again started to walk down the street, I followed suit. At that point, I think the director declared the scene a wrap and the crew began to pack up. When I got back to my parent's apartment, I told them that I might be appearing in a film with Valerie Bertinelli, though I suspect my parents didn't know who Bertinelli was. In any case, during the coming months, I kept my eye out for news as to when this film would screen either in a theater or on TV. Then, in late October 1984, [NBC TV](#), the network on which *Shattered Vows* would be shown, published a promotional advertisement in *TV Guide* that the film would be telecast October 29.



I was at the ready the evening of October 29, 1984, to catch my Hollywood debut in *Shattered Vows*, even if only as an uncredited extra. Soon the film reached the scene where Mary is walking in the street. Now I might possibly have been in the scene as described above but perhaps I blinked and missed that moment – and, as my father did not have a videocassette recorder, I wasn't able to tape and replay the movie to see if I was in that street scene or if my "scene" had been cut, left on the editing room floor.

While *Shattered Vows* was released commercially on VHS tape, by 2014 this tape had become a hard-to-find collector's item and expensive. For example, one amazon.com seller recently was asking \$129.99 for a used copy of *Shattered Vows* film on VHS. However, I discovered on another site a vendor offering a DVD-R of the film at a more affordable price and ordered it to so that I could have a second chance to view the film in the hope that, when I had first seen it the evening of October 29, 1984, I had blinked and missed seeing my "co-starring" moment with Valerie Bertinelli.

Screening the film on my computer and starting at 39:04, I carefully viewed each frame showing Sister Mary as she walked down the street in New York City. While I can't say for sure but, in the below screen capture, the guy walking to the left in the background, wearing sunglasses and turning his head left toward Mary, looks suspiciously like me (though I doubt that I went out looking for records donned in a tan sport coat).



Who Might Be the Dude in the Tan Sport Coat and Sunglasses?

Willard Herman Scott, Jr. (3/7/34 – present)



*I got more mail than anybody on the history of *The Today Show*, but half of it was to get me off the air.*



Willard Scott is an American actor, author, media personality, clown, and comedian, best known for his work as the weatherman on television's *The Today Show* (1980-1996 and occasionally since) and as the creator and original portrayer of [McDonald's Ronald McDonald](#) (see vignette). He even appeared on *The Today Show* in 2014 to extend Happy Birthday wishes to **Robert E. Simon** (see vignette) who was the founding father of Reston where Sonia and I have lived since late 1984.

Flight Log Memories: While an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) assigned to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, I frequently flew between Washington, DC and countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, catching my connecting flight at the Miami International Airport. On one trip, as I settled into my preferred bulkhead aisle seat (7D) for my flight back to Washington, DC, I heard some buzz around me and asked another passenger what the others were talking about. He told me that **Willard Scott** was seated in First Class. As I was seated in the first row of Economy Class, I was able to sneak a peek into First Class, where I saw Scott casually dressed in a white T-shirt and Navy blazer. The passenger next to Willard was at a much better advantage to chat with him than when, back in 1955, I missed an opportunity to interview that earlier *Today Show* cast member, J. Fred Muggs. Of course, it is probably much easier – and infinitely more informative – to chat up a former Ronald McDonald than to make small talk with a chattering chimpanzee!



Willard Scott (as the original Ronald McDonald)

Leslie Townes Hope (5/29/03 – 7/27/03)



Bob Hope at American Cancer Society Benefits (1963)

If you watch a game, it's fun. If you play it, it's recreation. If you work at it, it's golf.



Bob Hope was an English-born American comedian, vaudevillian, actor, singer, dancer, and author who appeared on Broadway; in vaudeville, movies, and television; and on radio. Noted for numerous United Service Organizations (USO) shows to entertain American military personnel, Hope made 57 USO tours from 1941-91. His career, which spanned over 60 years, included appearing in over 70 films and shorts. He hosted the Academy Awards fourteen times, appeared in many stage productions and television roles, and authored fourteen books. In 1997, the U.S. Congress honored Hope as the “first and only honorary veteran of the U.S. armed forces.”

Flight Log Memories: The purest form of an accidental close encounter that I ever had occurred in the Houston airport in March of 1963, as my father was moving our family from Michigan to his new job in the Philippines with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). We were walking from the terminal out to the gate for our flight to Los Angeles, my father (see Francis Byrnes vignette) ahead, me several paces behind, and further back my mother, sister, and brother bringing up the rear.

I hadn't been paying any attention as other passengers walked past me toward the terminal when, suddenly, my father stopped to wait for me to catch up. When I did, he asked: "Did you recognize who that was?" Before "Let's go the videotape!" became sportscaster Warner Wolf's catchphrase years later, I turned around to look back at the passengers walking toward the terminal, my mind attempting to recall (replay) the faces that had passed by me – and then it hit me as I said to my father "That was **Bob Hope!**"

And, boy, for a kid of 18 (my age at the time), Bob Hope looked old even then but, more objectively, here's a video of Hope's appearance on *What's My Line?* on May 5, 1963, less than two months after I saw him in the Houston airport.



As luck (or bad luck) would have it, while I and my siblings Kevin and Kathryn had our seats back in coach class, my parents' had theirs in first class, affording them a front row opportunity to follow the quips of Hope also seated in that cabin on our flight to Los Angeles.

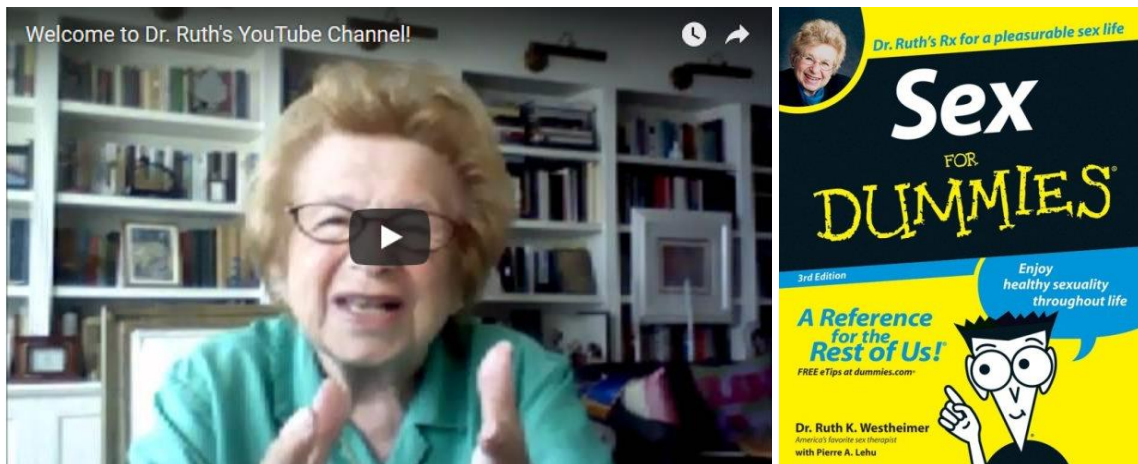
After landing, my father reported that Hope cracked jokes throughout the flight, the highlight being: "I hope the pilot can find Los Angeles in all that smog!"

Karola Ruth Siegel (6/4/28 – present)



I'm never embarrassed to say, "I don't know." &

"A lesson taught with humor is a lesson retained."



Ruth Westheimer is an American sex therapist, media personality, and author best known as **Dr. Ruth**. She was described by *The New York Times* as a “Sorbonne-trained psychologist who became a kind of cultural icon in the 1980s.... She ushered in the new age of freer, franker talk about sex on radio and television—and was endlessly parodied for her limitless enthusiasm and for having an accent only a psychologist could have” ([Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_Westheimer)).

Flight Log Memories: Another random close encounter occurred in 2004, as my wife Sonia and I waited in the Honolulu airport for our flight back to Los Angeles and onward to Washington, DC. Each of us had gone our separate way to check out the gift shops, when suddenly Sonia came up to me to report excitedly “It’s her!”

I asked: “Who?” Sonia replied “I think it’s Dr. Ruth,” pulling me over to the coffee shop to see as unobtrusively as possible if this was a simple case of mistaken identity or really Dr. Ruth. But there, indeed, she was, **Ruth Westheimer**, noted sex therapist and star of cable television’s *Dr. Ruth* program.

As excited as we were by this celebrity siting, we were on our best behavior and refrained from invading Dr. Ruth’s privacy to ask for either an autograph or marital advice!

Walter Mercado Salinas (3/9/1932 – 11/2/19)



Paz pero sobre todo, mucho, mucho amor.



Walter Mercado's Famous Sign Off

Born in Ponce, **Walter Mercado** pursued a career as a dancer, actor, and writer, but is best known for his appearances on television as an astrologer whose predictions shows aired for decades in Latin America and the United States. Mercado's debut as a TV entertainer came when an invited artist did not show up for a TV program; Mercado happened to be at the station and was asked by the show's producer to use up the artist's 15-minute allotment to make astrological predictions wearing some fancy robes. After that, Mercado was made a regular with the predictions.

In 1970, Mercado started his regular astrology segment in *El Show de las 12*. He enhanced his studies with formal study into astrology, tarot, and other occult sciences. Mercado hosted a weekly astrology television show at WKAQ-TV, Channel 2/Telemundo. After several years, when the network changed its programming, Mercado moved his show to WRIK-TV (channel 7 in Ponce) where he hosted it for many years. ... In the 1980s, his show was seen in several TV channels throughout Latin America and the United States. When [Tommy Muñiz bought WRIK-TV], Mercado stayed for two years, then moved his show to WKBW-TV, Channel 11/Tele Once...which later became WLII-TV/Univision. In addition to the TV programs, Mercado also wrote his predictions for newspapers, magazines, and web pages. He was a syndicated writer in the *Miami Herald*. He also appears on various radio segments. From 1994 to 2009, he appeared on *Primer Impacto*, which airs on the Univision network in the United States. ... From the mid-1990s until 2010, Mercado's show aired in the Univision network throughout the Americas, but on 8 January 2010, and after a fifteen-year relationship, Mercado announced that he and television network Univision have parted ways (Source).

As of [March 2015](#), Mercado was yet making astrological predictions published on various media outlets, including the Internet, and had launched [Passion Latinos](#), a dating site. On 11/2/19, Mercado died of kidney failure in Puerto Rico at the age of 87.

Flight Log Memories: During the mid to late 2000s Sonia and I made two trips to Puerto Rico, the first somewhat of a wash when we got caught in Hurricane Jeanne in mid-September 2004. When the U.S. Government decided to host Round 4 of the U.S. Andean Free Trade Agreement negotiation (September 15-17, 2004) in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, clearly no one took into account that this would be in the midst of the hurricane season in the Caribbean. Nevertheless Sonia and I decided that Puerto Rico would be a good destination to return to for a spring break vacation which we did a year or two later, this time, however, sticking close to San Juan.

That follow up visit to Puerto Rico fortunately proved to be hurricane-free, with the weather on its best behavior for lounging at the swimming pool, catching some rays, and drinking piña coladas at the swim-up bar. However, what I failed to do was to first check with **Walter Mercado** before booking our hotel reservation. Indeed, when we checked into our hotel, we quickly discovered that it fell far short of what we expected based on reading the review of the hotel, so we quickly checked out and located a Marriott that was newly constructed, situated on the beach, and had a beautiful swimming pool with a swim-up bar that would make drinking those piña coladas so tempting.

However, the irony was that, for many years, Sonia would get home from school where she had taught Spanish classes all day, turn on the TV to our local Univision channel, take a nap, and wake up to *Primer Impacto* which was on about the time I was getting home from work. Often during that show we would watch the horoscope segment during which Walter Mercado gave his astrological predictions. So I knew who Walter Mercado was and, as he signed off, I'd mimic his catch phrase: "*Paz pero sobre todo, mucho, mucho amor.*" So it was quite a surprise, on arriving in San Juan for this second visit and waiting for our suitcases to be delivered to the baggage claim area, that Sonia suddenly said to me, "Look, there's Walter Mercado!"

Sure enough, there was Walter Mercado also waiting for his luggage to arrive. Even in his street clothes Walter was a bit flamboyant in his attire. When Walter's bags arrived, a colleague pulled them off the carousel and followed Walter out of the terminal. While I had not first checked Walter's astrological predictions before making our original hotel reservation, now I failed to seize the opportunity in the baggage claim area to ask Walter for a quick reading that might have alerted us to avoid the hotel that within the next half hour or so we would find not up to our expectations. Nevertheless, our stay in San Juan during this second visit made for the tropical vacation that one dreams about and avoided being a repeat of the nightmare stay we experienced during our prior visit when Hurricane Jeanne hit the island in 2004.

Of course, there is yet debate, when it comes to predicting the weather, whether one should place one's bets on Walter Mercado's astrological predictions or closely follow *The Weather Channel*. Perhaps, coincidentally, I read yesterday that the Verizon FIOS cable service has dropped *The Weather Channel* from its channel lineup. However, a Google search revealed that [Walter Mercado](#), now in his 80s, is alive and well – and still making his astrological predictions through various media outlets.

Robert Brackett Elliott (3/26/23 – present) and Raymond Walter Goulding (3/20/22 – 3/24/90)



Ray Goulding and Bob Elliott hosting *The Name's the Same* (1955)

This is Ray Goulding, reminding you to write if you get work. And Bob Elliott, reminding you to hang by your thumbs. (Bob and Ray's sign off at the end of each show)



The career of **Bob and Ray**, otherwise known as **Ray Goulding** and **Bob Elliott**, spanned five decades, satirizing the medium in which they were performing, such as when they conducted radio or television interviews, with off-the-wall dialogue presented in a generally deadpan style as though it were a serious broadcast. They began in Boston as radio announcers (Elliott a disc jockey and Goulding a news reader) with their own separate programs on WHDH-AM. While on the air, each would visit the other and their informal banter was so appealing that WHDH invited them to work as a team to fill in when Boston Red Sox baseball broadcasts were rained out. The two, not yet known as Bob and Ray, improvised comedy routines all afternoon. Their brand of humor caught on and WHDH gave them their own weekday show in 1946. Over the ensuing years, billed as Bob and Ray, the two worked on radio and television stations with their own shows or doing guest appearances, often appearing on network television variety and late night shows. Their career included a Broadway show (*The Two and Only*) that made a national tour as well as appearance on stage in London, England. Today their routines live on, documented in many books and recordings yet easily available, including numerous videos of them on YouTube.com.

Flight Log Memories: In the early 1950s my father (**Francis Byrnes** – see vignette) introduced me to the radio broadcasts of **Bob and Ray**. At the time, he worked in agricultural journalism and extension at Ohio State University (as illustrated by the photo below).



Francis Byrnes (right) Discussing “New Ideas in Farming”

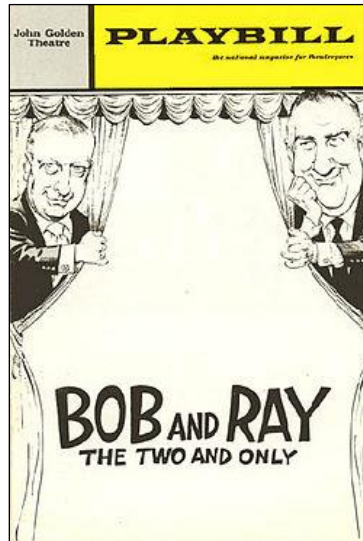
Ohio State Agricultural Experiment Station Colleague (circa early 1952)

With my father working to support dissemination of “new ideas in farming” deriving from Ohio State’s agricultural experiment station, surely one reason he took an interest in Bob and Ray was Dean Archer Armstead (Ray), the farm editor at Bob and Ray’s Lackawanna, New York agricultural experiment station. Armstead’s low, slurring delivery was unintelligible, punctuated by the sound of his spittle hitting a cuspidor. This unintelligibility required Armstead’s assistant, Robin I. Pickett (Bob), to translate Armstead’s “barely intelligible reports on everything from planting underground blooming dahlia bulbs in the snow to perfecting a hybrid peach with fuzz on the inside” (p. 70, *Bob and Ray: Keener Than Most Persons*, David Pollock). It was a bit of a coincidence that in 1952, on at least one occasion (as shown below), my father appeared on the *National Farm and Home Hour* on the same radio network (NBC) that also carried the *Inside Bob and Ray* program in the early 1950s.



Francis Byrnes (3rd from right) on NBC’s *National Farm and Home Hour* (August 2, 1952)

I probably first heard Bob and Ray performing on NBC radio's weekend *Monitor* and, years later, saw them on the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. For those of the younger generation, Bob Elliott was the father of film and television actor Chris Elliott who starred in the *Get a Life* TV series—but I digress. In April 1971 Sonia and I lived in Miami and were working as VISTA Volunteers. One day I saw a Miami TV station report that Bob and Ray were bringing their hit Broadway show – *The Two and Only* – to the Coconut Grove Playhouse in the Miami community of Coconut Grove.



Broadway Opening Night, September 24, 1970

I now kick myself that I didn't go to see their show when they appeared at the Coconut Grove Playhouse. However, I saw a *Miami Herald* advertisement that Bob and Ray would appear at Miami's Jordan Marsh department store to promote *The Two and Only* LP issued by Columbia records. Taking time off from our work as VISTA Volunteers, Sonia and I went to Jordan Marsh, bought two copies of the LP (one for my father and one for me), and met Bob and Ray. As the two signed their names to the LPs, they babbled on in humorous banter just as if one were listening to them on one of their radio shows. These guys simply couldn't step out of one or more of their diverse characters.

Indeed, as recounted in the recent biography – *Bob and Ray: Keener Than Most Persons* (David Pollock) – this is just the way they were during their 40-year career working together. In this regard, Bob's son Chris recalled that for "most comedians...their alter ego is their comedian ego, or their comedian personality. And the other side is who they really are. I don't think that's the way it was with them at all. . . They really weren't pretending to be something they weren't" (p. 70). As Pollock described this:

Just as on radio, the boys projected barely heightened on-air personas. They were easy company. They did not pander to or force themselves on the audience, nor did they come across as professional nice guys, or traffic in show-biz schmaltz. They effectively distinguished themselves by appearing normal. That there was no definable on-air character of "Bob Elliott" or "Ray Goulding" merely reflected how they perceived themselves: sort of celebrity surrogates, *in* show business, but not *of* it. (p. 77).

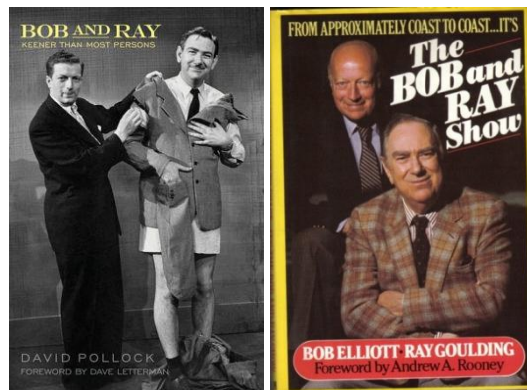
My favorite Bob and Ray routine, The Komodo Dragon, has Bob Elliott as a Komodo dragon expert and Ray Goulding as a dense reporter whose questions ask for information that Bob has just provided in his answer to the previous question.



Bob and Ray – The Komodo Dragon

In another favorite, Bob is the spokesperson for the Slow Talkers of America (STOA) (see introductory video above) whose lengthy pauses between words cause the increasingly frustrated interviewer Ray to go ahead and answer his own question.

Recently, one of my best friends (David Bathrick – see vignette) gifted me the *Bob and Ray* biography to help me laugh my way through my recovery from open-heart surgery (see vignette on **Paul Massimiano**).



Reading *Bob and Ray* sparked my curiosity to see if I could see (or listen to) some classic Bob and Ray routines on YouTube.com. Around the same time, my visiting brother-in-law (Libardo) and his wife Nena gifted me with an Apple TV device that made it possible for me to watch YouTube.com on my living room's non-smart TV. Reviewing Bob and Ray routines on YouTube, I discovered their “Four-Leaf Clover Farmer” bit they had done one Friday the 13th on the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson.



Bob & Ray – The Four Leaf Clover

The following is a print version of this routine published in *From Approximately Coast to Coast...It's The Bob & Ray Show* (Penguin Books, 1985).

Bob (as interviewer Wally Ballou): We came across a gentleman in Henderson, Vermont, recently. His name is Nelson Malamon, and his story struck us so much that we invited him to tell it himself.

Ray (as Malamon): And I want to thank you and the generous Bob and Ray organization for underwriting my trip, too. It's a wonderful experience.

Bob (Ballou): You deserve it...particularly with the run of bad luck you've had. Tell everyone what it is you do, Nelson.

Ray (Malamon): Well, I own a four-leaf clover farm back in Henderson. I developed a breed of hybrid four-leave clovers some years ago.

Ballou: And you found a market for them?

Malamon: That's right. I sell them to novelty makers who put them into little plastic cases as good luck tokens ...

Ballou: I've seen those. I used to get one of those from my insurance man every year.

Malamon: Right. Anyway, I thought this was going to be a banner year for my business until last June.

Ballou: That's when your troubles started.

Malamon: It was Friday the thirteenth—that's the funny part—and my assistant, Neil, was taking my entire first crop by truck to Bellows Falls. From there it goes to my biggest customer in New York.

Ballou: What happened?

Malamon: The truck went over a cliff and we lost the entire crop. Neil was unscathed, however.

Ballou: He was lucky, anyway.

Malamon: My second crop came out rather badly. It takes about six weeks for a crop to be ready for harvest.

Ballou: I was going to ask you that.

Malamon: I couldn't tend it properly because I was laid up . . . I got hit in the head with a horseshoe that was hanging over the door of my greenhouse.

Ballou: Yes, I can still see the lump there.

Malamon: No, That's the way it always was!

Ballou: Well, go ahead.

Malamon: Besides me being laid up, the crop-dusting plane crashed, so a lot of the clovers ended up with leaves eaten away—and there's nothing more worthless than a four-leaf clover with only two or three leaves!

Ballou: I agree. Looks like this whole year past will have to be written off as a disaster.

Malamon: You know the rest. The day you visited me back in Henderson was the day the telephone pole fell on my greenhouse—destroying the entire third crop.

Ballou: And that bit of misfortune involved your neighbor, if I remember correctly.

Malamon: Yes. He raises hares . . . for rabbits' feet. Well, he had his truck laden with rabbits' feet and was headed for Bellows Falls . . . when he swerved to avoid hitting a black cat . . .

Ballou: . . . and hit the pole—knocking it into the greenhouse.

Malamon: Hardly any wonder you thought my story worthy of telling on Friday the thirteenth!

Ballou: Right, and you certainly have had a tough time this year.

Malamon: Well things are looking up, though. I recently met a glass blower and we're going into business. He's made up some beautiful crystal glass four-leave clovers that'll be surefire sellers. Would you like to see them?

Ballou: Sure would.

Malamon: I'll get them.

Ballou: And so I guess you'd say there's a silver lining behind every dark cloud. Mr. Malamon's story of incredible bad luck apparently has a happy ending after all . . .

(Loud crash of glass backstage)

Ballou: On second thought . . .

Another classic Bob and Ray routine has Bob (as Wally Ballou) interviewing Ray as a cranberry grower who has little to no idea about what to do with the cranberries or what the market for cranberries might be.



Actually there is as much truth as humor in this cranberry example as is well documented in a [video](#) about cocoa farmers in the Ivory Coast who have no idea about how the cocoa beans they grow are used.



First Taste of Chocolate in the Ivory Coast

USAID colleagues who watched this video recalled experiences in introducing new crops in the developing world:

“I had the same experience when I was a [Peace Corps Volunteer] in Cameroon - I gave out packets of cauliflower seeds... and no one knew what to do with them afterwards.” (Sylvia Cabus, July 30, 2014 email)

“I was on an FAO project in Namibia where seeds were given to project members. One of the crops was watermelon. When they grew, then rotted, we asked why they didn’t harvest them - they replied they had never seen them before and didn’t know when to harvest.” (Melissa Fraser, July 30, 2014 email)

The common denominator with all these crops – whether cacao, cauliflower, or watermelon – grown by developing country farmers is that if the grower doesn’t capture more of the income associated with the value-added processing of the commodity he or she grows, there is little chance that growing that crop is going to make much of a difference in helping to lift the grower out of poverty. Interestingly, the reporters who produced the video of the Ivory Coast cocoa farmers went to the streets of Netherlands (see [video](#)) and asked people what they thought the cocoa fruit is; not surprisingly, at best only a few had a clue from where their beloved chocolate comes.



Many years ago the same lesson hit home regarding how disconnected our urban culture has become from our once rural roots in agriculture. One day, trying to make a point with my teenage son, I asked him with a great deal of frustration: “Shannon, where do you think the milk we drink comes from?” His reply: “Safeway.”

Nedenia Marjorie Hutton (12/9/25 – 5/22/17)



Of course I'm jealous when I see him [Cliff Robertson] kissing beautiful women. As a professional, of course, I know it's all part of the business. But the woman in me does get jealous.



Nedenia Marjorie Hutton was the only child of two of the richest people in the U.S. – stockbroker E. F. Hutton and cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post who at the time was the richest woman in America. She also was first cousin to the “poor little rich girl” Barbara Hutton, the Woolworth heiress. Nedenia’s father hated that she became an actor. To spite him, Nedenia asked her father whom he hated most. When he named Charlie Merrill (the founder of Merrill-Lynch), to spite her father she took the stage name **Dina Merrill**. Ms. Merrill has been married three times, the second time to actor Cliff Robertson. During her Hollywood career, from the mid-1950s to late 2009s, Dina appeared in numerous TV series and over 100 films including *Desk Set*, *Operation Petticoat*, *The Sundowners*, *Butterfield 8*, and *The Player*. She has been honored by the Guild Hall Academy of the Arts with a [Lifetime Achievement Award](#). Sadly, at the age of 93, Merrill died on May 22, 2017.

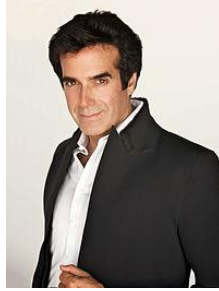


Flight Log Memories: For a number of years in Florence, Alabama, my wife Sonia worked in our local mall at the Parisian department store, selling Estée Lauder cosmetics, and one year she was recognized as Estée Lauder's top cosmetics seller in Alabama, an award that included a trip to New York City to meet Estee Lauder. Years later Sonia and I were shopping at the Tysons Corner Mall in Northern Virginia. We were in Hecht's (now Macy's) cosmetics department and Sonia was checking out the Estée Lauder line of cosmetics.

But what caught my eye was a very elegant woman greeting customers at the Coty counter. I quickly recognized her as **Dina Merrill** who created Coty's Amaranthe cosmetics line in 1969. Sonia and I chatted briefly with Ms. Merrill, finding her most gracious.

And surely the most elegant and classy close encounter in my lifetime, not counting when I originally met Sonia in Cali, Colombia in 1968.

David Seth Kotkin (9/16/56 – present)



David Seth Kotkin (aka David Copperfield)

What I've tried to do in my stage magic is to take a trick and give it an emotional hook.



David Copperfield (born David Seth Kotkin), tagged by *Forbes* magazine as the most commercially successful magician in history, is an American illusionist whose television specials have won 21 Emmy Awards out of a total of 38 nominations. Copperfield's ability to combine storytelling and illusion over a 30-year career earned him 11 Guinness World Records, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and a knighthood by the French government. The U.S. Library of Congress named him a Living Legend. To date he has sold 40 million tickets and grossed over \$4 billion, more than any other solo entertainer in history.

Forbes magazine reported that Copperfield earned \$55 million in 2003, making him the tenth highest paid celebrity in the world (earnings figures are pre-tax and before deductions for agents' and attorneys' fees, etc.). He earned \$57 million in 2004 and 2005, and \$30 million in 2009 in entertainment earnings, according to *Forbes*. Copperfield performs over 500 shows per year throughout the world ([Source](#)).

Over a span of nearly 25 years from 1977 to 2001, over 20 television specials showcased Copperfield's illusions. He has appeared in films – *Terror Train* (1980), *Oh My God* (2009), and *Burt Wonderstone* (2013) – and on TV shows: *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* (1997), *Scrubs* (2002), *America's Got Talent* (2010), *The Simpsons* (2011), *Wizards of Waverly Place* (2011), and *The Amazing Race 24* (2014). From 1983 to the present David Copperfield's illusions have been performed during ten worldwide tours.

Flight Log Memories: Since I was a kid I've loved doing card tricks and watching magicians perform albeit for many years the only opportunity for me to see a magician perform was on TV. Over the years I saw many magicians performing on TV, including Criss Angel, Harry Blackstone, Jr., David Blaine, Lance Burton, David Copperfield, Doug Henning, Penn & Teller, Siegfried and Roy, and Mark Wilson, among many others. One magician, Val Valentino, performed unbilled and disguised as the "Masked Magician" on the Fox TV *Breaking the Magician's Code: Magic's Biggest Secrets Finally Revealed* specials which exposed long-guarded secrets of the magician's trade.

So it was a special treat when opportunity arose one Saturday afternoon (March 21, 1998) for Sonia and I to attend a **David Copperfield** show at the George Mason University Patriot Center. This show was part of Copperfield's sixth world tour billed as "David Copperfield: Dreams and Nightmares" (a.k.a. Magic is Back) (1996–1998). As happened some years earlier at a Julio Iglesias (see vignette) concert, Sonia felt our nosebleed seats at the far end of the arena were too far from the stage on which Copperfield was to perform.

So she made her way down to an unoccupied seat closer to the stage, thus allowing her a much closer view of Copperfield's performance. Particularly memorable was his [ghost house](#) illusion especially its finale accompanied by Bernard Herrmann's theme from *North by Northwest* (1959). But the show's highlight was its finale when Copperfield performed his [flying illusion](#), made all the more memorable by the musical accompaniment of Lee Holdridge's beautiful title theme from his score for the film *East of Eden* (1981).

When my son Shannon was young, and now for my grandson Braden, I would "perform" simple magic at least until they each caught on to how the illusion was more trick than magic.

During one of my USAID assignments to Honduras, I was accompanied by an agricultural technician whose hobby was being a part-time magician. This piqued my curiosity and I asked him what was his stage name. He responded that he didn't have a stage name and just went by his own name.

I said: "But it's obvious what your stage name should be." Looking at me curiously: "And what would that be?" I replied: "Well, you should bill yourself as 'Hondurini,' the Honduran Houdini." I don't know if he ever took up this name.

I remember another field trip in Panama in the summer of 1986. The agronomist accompanying us happened to mention that one of the major banana companies was looking to come up with a brand name for its export-quality bananas. "Well," I said, "if I were the owner of the company, and since Panama hosts the Panama Canal and each boat is boarded by a pilot to guide the boat through the canal, I would market my company's export-quality banana as a 'Panama Pilot – A Top Flight Banana!'"

Well, it perhaps was better that I pursued a career as an applied sociologist working in development than as either a magician or as one of those Madison Avenue advertising *Mad Men*.

Timothy Lee Reid (12/19/44 – present)



Just having hope ain't going to cut it. You've got to have hope, passion and skills.



Tim Reid (Venus Flytrap from WKRP) on Bill O'Reilly

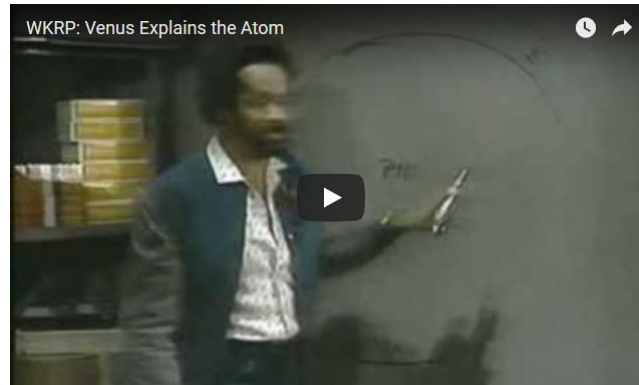
Tim Reid was born in Norfolk, Virginia and raised in the Crestwood area of Chesapeake, Virginia. He studied at Norfolk State College, earning a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1968. On graduating, he worked for three years with the Dupont Corporation. But that year also marked the start of Reid's career in entertainment, under untypical circumstances.

[Reid] and insurance salesman Tom Dreesen met at a Junior Chamber of Commerce meeting near Chicago. They were 'put together to promote an anti-drug program in the local schools' and, prompted by a comment from a child, decided to form a comedy team. The team, later billed as 'Tim and Tom', was the first interracial comedy duo. Years later, Reid and Dreesen co-wrote a book about those years called *Tim & Tom: An American Comedy in Black and White* ([Source](#)).



This is Venus Flytrap, here to brighten, tighten and enlighten your starlight hours.

Reid got his start in television in the short-lived *The Richard Pryor Show* but his TV career took off with his best known role as DJ Venus Flytrap on *WKRP in Cincinnati* (1978-82).



WKRP: Venus Explains the Atom

He starred as Lieutenant Marcel Proust “Downtown” Brown (episodes 43-127) on the series *Simon & Simon* (1983-87); as Ray Campbell on *Sister, Sister* (1994-99); and as William Barnett on *That ‘70s Show* (2004-2006). Reid also co-created, wrote, and starred in *Frank’s Place* as the professor who inherits a Louisiana restaurant. In 1988, Reid won two awards, one from Viewers for Quality Television Awards as “Best Actor in a Quality Comedy Series” in *Frank’s Place*, and for the same role an Image Award for “Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series.” In 2009, Reid appeared in the short-lived series *Roommates*. He also appeared in the TV-movie version of *Stephen King’s IT*, and in three first-season episodes of *Highlander: The Series*.

Reid made his directorial debut with *Once Upon a Time...When We Were Colored*. He also was the creator of the first music video produced by the Entertainment Industry Council in the fight against drugs that was supported by Nancy Reagan. This public service announcement (PSA) video, recorded in the Blue Room of the White House and at various Hollywood locations, included appearances by Whitney Houston, LaToya Jackson, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Casey Kasem, among others. Since December 4, 1982, Reid has been married to actress Daphne Maxwell; and since 1998, Reid’s operational base has been Petersburg, Virginia where he was the founder and is CEO of [New Millennium Studios](#).

Flight Log Memories: On February 16, 2012, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted a Black History Month Observance celebrating “Black Women in American History and culture” with the keynote speaker being **Tim Reid**, billed as a Hollywood fixture for more than 30 years but “whose work reaches across cultures and generations.” When I learned that Tim Reid, DJ Venus Flytrap, would be the event’s featured speaker, I made sure that no other meeting or tasker would get in the way of being there to hear Reid speak. Fortunately, I was not on travel (TDY) status that week and didn’t have a competing meeting that would have prevented me from getting out of my office at the U.S. Agency for International Development and over to USDA to catch Reid’s presentation.



USDA Staff Listening to Tim Reid (USDA Photo by Bob Nichols)

I found Reid's presentation to be the best "diversity event" I ever attended as a USDA employee. While doing the research for this vignette, I was hoping that Google would turn up a transcript of Reid's remarks or even possibly a video recording but to no avail. Reid was as moving at times as he was funny at others, especially reflecting on the history of the struggle of African Americans over the years for their freedom and dignity.

One of his reflections had the audience in almost uncontrolled laughter as he recalled that in the late 60s the Whites were in the White House and the Blacks were marching in the streets, while in 2012 the Whites (a reference to Tea Party marches at the time) were marching in the streets and the Blacks were in the White House. Of course, the way that he told this anecdote was much funnier than my recounting of it.

He also recalled the day that he was on the Mall to see the inauguration of Barack Obama as the United States' first Black American to become President. He reflected that, at one moment, he was looking at the other end of the Mall and remembering the day that Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and gave his now-famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Then, the next moment, he recalled that he had turned back to the Capitol to watch Obama being sworn in as President, and thought not only how far African Americans have come as a people but also how far America has come as a country.

Carlos Castañeda Ceballos (Juan Valdez)



Buenos días. Disfrute un buen café



Classic Juan Valdez Colombian Coffee Commercial

Since 1958 the [Colombian Coffee Growers Federation \(FEDECAFE\)](#) has made **Juan Valdez** an icon, now famous in promoting Colombian coffee in print advertisements, on television, and even appearing in the 2003 film *Bruce Almighty*. Juan Valdez, who in real life is a coffee grower, represents the Colombian coffee farmer and that Colombian coffee derives only from coffee beans grown in Colombia and not from coffee blended with beans from other countries. Juan typically appears with his mule Conchita, carrying sacks of harvested coffee beans. José F. Duval initially played the role of Juan Valdez from 1958 to 1969, at which point Carlos Sánchez assumed the role until he retired in 2006. FEDECAFE then selected **Carlos Castañeda**, a coffee grower from Andes, Antioquia, as the new face of [Juan Valdez](#).



Bruce Almighty: Colombian Coffee

Flight Log Memories: Having attended a performance of **Delirio** (see “Concert Encounters in the Realm of Latin American Musicians”) in Cali, Colombia in early 2015, it was a surprise in late January of 2016 to receive an Embassy of Colombia invitation to attend a Delirio performance at the Lincoln Theatre in Washington, DC on February 3. We immediately RSVP’d to obtain our tickets for the event.

DELIRIO
SALSA · CIRCO · ORQUESTA
HECHO EN CALI

FEBRUARY 3

On the occasion of H.E. President Juan Manuel Santos's official visit to Washington to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Plan Colombia and the enduring Colombia-U.S. partnership

Ambassador of Colombia Juan Carlos Pinzón invites you to attend the unique performance of Delirio, a salsa, circus and orchestra troupe from Cali, Colombia

WHEN : Wednesday, February 3, 2016
: Doors open at 5:30pm
: Performance starts at 6:30pm

WHERE : Lincoln Theatre
: 1215 U St. NW
: Washington DC 20009

Please click here to RSVP

As theater seating is limited, RSVPs will be taken on a first-come first-served basis.
If you have questions please email us to rsvp4@colombiaemb.org

CANCELLERÍA
Embassy of Colombia in the United States

PROCOLOMBIA
Colombian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency

CARACOL TELEVISION

ENBRIDGE
Life. Less Energy.

On arriving at Lincoln Theatre and passing through security to the lobby, it was even a bigger surprise to discover the event was co-hosted by FEDECAFE, with the invitees being greeted by **Juan Valdez** (in real life **Carlos Castañeda**). While Sonia wanted to proceed to select our seats, I urged her to come back to the lobby so we could meet Juan and get a photo of us with him. On returning we met a most gracious Juan (see photo below), briefly visiting with him and Santiago Echavarria Rojas, FEDECAFE’s Public Affairs Coordinator, who travels with Juan Valdez.

As thrilled as I was to finally have a close encounter with Juan Valdez, the irony is that I don’t drink coffee, the only exception being that, while I worked on the PIMUR project in Cali, Colombia in 1968-9, I occasionally drank a “tinto” in the morning (see **Kelly Harrison** vignette).



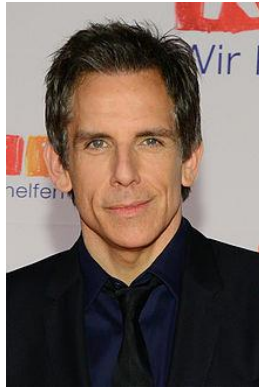
Carlos Castañeda (Juan Valdez), Sonia y Kerry at performance of Delirio at Lincoln Theatre, Washington, DC (February 3, 2016)

The Delirio presentation was also memorable because it afforded “close encounters” with two other Colombian celebrities, President Juan Manuel Santos who welcomed the guests and Paulina Vega Dieppa (Miss Universe 2014) who hosted the program.



Juan Manuel Santos and Paulina Vega Dieppa

Benjamin Edward Meara "Ben" Stiller (11/30/65 – present)



Ben Stiller

"If my parents were, like, plumbers, who knows what I would be doing?"



Top 10 Hilarious Ben Stiller Moments

Ben Stiller, an American actor, comedian, and filmmaker, is the son of veteran comedians and actors Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara. Ben began his acting career in a play, moving on to produce and host a 13-episode run of his own television show (*The Ben Stiller Show*). With experience acting in television, Ben began acting in films, his directorial debut being *Reality Bites*. During his film career, he has written, starred in, directed and/or produced more than 50 films, including *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, *Zoolander*, *The Cable Guy*, *There's Something About Mary*, the *Meet the Parents* trilogy, *DodgeBall*, *Tropic Thunder*, the *Madagascar* series in which he is the voice of Alex the Lion, and the *Night at the Museum* trilogy. He also has had multiple cameos in music videos, television shows, and films. Stiller's films have grossed more than \$2.6 billion in Canada and the United States, an average of \$79 million per film. During his career, Stiller has received multiple awards and honors, including an Emmy Award, multiple MTV Movie Awards and a Teen Choice Award.

Flight Log Memories: Going back nearly a half century to when my wife Sonia and I were married in 1969, she has wanted to visit Boston. Her pleas had become almost the "Boston bane" of my existence. My parents had taken me to visit Boston in 1965, the highlight of which, other than the usual tourist sightseeing, was going to see *Help!* (the Beatles movie). Now, 50+ years later, with the visit from Colombia of Sonia's brother Libardo and his wife Nena, the day arrived for the four of us to fly to Boston for a three-day visit! We flew from Washington, DC to Boston on Jet Blue, arriving mid-morning, renting a car, and driving to the Marriott Long Wharf Hotel, right on the edge of Boston's downtown financial district.

After checking into the hotel and getting our stuff up to our room, we agreed that our first stop would be driving over to Cambridge to visit Harvard University.” With Nena as navigator (using Google maps), we soon were in Cambridge looking for place to park, finding a spot just a block away from Massachusetts Ave., which street borders one side of the university. On walking up to Mass Ave., we noticed quite a bustle of activity along the sidewalk. When we asked an onlooker what was going on, she replied that a crew was filming a movie titled *Brad’s Status*, starring Ben Stiller. “Look,” she pointed out, “there he is!”

On seeing Stiller, Sonia and Nena walked toward the area where the crew was filming and approached him during a break in the filming, introducing herself as from Colombia – and then had a short chat with Ben and the film’s director, Mike White, while Nena took the photo below.



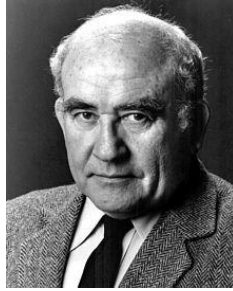
Sonia with Ben Stiller (middle) and Mike White (left)

Of course, I kicked myself that I didn’t tag along to meet Ben and get in the picture so, after a walking around the Harvard campus for a while, and lunch time approaching, I said to Nena “Let’s go see if there’s a break in the filming that would give me an opportunity chance to meet Ben and get a picture with him.” Mission accomplished!



Kerry with Ben Stiller

Yitzhak Edward Asner (11/15/29 – present)



"I was a newspaper editor in high school, and I truly thought of journalism as a career. I loved it."

"I loved journalism until the day my journalism teacher, a man I revered, came by my desk and said, 'Are you planning on going into journalism?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'I wouldn't.' I said, 'Well, why not?' He said, 'You can't make a living.'"



Ed Asner Remembers "Mary Tyler Moore"

Edward "Ed" Asner is an American actor, voice actor, and a former president of the Screen Actors Guild. He is best known for his role as Lou Grant during the 1970s and early 1980s, on both *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and its spin-off series *Lou Grant*, making him one of the few television actors to portray the same leading character in both a comedy and a drama. His career as an actor on TV began in the 1950s in television programs such as *Studio One in Hollywood* (1957), *Decoy* (1959), *Naked City* (1961), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1962), *Route 66* (1961-62), *The Untouchables* (1962-63), and *The Fugitive* (1965 & 1967), among [many other TV series and films](#) over the. He has also provided the narration for many documentaries. In film Asner is known for portraying Santa Claus in the film *Elf* (2003) and its animated remake *Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas* (2014). In 2009, he starred as the voice in the film *Up*.



"Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't."

Lou Grant, "One Producer Too Many" (S7, E6 of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*)

Flight Log Memories: On Saturday, October 22, I attended the Washington West Film Festival for an event titled (“In Conversation with Robert Duvall” – see next vignette). While waiting in line in the lobby for that event to start, I noticed that several people were having their picture taken with an elderly man down the lobby. I took a guess and asked the person standing next to me in line if that man was **Ed Asner**. He answered yes and offered to hold my place in line if I wanted to go over to meet Asner.

While I primarily knew Asner from his work as Lou Grant on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, it was a surprise to learn he was also attending the festival in connection with screenings of two of Asner’s most recent films – *Super Sex* and *Getting Ed Laid*. After the session screening those two films, there had been a Q&A session, with Asner responding to questions from the audience. Shortly after spotting Asner, he was headed toward the *Getting Ed Laid* poster.



I headed down to where folks were taking pictures of him in front of that poster and, when I had my chance, greeted him, shook his hand, and congratulated him on his work over the years. Then I told him that my favorite line of Lou Grant dialogue was the one he delivered on an episode of *The Tyler Moore Show* where he was following up with Mary on an earlier line of dialogue from that same episode to the effect: “Mary, what if I told you that Walter Cronkite told me that you are one of the best young news reporters in the country?” This temporarily lifts Mary’s spirits but in the episode’s last scene between Lou and Mary she continues to revel on Walter Cronkite’s high esteem for her news reporting. To bring Mary back down to earth, Grant then says, “Mary, what I said to you was ‘What...IF...I told you that Walter Cronkite had said you are one of the best young news reporters in the country?’” In effect, Lou clarified he had asked a hypothetical question, leaving open the possibility that Walter had never told this to Lou.

Asner laughed, saying he was worried that I was going to say that I had thought that the greatest line of dialogue he had delivered was “Spunk”—a line that he delivered in a scene with Mary in the very first episode (“Love Is All Around”) of *The Mary Tyler Show*.

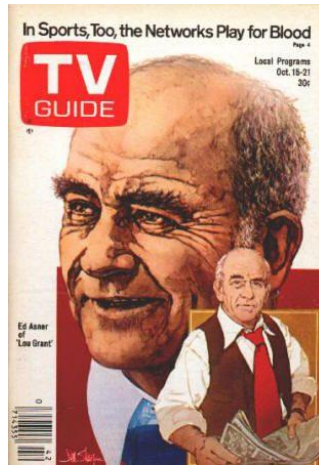


Mary Tyler Moore – “You’ve got spunk!” (at 7:35)

Lou Grant: *You know what, you've got spunk!*

Mary Richards: *Well, yes...*

*Lou Grant: I *hate* spunk!*



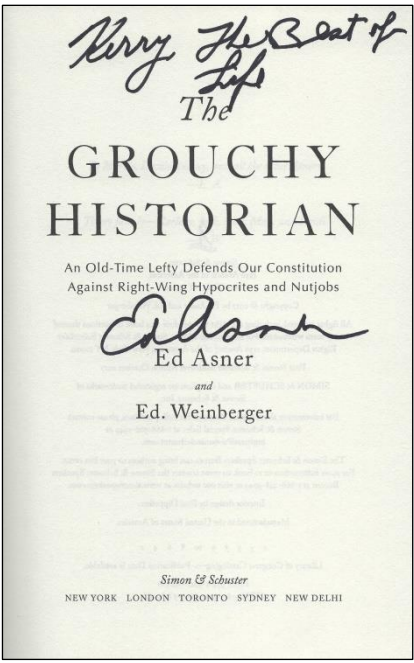
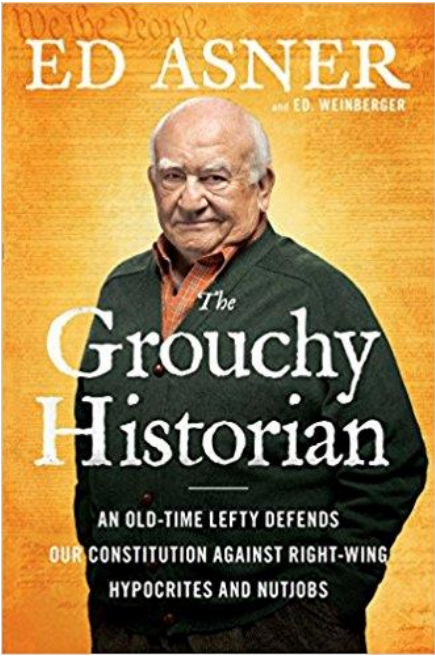
Ed Asner of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* & *Lou Grant*



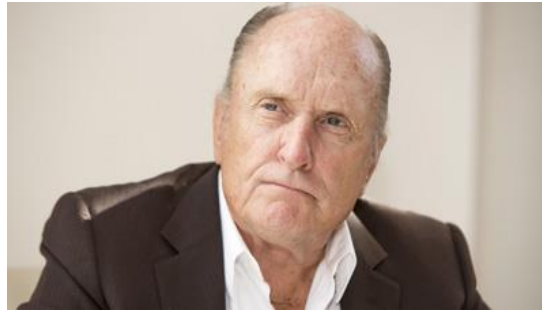
Ed Asner at 2016 WWFF (credit: Getty Images)

A year later I had an opportunity to meet Ed Asner and have him sign his book *The Grouchy Historian* when he returned to the Washington West Film Festival in October 2017 (see photos below).





Robert Selden Duvall (1/5/31 – present)



"I take a vitamin every day; it's called a steak."



Robert Duvall: "I love the smell of napalm in the morning."

Robert Duvall, an American actor and filmmaker, has starred in some of the most acclaimed and popular films and TV series of all time. He first appeared in theater during the late 1950s but in the early 1960s moved into TV and film roles, one of his earliest roles playing Boo Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), followed by roles in *The Twilight Zone* (1963), *The Outer Limits* (1964), *Bullitt* (1968), *True Grit* (1969). Many of Duvall's most famous roles came during the early 1970s, such as Major Frank Burns in the blockbuster comedy *MASH* (1970) and the lead role in *THX 1138* (1971). Other major roles during the 1970s were in *Joe Kidd* (1972), *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather Part II* (1974), *The Conversation* (1974), *Network* (1976), *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *The Great Santini* (1979).

Over the ensuing decades, Duvall continued acting in both film and television, including *Tender Mercies* (1983), *The Natural* (1984), *Colors* (1988), the TV mini-series *Lonesome Dove* (1989), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), *Rambling Rose* (1991), *Stalin* (1992), *Falling Down* (1993), *Wrestling Ernest Hemingway* (1993), *The Man Who Captured Eichmann* (1996), *A Family Thing* (1996), *The Apostle* (1997), *A Civil Action* (1998), *Assassination Tango* (2002), *Gods and Generals* (2003), *Secondhand Lions* (2003), *Broken Trail* (2006), *Get Low* (2010), *Jack Reacher* (2012), *The Judge* (2014), and *Wild Horses* (2015).

Duvall has been nominated for an Academy Award seven times, winning for his performance in *Tender Mercies*, and seven Golden Globes (winning four). He has multiple BAFTA, Screen Actors Guild, and Emmy nominations and in each one win. In 2005 Duvall received the National Medal of Arts.

Flight Log Memories: Over the many years I've seen films at the theater or on TV, one of my favorite actors has been **Robert Duvall**. Living in Fairfax County (Reston, VA), I've often thought it would be interesting to meet Duvall who now lives "just down the road" two counties to the west of Fairfax County on a 360-acre farm in Fauquier County. But, recently, news arrived that Duvall would appear at Reston's Bow Tie Cinema, "just up the street" two blocks from our condo apartment, during this year's Washington West Film Festival (WWFF) (October 19-25).

Promotional materials for the festival indicated that Duvall would appear Saturday, October 22 at 3 p.m. at the Bow Tie Cinema for an event titled “In Conversation with Robert Duvall”—during which Duvall would share on-screen scenes from his career and answer audience questions. I went online and immediately purchased a ticket.

That Saturday afternoon I went early to the theater to get a good seat, in fact, so early that I was the first to sit down before one of the WWFF assistants asked me to wait in the lobby until her colleagues had finished making preparations (e.g., testing the video and sound systems). I sat near the entrance but when a line of other attendees started to form, I got in line. Just a bit later I noticed that several people were having their picture taken with an elderly man down the lobby. I took a guess and asked the man standing next to me if that man was **Ed Asner**, best known for his role as Lou Grant on *The Mary Tyler Moore* television program. He answered yes and then offered to hold my place in line if I wanted to meet Asner. For more on my close encounter with Ed Asner, see his vignette.

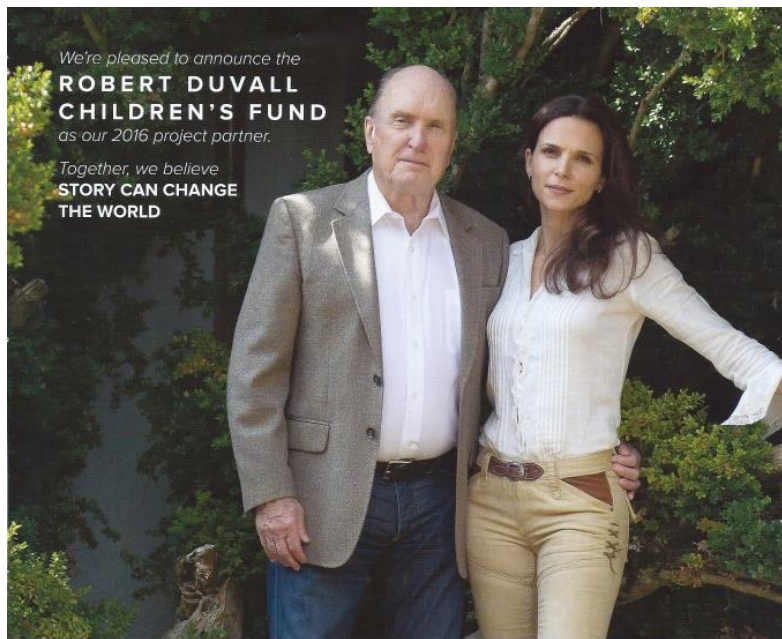
Just after I returned to my place in line, the ushers allowed us to enter the theater. I was able to return to my earlier selected seat. Soon the event host, **Brad Russell** (see photo further below) introduced the session and its moderator, **Chris King**, an award-winning filmmaker, TV writer/producer/editor, and a screenwriter. King is the director of *Birthday* (2015), a 50+ award-winning and Oscar-qualified short film. King then invited Robert Duvall to come on stage—actually, he had been standing along with his wife (Luciana Pedraza) just a few feet from where I was sitting. King proceeded to give some background info on Duvall’s career and then launched into showing clips from the following eight films that Duvall had selected: *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962), *The Godfather* (1972), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Tender Mercies* (1983), *Lonesome Dove* (1989), *Stalin* (1992), *The Apostle* (1997), and *The Judge* (2014). Following each clip, Duvall answered questions from the audience.

Highlights for me included Duvall saying the following about *To Kill A Mockingbird* (in which he had played the role of Boo Radley): “I had one line—and they cut it!” He also recalled having once been approached by a lady who said to him: “I knew you when you were nobody.” Duvall’s response: “Ma’am, I’ve always been a somebody.” With my cell phone, I was able to get the following pictures albeit they’re a bit blurry:



Chris King and Robert Duvall

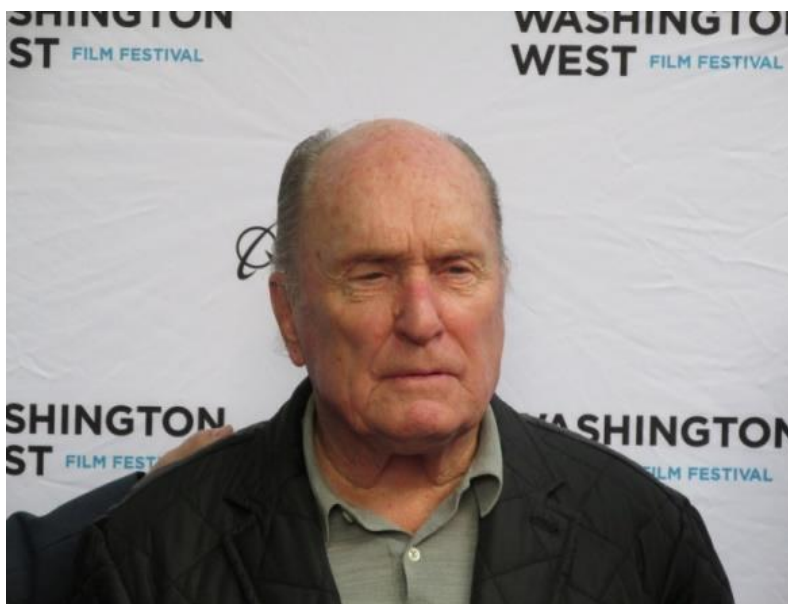
As the session was ending, I went out to the lobby in hopes of having a chance to meet and shake hands with Duvall. As I waited I saw that Duvall’s wife, Luciana, was already waiting for him, so I went up to her and introduced myself in Spanish, shaking her hand, and indicating my regret that my Colombian wife had not been able to attend the event. For the 2016 WWFF, the festival had partnered with the Robert Duvall Children’s Fund as the festival’s partner charity.



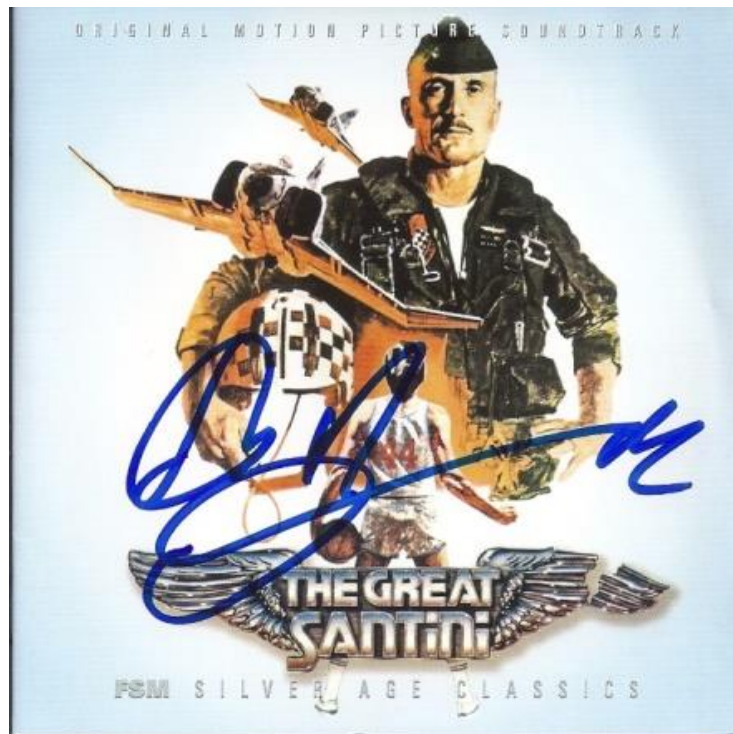
Robert Duvall and Luciana Pedraza

Just then Duvall was exiting the theater but I wasn't able to shake his hand as he was already surrounded by others, so I went downstairs in hopes that I could catch him there and have him autograph the CD insert I had brought with me of the soundtrack CD (with score by Elmer Bernstein – see vignette) of his score for *The Great Santini* (1979).

When Duvall reached the bottom of the escalator where I was waiting, the WWFF staff asked him to wait a bit before going out on the red carpet for a red carpet photo shoot. Here was my chance—I went up to Duvall and asked if he could autograph the CD. He reached for it when I realized that I couldn't find my pen and, just then, he was pulled away to go outside where, in the midst of the push and shove of the paparazzi, I was able to take the photo below.



After photos were taken, Duvall came over to sign the programs and photos of festival fans but only one fan asked him to autograph the front insert of *The Great Santini* soundtrack CD.



That evening at the WWFF party, held at the Bow Tie Cinema rather than the Reston Pavillion due to high winds, Sonia and I approached an attractive young lady that I had seen that afternoon in the front seat of the car that had whisked Robert and Lucia away after the red carpet photos and autographs. We learned that her name is **Daisy Saulls** and that she is the Executive Director of the [Robert Duvall Children's Fund](#).



Daisy Saulls and Brad Russell

We also met and visited with **Brad Russell**, the founder and president of the Washington West Film Festival. I shared with him some ideas I had for following year's program, and he asked for my thoughts on ways WWFF could improve the festival's marketing to reach a larger audience and increase festival attendance in future years.

The Not So Famous

Luis Eduardo Aybar Báez (8/5/47 – present)



I just received your e-mail and I was surprised how you could remember all that information after one dinner party so long ago in another century.

Luis Eduardo Aybar was born in Paris, France, where at the time his father was an engineer who, after graduating from a university in the Dominican Republic, went to France for two years of postgraduate studies at La Sorbonne. Luis' mother also was Dominican and her grandfather, Buenaventura Báez, was president of the Dominican Republic for five nonconsecutive terms. Another reason Luis' father went to France was that his father, Dr. Luis Eduardo Aybar, also had studied in France at La Sorbonne and had married a French woman. Luis' family returned to the Dominican Republic when he was about a year old.

From 1965-73, Luis lived in Quito, Ecuador, where he studied medicine, graduating July 26, 1973, from the Universidad Central del Ecuador. Luis, in a recent email, explained why he went to Ecuador.

The reason I went to Ecuador is the following: I HAD NO CHOICE. As you know we had [the dictator] Trujillo for 31 years [but] he was killed in 1961. After the assassination of Trujillo, the economy and political situation of the [Dominican Republic] was a mess. My father got a job in Puerto Rico, [where] I did my first year of high school in San Juan at the Colegio Gerardo Selles Sola that was close to our home. Then my father got a job with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and he went Washington, DC. I was in that city during the Cuban missile crisis in my father apartment and we were getting ready for a nuclear war. After that my father was transferred to Caracas, Venezuela, where [my parents] lived for three years before going to Ecuador. I decided to finish my high school in Santo Domingo and went to Caracas during school vacations.

In 1965 we had our civil war in April and everything was a mess again. The Americans came to help and the U.S. Marines established a free zone but they stopped a block from my grandmother's home, [leaving us] in the middle of the war zone. You could hear the bullets flying through the trees and the leaves falling all over the place. I was alone with my grandmother helping her and suddenly the glass window broke and a bullet fell at my grandmother's feet—the bullet had come from afar without velocity but I considered that a real miracle. Due the civil war I had no choice but to go to Ecuador where my parents were living after Caracas. They stayed in Quito for four years and then the IDB transferred my father to Managua, Nicaragua. I went back to Ecuador alone to finish medical school" (Luis Eduardo Aybar, personal communication).



In a recent personal communication, Luis shared that his medical title is only valid in Ecuador. Even though his medical degree was certified in the Consulate of the Dominican Republic in Ecuador, Luis never revalidated it in the Dominican Republic. “I am no MD and I never was interested in being one” (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

In the early 1970s, on returning to the Dominican Republic, Luis began working in the tourism industry with a company called Vimenca, which is still very active in the Dominican Republic.

With Vimenca I was in charge in [organizing] the tours for incoming tourists including cruise ship passengers. I remember...a night tour I made for a Costa Line cruise ship. At that time in 1974 the nightlife in the country was extremely limited. The tour included three main stops: the Water and Lights Theater, a second show, and a Flamenco Spanish Dance. Nothing worked that night. The operators of the Water and Lights Theater were a no show. The Flamenco dancers were gone because it was their day off and, to make the story short, I still have nightmares about that night (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

Luis also was a representative for the American Express Card. In 1973 the credit card business was just beginning in Santo Domingo and “American Express was giving me an additional fee of US \$25 for each new establishment” opening an account with American Express.

During this period, Luis became very interested in pursuing a career in hotel management and in 1976 went to Puerto Rico to take a two-year program in hotel management at a branch of Cornell University. However, Luis did not finish this program because, in 1977, he was offered a job in Paris, the employer telling him that “they needed someone in Paris urgently.” The company, called Guillo Et Bona, was a cosmetics and perfume company representing over 100 cosmetics and perfume manufacturers, including such brands as Givenchy, Carven Paco Rabanne, Hermes, Dior, Jean Desprez, Azzaro, Pierre Cardin, among others. The company also represented such brands as Limoges underwear for men and ladies as well as Eminence (skin care) and Chantelle (lingerie). Luis also was the agent for Saint Louis Crystal, Haviland porcelain, and many other brands. Luis’ territorial responsibility was the whole Caribbean, including the three Guyanas in the northern part of South America.

I never finished the two-year program in Puerto Rico due to the pressure from the Paris office and after a year I was in Paris for a three-month training program. I was travelling like seven months a year and in Paris three months during the wintertime. The reason for that is that in the Caribbean the high season is from December 15 to April 15 and hotels and airlines are much more expensive, so during those months I was visiting factories and getting to know the products and the novelties. The problem of working with this type of company as a manufacturer's representative is that you are in trouble if you don't sell but you are in trouble if you sell too much. In 1976 the company Guillo Et Bona was losing Paco Rabanne and Hermes due [to] these fragrances becoming extremely popular. When a fragrance becomes very popular like the famous Paco Rabanne, they don't need a manufacturer's representative. The company can hire its own representative to travel just for the company's brand. All these pressures made me leave the hotel management school in Puerto Rico, which was a good short-term decision, but I regret the long-term effects of that decision because tourism became in a few years a very important economic factor for the Dominican Republic. In 1973 there was nothing. I remember a trip with Vimenca trying to find beach hotels for a German Travel Agency. These people wanted a hotel next to the beach and practically there was a nothing here, just [a] small beach hotel with not enough quality. Now the Dominican Republic has hundreds of quality beach hotels [though] I know of them only because of their advertising. That trip with those German travel agents was traumatic because even the roads were under construction at the time and the car got stuck in a river where they were repairing the bridge (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

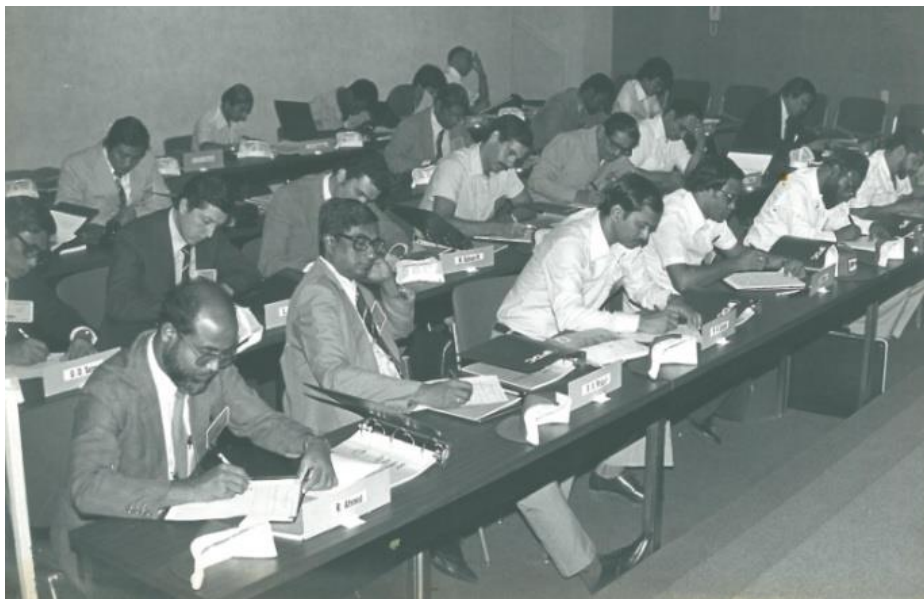
Luis was travelling all of the Caribbean and doing very well in the job with Guillo Et Bona but, after a car accident in St. Lucia, decided to leave this job in 1980, when another opportunity arose to work as a sales representative for Fertilizantes Químicos Dominicanos SA (FERQUIDO), one of two fertilizer companies operating in the Dominican Republic.

I took the FERQUIDO job for the export department because I [spoke] French. FERQUIDO had their own private plane, and the business trips were done by the pilot and me. I was seating in the co-pilot seat. We [traveled] to Haiti weekly selling fertilizer and the Haitians were paying in cash, sometimes in US bills of \$5 and \$10. I spent hours counting all that money. The stories I could tell about those trips, beginning with the landing in country airfields full of cows and animals. We had to wait until the cows cleared the airfield in order to land. We also had landing problems in several islands like Dominica and Grenada (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

In 1981, while working with FERQUIDO, Luis traveled to Muscle Shoals, Alabama to attend a Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program at the International Fertilizer Development Center.



Luis Eduardo Aybar (middle) at IFDC Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program (1981)



**Luis Eduardo Aybar (L: center & R: 4th from left in middle row) at
IFDC Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program (1981)**

Luis worked with FERQUIDO for several years but then Guillo Et Bona was

again looking for [Luis], sales were down, and the son Mr. Guillo, Patrick Guillo, came to Santo Domingo and offered me my job back. This time I went to the office of Guillo Et Bon in Panama. The son of Mr. Bona, Jean Jacques Bona, opened a branch in Panama. ... I was travelling to the Bahamas like three times a year, other important markets were Curacao and Aruba and, of course the Virgin Islands. I used to go to St. Thomas sometimes four times a year. For ten years I had the whole Caribbean including Bermuda and the French territory including the Cayenne and French Guyana. The end of my honeymoon was due to Noriega. After the US Marines invaded Panama, the office in Panama was closed and Jean Jacques Bona moved to Miami where they opened Essence Corporation that is the only branch still open (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

After twelve years with Guillo Et Bona-cum- Essence Corporation, Luis left the company and began working with Eurolux Fragrances, a Barbados-based company that markets mostly European goods (crystal, china, and perfume).

Flight Log Memories: The name of **Luis Eduardo Aybar** is hardly one that any reader of this vignette would recognize as a TV or film personality. I met Luis in 1981 while he was attending an International Fertilizer Development Center Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program (8/17-9/25) in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. This program hosted participants from all over the developing world, with Luis being from the Dominican Republic. At the time, as reported above, Luis was working as a sales representative with Fertilizantes Químicos Dominicanos SA (FERQUIDO).

During the course of the training program, Sonia and I were invited to dinner one Saturday evening at the home of IFDC colleague Jorge Polo and his wife Alicia, both of whom, like my wife, are from Colombia. Jorge also invited Luis. At one point during the evening, I asked Luis what led him to working as a sales representative for a fertilizer company. As Luis responded to my question, what he was telling me began to strain credulity, leaving me with a sense

that he really knew how to spin a tall tale. First of all, Luis told me that he was a medical doctor but decided to leave that profession because he really didn't have an interest in medicine. At some point, Luis drifted into a working as a sales representative for some famous European cosmetics and perfume company, with his sales territory being all the Caribbean. In my mind, I was thinking that it probably would not be too much of a stretch for a cosmetics sales representative in the Caribbean to shift from that line of work to being a fertilizer sales representative hawking FERQUIDO's products in the same region.

But then Luis added that he also had pursued working in the hotel industry, focused on attracting visitors to the Dominican Republic from the Caribbean and beyond. As Luis' story unfolded, he related that in the early 1970s Francis Ford Coppola had brought his film production company to the Dominican Republic to film some Cuba-related scenes for *The Godfather Part II* (1974). Now Luis definitely had caught my attention as he went on to tell me that, for one scene, there was a need for extras to fill out the number of persons surrounding the film's star Al Pacino – and Luis tells me that he was in that scene as an extra! The scene in question was a stripper or sex club where the club guests are, from a balcony, watching the “action” below.

In this scene, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) is standing in the background with other actors (e.g., Fredo) plus some extras, including Luis, in the foreground viewing the “action” below. At this point, about the best that I could muster was to say “Que interesante!” which only disguised my heightened incredulity about what I was hearing. Later that evening, Sonia and I thanked our hosts and drove back across the river from Muscle Shoals to our home in Florence. It wasn't too late, so I turned on the TV and was surprised to discover that *The Godfather: Part II* was on. More surprising, however, was at that moment the film was precisely at the scene where the actors (notably Fredo) are overlooking the “action” below. But the biggest surprise – and perhaps the most unexpected coincidence of my life – was seeing none other than Luis Eduardo Aybar in this same scene, just as Luis had described to me earlier that evening.



Luis Eduardo Aybar (front center) in *The Godfather Part II* [Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) (left)]

In a recent personal communication, Luis described how his involvement in *The Godfather: Part II* came about:

I was in Ecuador when I saw the original *Godfather* film. Just after my graduation in Ecuador in July 1973, I arrived in Santo Domingo after a trip to El Salvador and Mexico. [One of the reasons why I returned from Ecuador was that] I was interested in being a part of *The Godfather: Part II*. [But] just after my arrival I got sick with hepatitis and I was yellow with Ictericia [a liver infection]. The owner of the Gulf and Western Company was living in La Romana and [also owned] the Hotel Casa de Campo, the first deluxe beach resort in the Dominican Republic. This company was the owner of Paramount Pictures. I don't remember when they began filming [*The Godfather: Part II*] but...my brother Rafael [the father of my nephew with my same name] was the translator of Francis Ford Coppola and my cousin Felipe Perdomo was the translator of Dean Tavoularis [the film's production designer] and his brother Alex. They both came to my home to dinner. [When] I arrived from Mexico the crew of *The Godfather: Part II* was already in pre-production in Santo Domingo and all the local jobs were taken. [So at the time] I could not get any...full-time job so I began working as an extra [and] was in many scenes but [almost always in the distance]. Coppola (the film's director) wanted me to [take] the part of the doctor when they [attempt to] kill a mafia man in a local hospital. This scene was filmed at the Padre Billini hospital but the guy who watched the dailies told Coppola that I already had too much exposure in [a] previous scene—the one [where I'm holding a beer near] Al Pacino and I could not be in a stripper club and a hospital at the same time and [thus] I could not do that scene [in the hospital]. I practically worked as an extra during the three months they were filming here (Luis Eduardo Aybar Baez, personal communication).

Near completing this vignette, I woke up in the middle of the night with the lyrics of “Don't Cry for Me Argentina” from *Evita* going through my mind:

Have I said too much?

There's nothing more I can think of to say to you

But all you have to do

Is look at me to know

That every word is true.

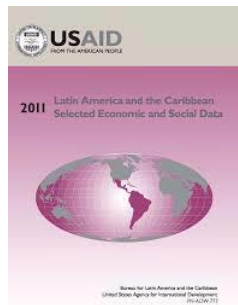
So, sure enough, despite my initial disbelief, “every word” that Luis told me at that dinner party back in 1981 was “true”—Luis, just as he claimed, had appeared in *The Godfather: Part II*, thus qualifying him, at least for this vignette, as a full-fledged film personality, if not quite yet having a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

David Elton Deuel Colin (7/6/70 – present)



I come back to Rome as often as possible. Despite all my time here, Rome continues to be a fascinating city that always has more to offer.

At the time I was writing this vignette, **David Colin** was working with DevTech, a consulting firm that was implementing the USAID-funded Economic Analysis and Data Services project. As Senior Economist, Colin specialized in Latin America and the Caribbean, international trade, and market analysis. Since 2003, he was the principal author of several editions of the annual publication *Latin America and the Caribbean: Selected Economic and Social Data* (aka the *LAC Data Book*). He previously worked as an economist at the Inter-American Development Bank and the U.S. International Trade Commission. His private sector experience includes working with an import-export firm and a consultancy on regulatory matters, including market analyses of the U.S. electricity market and the chemicals and concrete industries. Colin has contributed to scholarly papers on topics ranging from NAFTA to the Bulgarian economic transition. He holds a BA and an MA in Economics and speaks Spanish and fluent Italian. Colin lives in the Washington, DC area ([Source](#)).



The prior biography for David Colin, based on information provided on DevTech’s website, skips over a much more interesting part of Colin’s life, a story that began in Rome, Italy. Colin recalled:

My father, David T. Colin, had come to Rome in World War II, when he was with [the] American military, the legendary Office of Strategic Services run by ‘Wild Bill’ Donovan. After the war, my father returned to Rome, the city that he had fallen in love with, and purchased [an] apartment. During the late 1960’s, he was one of the founders of the American University of Rome (AUR), and, indeed, the apartment was the administrative office (and impromptu party space) for AUR over a number of years.

I was born and raised...in Rome. As a child, I acted in two horror films...in Italy, credited as David Colin Jr. The first was called ‘Beyond the Door’ [aka *Chi sei?*] (1974) and starred actress Juliet Mills. The second, ‘Beyond the Door II’ (1977), starred the “queen” of Italian horror movies, Daria Nicolodi, and was directed by Mario Bava, an Italian director with a cult following for his long line of horror films ([Source](#)).

Thus, Colin’s earliest professional work was not as an economist but rather as a film actor starting at the age of three in 1974 in the Ovidio G. Assonitis-directed *Beyond the Door* (aka *The Devil Within Her* and, in Italian, *Chi sei?*).

my dad...was one of those people who just knew everybody. He had contacts in the arts, including the film industry. So when he heard that a director was casting for a three-year-old blond, blue-eyed kid for a new feature film, he promptly grabbed me and we headed to an audition of about 200 kids. Perhaps I was the only three-year-old blond-haired, blue-eyed kid in Rome that day, because I got the part. ...The movie was shot at the famed [Cinecittà](#) studios in Rome and in San Francisco ([Source](#)).



Beyond the Door (Chi Sei?) - Colin is the blond boy at lower right ([Source](#))

However, David (personal communication) recalled that the film's director selected him because he had seen David playing in the schoolyard and was intrigued by his behavior, noticing him to be a quiet kid who had some interesting and idiosyncratic facial expressions. When David's father learned the director was casting a role for a three-year-old blond, blue-eyed kid, he promptly got David to audition with a screen test – and the director selected him for the role.

The film's plot centers on a woman (Juliet Mills) who becomes pregnant with a fetus from the devil. Colin played Mill's son Ken.

For the most part, the film was a fun game to me: I got to swear and be in a room that rocked and swayed like an amusement park ride (and it really did, care of at least two burly men, large wooden levers, and a gimbal), people played with me on the set, and the lovely Ms. Mills gave me two little toy boats for my fourth birthday (shooting ran long, which led to our celebrating my birthday at the set). The film was reportedly made for \$350,000 but garnered over \$15 million despite, um... mixed reviews (Roger Ebert gave it one star and called it trash). People often refer to "Beyond the Door" as a rip-off of "The Exorcist," citing a lawsuit by Warner Brothers to shut our movie down. But I don't think "Rosemary's Baby" gets enough credit as...inspiration ([Source](#)).



Beyond the Door set: Colin (on right) and film sister (actor Barbara Fiorini)

(© David Colin)



Beyond the Door (Chi Sei?) (1974) - Opening Titles



David Colin, Jr. in *Beyond the Door* (1973)

In 1977, at the age of six, Colin returned to the screen in Mario Bava's *Beyond the Door II* (*Shock*). The latter film was not a sequel to the former, since Colin was in a new role as Marco (son of Daria Nicolodi's character). After his father possesses Marco, Marco's mother and stepfather begin to see ghosts, ultimately going mad.



Because the first film was a hit, I was asked back for “*Beyond the Door II*,” also released as “*Shock*” [sometimes spelled *Schock* as in the poster above, courtesy of horrorpedia.com]. The two movies were unrelated: I was the only carry-over from the prior movie but played a completely different character. Fortunately, at 6, I didn’t really know the difference. But then again, this movie went through several title changes during production. The director was the Italian horror film legend [Mario Bava](#) [man with the cigarette on left of below photo], and it starred Italian “scream queen” [Daria Nicolodi](#) as my mother

and [John Steiner](#) as her new husband. [spoiler alert] By the end of the film, everyone is dead except for me, and I'm possessed by the spirit of my dead father ([Source](#)).



Colin (in bed on right) preparing for a scene in *Beyond the Door II* (© David Colin)

Almost all of the filming for this movie took place in a house in the country where, between takes, I could happily run around, dodging the snakes in the back yard. While the first film was often referred to as an *Exorist* rip-off, this film was original. But quality is in the eye of the beholder. I recall seeing one review [that the film] was a turkey (zero out of four stars) with the question “why, why, why did they make a second movie?” Apparently, Italian horror films with beautiful leading ladies made money, that’s why! ([Source](#))



***Beyond the Door II* (Colin’s scary 6-year old face) ([Source](#))**

“I played the annoying kid in Shock.... This film also was marketed under the title Beyond the Door II because of the commercial success of the first film. Except for my presence, the two films had nothing to do with each other--plot, characters, writers, etc.”



DVD Covers for *Beyond the Door* & *Beyond the Door II*

Were these first two films the end of David Colin's career as a film actor?

In my late teens, I was surprised to get a call for a third movie. I met with the producers but decided my acting days were over. It might have been for "[Beyond the Door III](#)" (a.k.a., "Amok Train" — great title!), but we never got that far in our discussions. That was a good decision, given my questionable acting talent. So I have not acted since. But my movie days were an incredibly fun time for me. I met some lovely people, got to be in the inside of Cinecittà studios...and just had an enjoyable time. My dad tucked my salary away, and it paid for college thanks to the power of compounding returns. All in all, a pretty great childhood occupation! ([Source](#))

In 1979, when he was nine years old, his parents split and David's mother brought him and his sister back to the U.S., enrolling him in fourth grade in a primary school in Bethesda, Maryland. When asked about how he got interested in economics, David replied that, while he was in high school, a friend told him how much he enjoyed taking some economics courses in college because it gave him a better idea of how the real world works. As soon as David was enrolled in college, he began taking some economics courses and declared economics as his major, earning a B.A. from Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts) and later a M.A. at American University (Washington, DC).

Today Colin maintains as a second home the [apartment](#) that his father bought near the Spanish Steps on Via della Mercede in Rome, Italy, and pursues a professional career as an economist working on USAID-funded projects.

Flight Log Memories: While working on the economic growth team in USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, I occasionally referred to the *LAC Data Book* (aka *Latin America and the Caribbean: Selected Economic and Social Data*) to check on this or that economic or social statistic. Until a few years ago, this book was prepared yearly under the USAID-funded Economic Analysis and Data Services project. In late 2003, the project brought on **David Colin** and the project director (Frank Martin) brought David over to meet with the LAC Bureau's chief economist (Charles Mohan) who invited me to accompany him to the meeting. The meeting was held near USAID in the upstairs cafeteria of the nearby Barnes & Noble bookstore. During the conversation, David shared a little about his background, including that he spoke Italian.

Subsequently, in later conversations with David, who at the time also had an office in the LAC Bureau as well as at DevTech, I told him about my interest in the famous Italian film composer Ennio Morricone (see vignette) and that I had collected all of Morricone's soundtrack albums on LP and on CD. While on the subject of Italian film music, David told me that, at an early age, he had been an actor in two Italian films – *Beyond the Door* and *Beyond the Door II*. I mentioned that I had seen *Beyond the Door* years before, while working with the International Fertilizer Development Center in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, probably on the HBO cable channel.

However, I didn't recall much about the film, especially the role he had played as Ken. David mentioned that he had a copy of the first film on VHS tape but, when I inquired about borrowing it to view the film again, he was reluctant to lend it to me, perhaps fearing my high esteem of him as an economist might be compromised if I started seeing him as a former child film actor who had appeared in a couple of Italian horror films. Occasionally, on seeing David, I would mention I was still interested in viewing *Beyond the Door* but didn't push the issue. Subsequently, in working with David who shared additional information for this vignette, he finally promised to loan to me the DVDs of these two films.

Some number of years later our economic growth team was tasked with generating a PowerPoint on very short notice—and we were not quite sure how we could pull the presentation together in time to meet the deadline. I recalled that we viewed David as a virtual member of our team (though he no longer had an office in the LAC Bureau) and suggested that we contact him to ask if he could help us in preparing the PowerPoint by pulling together, from the LAC database he managed, data we needed for the presentation. Within just a few days David had generated most of the PowerPoint slides needed for the presentation—and helped save the day for our team, including participating in the presentation.

So I certainly think of David first as a top-notch economist even though he started his professional career working as a child actor in Italian horror films—and his fluency in Italian also is greatly valued as, some time back, he translated for me the liner notes of the soundtrack albums of a number of Italian films that I had been using as reference material for another writing project that I hope to get back to soon. But what came to worry while I was still working with USAID was that the next time our team got tasked with pulling together a PowerPoint on short notice, that we would not have at the ready the latest *Latin America and the Caribbean: Selected Economic and Social Data* (aka The LAC Data Book), the last volume of which was published in 2011, after which the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean stopped funding the updating of the data base underlying the book.

Herman Zaks Lubin (June 1985 – present)



I don't think I have been "spotted" so to speak. I did run into the star of the show, Kyle Chandler, when I was visiting LA when I was 16. He recognized me and I recognized him, and we said hello.

In 2015 **Zaks Lubin** was working as a Foreign Service Officer and Economist with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), specializing in project monitoring and evaluation, economic growth diagnostics, benefit-cost analysis, and project management. During Zaks' younger years, growing up in the Chicago area, he got involved at an early age in acting. After attending acting school for a year or so the school "started sending me out for auditions." At 11 years old Lubin landed a role in the three-person cast of David Mamet's play *The Cryptogram*, getting the part over 25 other actors (under 14 years old) who auditioned for the part, and later appeared in several plays.

With Lubin's early start as an actor in theater, who would have guessed that he would eventually abandon acting? He recalls: "I hit puberty and there [were] not a lot of roles for actual teenagers, even though there are a lot of TV shows and movies about teenagers. I also realized that I wasn't really interested in the risky life of an actor, and I really wanted to dedicate myself to studying." Earning a B.A. in International Relations and Economics (Cornell University, 2007) and an MSc in International Political Economy (London School of Economics, 2008), Lubin decided to become a Foreign Service Officer under the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), initially working in Washington, DC, taking required training courses, and helping to manage the USAID task force staff responding to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. His next two posts were to the USAID Missions in El Salvador serving two years as Mission Economist, and Afghanistan serving one year as the Mission's Evaluation Officer, after which he returned to Washington, DC to work as a Program Analyst in the Agency's Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) Office, just 10 years after graduating from New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois. However, after four plus years working with USAID, Lubin decided to leave the agency and pursue an MBA at The Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania).

Flight Log Memories: While **Zaks Lubin** was working in Washington, DC as a new DLI recruit, he did a short rotation with the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Bureau, working on the Broad Based Economic Growth Team on which I worked at the time. His worked on pulling together a comprehensive spreadsheet of data on poverty in the LAC region, with a view to helping our team to better target where to invest our program on addressing economic growth and poverty reduction in the region.

Little did we know at the time, with Zaks keeping his nose to the grindstone developing that spreadsheet, that his professional career actually began not in developing spreadsheets but rather in memorizing, for purposes of this

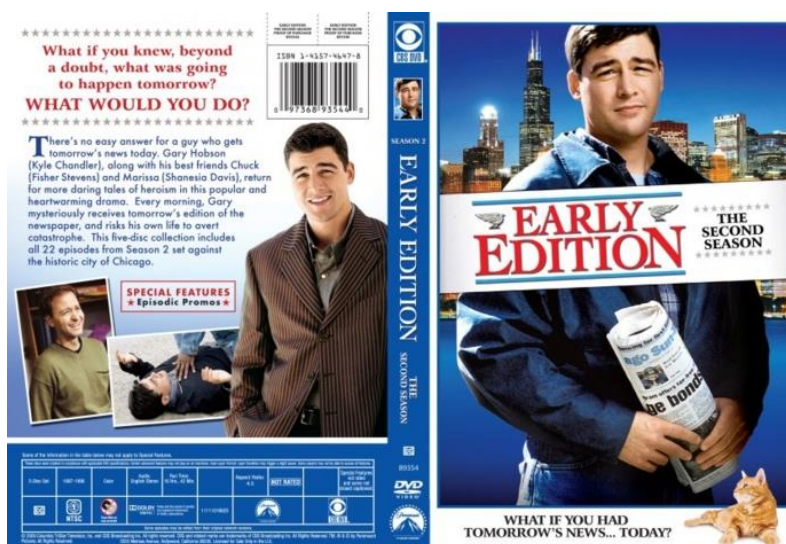
vignette, a “script sheet” – the lines he delivered over a decade earlier when he had a co-starring role in an episode of the CBS TV series *Early Edition*. Starring Kyle Chandler, *Early Edition* was a show about Gary Hobson who gets tomorrow’s newspaper today. Not knowing how or why he receives tomorrow’s newspaper a day early, when that “early edition” arrives on his doorstep, he has only twenty-four hours to save the day and set things right. This show, one of my favorites, ran for four seasons (90 episodes) between its debut on September 28, 1996 and its last episode on June 3, 2000.



What if you knew beyond a doubt what was going to happen tomorrow? What would you do? There's no easy answer for a guy who gets tomorrow's news today. (Early Edition Intro Narrative)

Of particular interest here is the fourth episode (“[Jenny Sloane](#)”) of *Early Edition*’s second season, with this episode airing on Saturday, October 18, 1997. Zaks Lubin co-stars as Kevin Miller. Zaks landed this role in a somewhat circuitous manner. While in middle school, Zaks recalled,

I attended an acting class...so that my sister, who was really interested in acting, could have someone to carpool with. I landed the role because a few years earlier the acting school I attended started sending me out for auditions. By the time I was *in Early Edition*, I had appeared in several plays and had an agent that would send me out for auditions (Zaks Lubin, personal communication).



In the episode in which Zaks co-stars, Gary stops the publicity plans of a woman (Jenny Sloane played by Robyn Lively) pretending to have cancer. With her story being covered by newspaper columnist (Howard Banner played by John Spencer), Gary tries to help Kevin Miller, a young boy played by Zaks, who is ill with leukemia but refuses treatment. Gary wants him to meet Jenny Sloane to inspire Kevin to receive the treatment he needs.



Kevin Miller (Zaks Lubin) in “Jenny Sloane” on *Early Edition*

Pretty proud of yourself, huh? Big hero, saved a dumb kid from suffocating in a bus.

The following plot synopsis of this episode highlight Zaks’ role as Kevin and illustrates the premise underlying *Early Edition*:

When Gary rescues an eleven year old boy from the luggage compartment of a bus, he is shocked when said boy, Kevin Miller, reacts with anger rather than gratitude. When Kevin’s mother arrives, Gary learns that Kevin has leukemia and was attempting to run away from another round of chemotherapy.

While Gary broods at the bar over Kevin’s situation, Cat turns on the television. A news report is airing on Jenny Sloane, a woman with terminal brain cancer whom Sun-Times columnist Howard Banner has made a celebrity. Gary decides then that he needs to get in contact with Jenny Sloane and ask her to speak to Kevin and encourage him to give chemotherapy another go. Gary first attempts to reach Jenny through Banner, but Banner claims that Jenny has a “full plate” and shuttles Gary out of his office. Chuck and Gary then dress up as waiters and infiltrate the governor’s ball where Jenny is an honored guest. Gary shows Kevin’s picture to Jenny and explains the situation. Jenny seems to be eager to help, but when she discusses it with Banner, Banner is oddly resistant to the idea.



Kevin meets Jenny at the hospital

Ignoring Banner, Jenny does show up at the hospital the next day and immediately hits it off with Kevin. When Banner hears that Jenny has gone to the hospital without his consent, he heads over right away to collect her. When Banner arrives, a doctor approaches Jenny and offers to sign her up for a drug trial, but Banner aggressively refuses the offer. Only when Gary urges Banner to let Jenny speak for herself does Jenny get a word in edgewise. She too declines the offer. Later, in Jenny's room, we learn why Banner is acting so strangely. As it turns out, Banner made Jenny Sloane up and is using this woman as a pretty face to bolster his phony story. "Jenny" tells Banner she enjoyed speaking with Kevin - that she was actually good at it - and begs for Banner to let the ruse go on for just a little bit longer. Banner refuses and declares that Jenny Sloane will die the following day. The next morning, Banner heads in to work and starts penning a column about Jenny's tragic suicide.

What Banner didn't expect was Gary Hobson. Gary sees the column on Jenny's suicide in his paper and sets off to stop it. First, Gary tries to speak to Banner, but Banner gives him the bum's rush -- after which he changes the name of the bridge in the column he was writing. While waiting at the Randolph Street Bridge, Gary notices the change in his paper and heads over to the Lake Street Bridge. There, Gary sees Banner tape a fake suicide note to the railing. He confronts Banner at a local bar and learns from Banner the truth: that Jenny Sloane is a fiction.

In the end, Gary tracks down "Jenny," finds out her real name is Lucy, and enlists her help in stopping Banner from declaring to all the world that Jenny Sloane is a fraud in an attempt to save his own skin. Gary reads a piece of one of Banner's old columns and tells Banner that the Banner of years ago would never do something so dishonest and cruel. Banner seems unconvinced - up until, at an awards ceremony in his honor, he hears a speaker give him a glowing introduction. At that point, he finally feels guilty, and when he gets up to speak, he preserves the fiction of Jenny Sloane and declares that he is resigning.

...as for Kevin? He goes back on his chemotherapy. Meanwhile, Lucy takes the next bus out of town.

[\(Source\)](#)



Kevin with his Mother and contemplating whether to go back on chemotherapy



How did Zaks fare in his co-starring role in the “Jenny Sloane” episode? According to one review: “Zaks Lubin, for the most part, handles his material like a pro” ([Source](#)). While Zaks’ acting career also includes a role in the film *The Unspoken* (1999), this additional experience didn’t fuel Zaks’ interest in continuing to pursue an acting career in TV or the movies. Zak recalled: “Acting in that movie was mostly an excuse for my dad to go back to Iowa, where he did medical school” (personal communication).

While Zaks might have continued a potentially promising career in acting, he recalled that by the time he became a teenager there were “not a lot of roles for actual teenagers” and he had realized that he wasn’t “really interested in the risky life of an actor...[and]...wanted to dedicate myself to studying.” In the end, the call of the “foreign service” won out over the “casting call,” with Zaks’ decision being Hollywood’s loss and USAID’s gain.

When asked if fans of *Early Edition* ever recognize him, Zaks recalled that he has not “been ‘spotted; so to speak. I did run into the star of the show, Kyle Chandler, when I was 16 and visiting LA. He recognized me and I recognized him, and we said hello.”

Adolfo Alberto Franco (1/23/1956 - present)



We cannot realistically expect to solve the problems of Latin America's democracy in the short term. In fact, it will require a long-term, sustained, and collaborative effort. (September 28, 2005)



Adolfo Franco (in Spanish) commenting on Immigration Reform during presidential campaign of Republican Candidate John McCain (2008)

Born in Cardenas, Cuba, **Adolfo Franco** is a graduate of Creighton University School of Law [Juris Doctor, 1983 (cum laude)] and the University of Northern Iowa (M.A. in History, 1980). During the presidential campaign of Senator John McCain in 2008, Franco served as an advisor on issues relating to U.S. foreign and development policy on Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the past few years he has occasionally appeared as a Republican Party spokesperson on news-related shows on channels such as CNN and MSNBC, speaking on issues such as immigration and international aid. Today he serves as Vice President for Global Regulatory Affairs at the Direct Selling Association (DSA), engaging the Departments of State and Commerce on issues affecting access of direct selling companies to foreign markets. In 2015 Franco testified in the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committees on securing the U.S. border and the root causes of Central American migration.

Prior to joining DSA in April 2007, Franco was Assistant Administrator for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001, and confirmed by the Senate in 2002, Franco managed and directed the \$1.5 billion annual U.S. foreign assistance program for the LAC region, including overseeing USAID trade capacity building (TCB) initiatives to support the negotiation and implementation of the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). He was one of the Bush Administration's key policymakers, advising the President, Secretary of State, and USAID Administrator on issues involving Cuba, Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela.

From 1985 to 2000, Franco held various positions at the Inter-American Foundation, including senior vice president, director of congressional affairs, general counsel and acting president. Subsequently, he served as Chief Counsel to the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, advising Committee Members on global development and foreign policy matters. There Franco drafted the first piece of legislation to address the international HIV/AIDS crisis by bringing massive US investment to developing countries, these efforts laying the seeds for PEPFAR, the US response to the AIDS crisis in Africa. He also served in various capacities at the Inter-American Foundation, including General Counsel, Senior Vice President, and President. In 2003, President Bush appointed Adolfo as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation.

Flight Log Memories: At the time **Adolfo Franco** became Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), I was working as the Economic Integration and Free Trade Advisor in the Bureau, much of my time coordinating with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to support USAID participation in the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (CGSE), a non-negotiating group that met during each round of the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The group's mission was to assist the participating LAC countries to identify their trade capacity building (TCB) needs and mobilize TCB assistance from U.S. government agencies, non-profit organizations, the U.S. private sector, and multilateral organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank.

One of my roles during those years was responding to a charge from AA/LAC Franco to do more to help the USAID Missions in the LAC region get up the "learning curve" on trade-related issues such as TCB. Responding to that charge I started up and became "editor-in-chief" of *LAC Trade Matters* as a periodic newsletter for USAID Mission Directors, Mission economic growth staff, and a broader TCB community. Initially the newsletter came out monthly, then quarterly, resulting in 60 issues during the years that the Republican Administration of George Bush put an emphasis on negotiating free trade agreements. This effort was acknowledged by USAID in 2002 as an Agency best practice in knowledge management to support TCB.

But another role I had from time to time was writing speeches for AA/LAC Franco. Actually, my initial foray into writing a speech was for an earlier AA/LAC, Mark L. Schneider, during the administration of President William J. Clinton. In the wake of the destruction left by Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998, the U.S. Government mounted a program to provide reconstruction assistance to several Central American countries. John Becker, the leader of LAC's Broad Based Economic Growth Team, asked me to coordinate with USDA to develop two Inter-Agency Agreements (IAAs). The first IAA was with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) to assist Central America to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures so that the region's economic recovery could be facilitated by increased export of agricultural products such as fresh fruits and vegetables. The second IAA was with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) to assist these countries in improving their capacity to monitor agricultural production in the region and identify potential emergency food aid needs.

In December 1998, a central theme of the annual Caribbean/Latin American Action (C/LAA) Miami Conference was the challenge of responding to Hurricane Mitch's devastation. In preparation for the participation of AA/LAC Schneider's plenary remarks to this conference, I was tasked to draft a speech for him that I titled "From Hurricane Destruction to Hemispheric Prosperity: Looking Beyond Short-Term Relief and Longer-Term Reconstruction." Preparing this speech also proved to be a challenge, with drafts going back and forth between my desk and the AA's office, then in Miami back and forth between me and the U.S. State Department's Control Room, with Schneider or State colleagues wanting this or that change made in the speech, resulting in me spending time in the Control Room to incorporate the changes.

Shortly before Schneider was to deliver his remarks, a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) press agent was hounding me to give to him an advance copy of the speech, which I politely declined, saying that the remarks were yet being finalized and that it would be best to ask the Control Room for the final prepared version. Indeed, even as we watched a video of the Honduran president welcoming the attendees, I could see Schneider at the speakers' table apparently yet making changes to the speech, crossing things out and/or writing in new comments. What I found most surprising when Schneider spoke was that his remarks were more extemporaneous than read—and not that clear that he was following any version of the text I originally wrote. Once back in my office at USAID, Becker asked me if I would be interested, if opportunity arose, to write another speech for Schneider—my response: “Not with a 10-foot pole.”

Fortunately I was not asked to write more speeches for Schneider. However, not long after the arrival of Franco in the Bureau, I was tasked with writing a speech for him that I titled: “A Toast to Trade & Investment: USAID Trade Capacity Building Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean.” Franco presented this speech at a meeting of the Distilled Spirits Industry in Washington, D.C. on May 9, 2002. Basically, the speech provided an overview of USAID's efforts to provide TCB assistance to many of the LAC countries participating in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations.

Franco apparently liked the initial speech I wrote, resulting in requests over the next few years to write four more speeches for him. These speeches reworked the original speech but each time led with a “hook” relating the speech to the venue at which and/or audience to whom the speech was to be given. For example, here was the hook for the speech on “A Toast to Trade & Investment” that built on a visit my wife and I had made to the Bacardi factory in Puerto Rico:

Before starting, let me tell you a true story that one of my colleagues shared with me. This anecdote concerns Bacardi Limited, one of the most distinguished companies in the spirits industry. As you know, Bacardi is one of the LAC region's true business successes and one of the top five spirits companies in the world. My colleague, while on vacation and touring Bacardi's plant in Puerto Rico, was impressed when the tour guide informed him of Bacardi's Global Mission which I would now like to read to you – Bacardi's Global Mission is:

To be recognized as the most socially responsible spirit making company in the entire world. We emphasize Moderation not only with the consumption of alcoholic beverages but Moderation in all aspects of life, for example, Moderation when we are driving, with our natural resources, with the way we express ourselves, with eating, etc.

What is impressive about Bacardi's mission is that it reflects the company's own recognition of its corporate responsibility to encourage consumers to be responsible both in their consumption of alcoholic beverages and in how they live their lives so as to protect and conserve human life and the environment.

At USAID we are positioning our development assistance programs for the LAC region to help LAC countries prepare for full participation in the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that is currently on track to be established by early 2005. In this context, and taking liberty to paraphrase Bacardi's mission statement, USAID's “corporate mission” in the LAC region is:

To assist LAC countries to become the developing world's most attractive and sustainable environment for trade and investment as the dual engines for economic growth and poverty reduction.

The titles for the four speeches were:

- Harnessing Free “Trade Winds” from “Economic Hurricanes”: Strengthening Central America for Trade and Investment (for the launch of the U.S.-CAFTA Negotiation, January 8, 2003).
- Sewing Trade Capacity Building, Reaping Hemispheric Prosperity: “An Idea Whose Time Has Come” (for the Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America (AACCLA), Washington, D.C., May 8, 2003).
- Building Trade Capacity, Strengthening Trade Corridors: USAID’s Role in Fostering Hemispheric Trade and Integration (for the 26th Hemispheric Congress of Latin Chambers of Commerce and Industry, April 27-30, 2005).
- Three Legal Reform Challenges to Strengthening Ecuador’s Business Climate and Competitiveness (for a meeting of the Ecuadorian Business Committee, Washington, DC, July 17, 2006).

Of these, my favorite was “Sewing Trade Capacity Building...” built on a hook that related the speech’s theme to the venue at which Franco gave this speech:

Let me begin by saying what a pleasure it is for me to be here today with you in this historic building that honors former Senator Everett Dirksen who was famous on a number of counts, not least his skill as an orator. Let me set the stage for my humble comments by referencing what may be the two famous quotes often attributed to Senator Dirksen: “A billion here, a billion there, pretty soon it adds up to real money.” And “There is no force so powerful as an idea whose time has come.”

Let me, if you will, return to these two quotes in a few moments in the context of sharing with you, the leadership of the Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America and the Caribbean, an overview what the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is doing to help many of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to build capacity to participate in and benefit from the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Near the end of the speech, Franco returned to the two original Dirksen quotes:

In closing, let me return to the two Senator Dirksen quotes and sum up my comments by paraphrasing Senator Dirksen: “Some TCB here, some TCB there, pretty soon it adds up to real economic growth and poverty reduction for the LAC countries.” At USAID, we believe that TCB is not only an “idea whose time has come” but also a “powerful force” for strengthening the enabling environment for Trade and Investment.

The process of writing these speeches got even easier once I developed and worked off a master draft speech that I kept updated with the latest information on USAID support for TCB in the LAC region. Then, when the call came to write another speech, I would tweak the speech’s introduction, content, and conclusion as needed to fit the venue and/or audience. However, for one speech, I was a bit up in the air on how to tweak my master draft so left a message with the front office to ask Franco what he would like to talk about in the speech; the only response that came back was a note reading “trade and development.”

This was as broad a topic as when my high school history teacher (Greta Gary) tasked the students with doing term papers on the following subject: “World War I and World War II.” So put off by this way too broad topic, and realizing my grades in the course were already high enough that I’d still pass the course even if I didn’t turn in a paper, I simply, as we would say today, blew off the assignment. More on how that strategy turned out is recounted in Annex 2’s vignette on Greta Gary). But I digress.



After Franco left the LAC Bureau to work on Senator McCain's presidential campaign and even into 2016, I occasionally saw him representing Republican Party views on [CNN](#), [CNN Español](#), [MSNBC](#), [Univision](#), and other cable programs, hence why this vignette on Franco is included among the vignettes on my close encounters with celebrities in the *Realm of Film and Television Personalities*.

Interestingly, during the years Franco served in the LAC Bureau, I had few direct face-to-face encounters with him, those at all-hands meetings, passing hellos in the hallway, or being invited to join in meetings with him and visitors interested in trade capacity building issues. In this latter case, Franco wanted to include in the meeting a representative of the Broad Based Economic Growth Team in case more detail needed to be provided to a visitor about USAID TCB assistance programs in the LAC region.

Robert Stern Landmann (6/27/39 – 12/19/16)



When the shooting was over, the man lay on the dirt floor, the bluish eyes open, his lips parted with the traces of a smile, looking almost angelic. Ironical for a soul that was now in hell. (*Fatal Film*)



The Longest Day (1962) - Trailer (Bob Landmann at 0:53)

Robert Landmann, who held a M.A. and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of New Mexico, was an international development expert whose 35+ year career included work in agribusiness development and trade, small enterprise development, institutional development, strategic planning, project evaluation, policy analysis, public sector reform and management, and pension reform. He had extensive experience working with the U.S. Agency for International Development as well serving as the Deputy Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

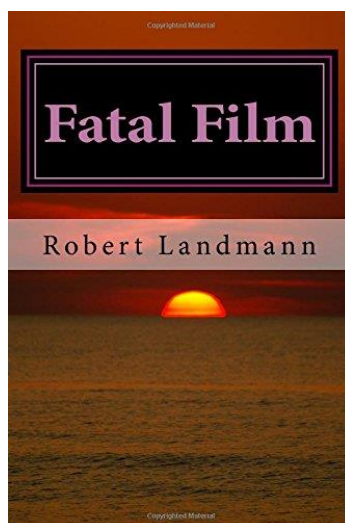
Before serving with IICA, Dr. Landmann was a Senior Associate with Financial Markets International. Prior to that, he was Director of Public Sector Reform at DevTech Systems, where he oversaw the public sector development practice area. Before DevTech, he was a partner at Carana Corporation from 1989 to 2001, managing USAID-funded projects in Central America, Peru, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, and a World Bank-funded initiative in Kazakhstan. He supported field projects by providing project oversight and strategic leadership as well as technical advisory services in policy analysis, planning, training, institutional development, and public sector management. Landmann has worked in over thirty countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East.

Earlier in his career, during the Administration of President Jimmy Carter, Landmann served as Assistant Director, U.S. Community Services Administration (the national anti-poverty agency responsible for 900 local and county community action agencies); Deputy Commissioner of Employment and Training, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and Deputy Director of Planning, State of New Mexico. He served on the faculty of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, and the Department of Sociology at the University of New Mexico, where he served respectively as Associate Director of the Institute for Social Research and Development and Director of the Andean Study and Research Center.

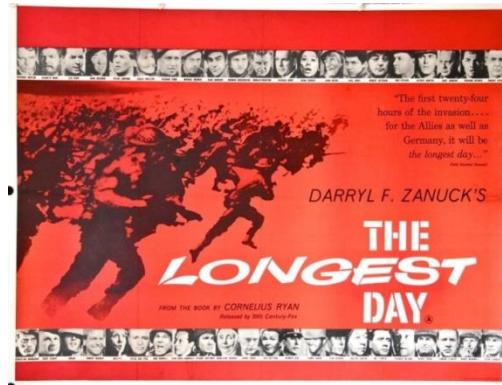


At the time of his passing on 12/19/16, Landmann was Senior Associate for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, while remaining active in development-focused consulting assignments for various clients. Most recently, and drawing on his years in Bolivia working as a Peace Corps Volunteer, Landmann wrote *Fatal Film* (2014), a novel available from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/Fatal-Film-Robert-Landmann/dp/1493014444).

Fatal Film is a fast paced thriller filled with intrigue, as an encounter between two supposed foes results in a chase through Bolivia and Brazil in the Che Guevara era. While the book is fiction, it relies of the history of the period to serve as an exciting setting for assassination, revolutionary fervor and unforeseen twists and turns. The main character, film maker Leonard Wood, is the unwitting target of potential assassins and a beautiful woman, as his sojourn to South America turns into a fatal trail ([Source](#)).



Flight Log Memories: I first met **Robert Landmann** on an American Airlines flight in route to Miami from some Central American country. I was seated in 7C (aisle) and Bob in 7A (window). We struck up a conversation during which I learned he was the Deputy Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) headquartered in Costa Rica. Thus we shared a common interest in the role and importance of agricultural and rural development in many of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries. Years later, while I was working with USAID's LAC Bureau, we called on Bob to take on short-term assignments that ranged from assessment of the status of competitiveness councils in the LAC countries to leading a study on constraints to agribusiness development in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. After I had retired from USAID at the end of September 2014, I stayed in touch with Bob, often meeting for lunch to swap stories (jokes) and, on a more serious note, discuss Bob's ongoing consulting assignments.



One day we met for lunch at California Pizza Kitchen in northern Virginia's Tysons Corner Center Mall. During our conversation I was updating Bob on my efforts to write this memoir and for some reason was telling him about my encounters with film and TV personalities. All of a sudden Bob shared that he had been an uncredited extra in Darryl F. Zanuck's *The Longest Day* (1962), in a scene with Hollywood actor Red Buttons. In the scene soldiers are shooting craps. In the images below from that scene, the soldier second from the left, the one holding a cigarette to his mouth with his right hand in the top left image, is Bob.



In 1962, Bob was living in Paris, studying French, and leading a Bohemian existence as a member of the post *Génération Perdue* (Lost Generation). He found out, quite by accident, that *The Longest Day* was being filmed nearby and that there was a casting call for young Americans to serve as extras. Beside the adventure of it all, the extras were paid \$10 per day, a small fortune at the time. While he did not win the craps game, he enjoyed meeting and talking with stars Red Buttons and Robert Wagner.

While Bob's fleeting appearance as an extra in *The Longest Day*, helping the Allies to land on the beaches of Normandy, didn't also result in landing a star next to Red Buttons' star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Bob's "cameo" but uncredited extra appearance in *The Longest Day* does fully qualify him to be honored among those with whom I've had *Off-Screen Encounters in the Realm of Film and TV Personalities*.

And, who knows, perhaps one day *Fatal Film* will be turned into a Hollywood film—and Bob will finally get that star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Stay tuned!



John Roland Thomas (4/15/51 – present)



*It takes first a country that is committed to invest in agriculture and supporting the enabling environment for agriculture....
It's really important to find a champion, somebody who is aggressive and can understand the impact of bad policy and can help influence people within the government that changes are necessary and present some options.*



At first blush one wouldn't associate the name of **John Thomas** with Hollywood's "A" list of film or TV actors. Originally from Michigan, John's career evolved not in Hollywood but in the developing countries of Africa. For 28 years Thomas worked with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Foreign Service Officer, where he focused on agribusiness and agricultural market development, host-country institutional strengthening and capacity building, integrated watershed management and protection, and environmental policy.

Early in his career, he earned a B.A. in natural resource management from Michigan State University, after which he began his international agricultural development career as a Peace Corps Volunteer, working on livestock marketing in the Philippines from 1974-76. Subsequently, after earning a M.S. in agricultural economics at the University of Hawaii East-West Center, Thomas entered USAID's International Development Intern program (1980-81). On completing Washington, DC-based training, his first posting as a Foreign Service Officer was as Agricultural Economist with USAID/Ghana (1981-84), followed by serving as Deputy Director of the Office of Agriculture with USAID/Kenya from 1984-88, and Director of the Office of Market and Business Development with USAID/Madagascar from 1988-93.

After over a decade serving with USAID in Africa, Thomas was reassigned “Out of Africa” to serve as Director of the Agriculture Development Division with USAID/Russia from 1994-98, though he returned to Africa from 1999-2003 to serve as Office Chief and Strategic Objective Team Leader in the Office of Environment and Natural Resources with USAID/Morocco from 1999-2003. His field-based experience developing and managing USAID assistance programs in agriculture prepared Thomas for a Washington, DC-based assignment as Supervisory Agribusiness Development Officer with the Office of Agriculture in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade from 2003-2004, which led to being promoted to Director of that office from 2005-2008.

John’s many professional accomplishments working with USAID include:

Strategic Planning and Design

- Orchestrating a review of global agricultural research programs and needs, resulting in a strategic plan with funding priorities for \$35 million annually in USAID support for international agricultural research.
- Developing a strategy to re-engage USAID in international agricultural training and capacity building. Designed and secured funding for three innovative, long-term degree training pilot programs for agriculture specialists from seven countries in Africa to implement the strategy.

Resource and Program Management

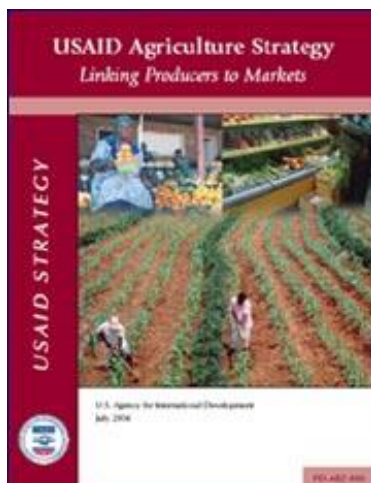
- Creatively improving management efficiencies for the \$10 million (annual) Farmer-to-Farmer Program, resulting in increased number of U.S. volunteer farmers and farm business managers working with small farmers and farmer associations in Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe to expand their production.
- Designing and administering a watershed management program that integrates agriculture, industry and household water use, which was subsequently adopted by other donors and the Government of Morocco in additional watersheds.

Agriculture Finance, Market and Trade

- Linking Madagascar smallholder producers to export markets for increased production and quality of spices, medicinal products, and other non-traditional agricultural exports.
- Negotiating an annual policy reform agenda with the Government of Kenya to privatize fertilizer distribution, resulting in the elimination of a government monopoly and the development of an active industry of 35 competing private sector firms.

Following retirement from USAID, Thomas continued to provide advisory services to USAID, initially serving six months in 2009 as a Program Design Specialist on Agriculture and Water Policy to assist USAID/Morocco in developing a new economic growth strategy. Thomas’ career working with USAID, which began as an International Development Intern in 1980, came full circle when he took on a six-month assignment in 2009 as International Agriculture Development Advisor to USAID’s Office of Agriculture, where he focused on recruiting and training a new generation of Foreign Service Officers to work in Agriculture, during a period when USAID was rebuilding its cadre of expertise in Agriculture in the wake of the food price hikes and food insecurity crisis of 2008. From 2010 until retiring in 2015 Thomas worked as an Agriculture Training Coordinator in USAID’s Bureau for Food Security, developing training programs to help the Agency rebuild its capacity in agriculture development and food security, with particular support to new entrants in the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) program.

Flight Log Memories: I first met **John Thomas** when he worked as the director of USAID's Office of Agriculture in 2003-2004, during which period we were members of a working group that developed the USAID Agriculture Strategy: Linking Markets to Producers (2004).

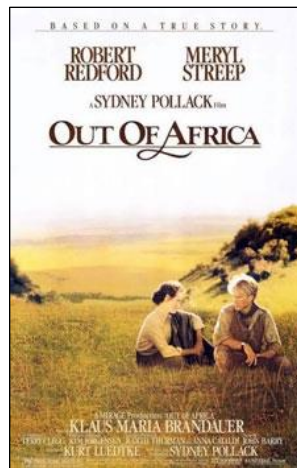


I had the opportunity to again work with John in 2010 when he returned to USAID as an Agriculture Training Coordinator. In this position, John organized a short course on Agriculture each year for new USAID recruits hired under the agency's DLI program. During this short course, I met with the new recruits in small groups to brief them on USAID Agriculture programs in the LAC region. Occasionally, as John worked on developing USAID's Agriculture training course, I offered ideas on ways in which agriculture-related simulations could be incorporated into an Agriculture training program along the lines of the simulations I used back in the 1980s in International Fertilizer Development Center training courses.



John Thomas (left) and new USAID recruits (DLIs) meet with IICA representative

Recently, while chatting with John in the Bureau for Food Security, I noticed on his desk a photo that I had seen before in the office of a former colleague, Lyn Dunn, who worked for a year or so in the Office of Regional Sustainable Development in USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, my "office" was the cubicle next to Lyn's cubicle. When I asked Lyn about the photo, he said it was a photo of extras that appeared in the film *Out of Africa* (1985) starring Robert Redford and Meryl Streep.



The photo (see below) shows a number of Americans dressed in costumes typical of British East Africa in the early 1900s, the period in which the film is set. Lyn had pointed out that he was the fourth person from the left. Seeing this photo on John's desk reminded me that, knowing that Lyn had been an extra in *Out of Africa*, I was thinking about writing a vignette about Lyn's experience "breaking into Hollywood" for this section on my close encounters in the realm of *Film and TV Personalities*.



Left to Right: Bob Kidd, Joe Stepanek, Gary Eidet, Lyn Dunn, Jim Dempsey, John Thomas, woman (not identified), and Fred Guymont

When I asked John why he also had the same photo, he pointed out that he was the third person from the right. Everyone on the photo, except the woman, worked for USAID/Kenya or USAID's Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO) for East Africa. With reference to the above photo, Kidd was a Food for Peace Officer with REDSO, Stepanek a Program Officer with USAID/Kenya, Eidet a Controller for REDSO, Dunn a Contracting/Commodity Procurement Officer with REDSO, Dempsey a REDSO Project Development Officer, Thomas an Agriculture Development Officer with USAID/Kenya, and Guymont an Engineer with REDSO. The unknown woman apparently was a friend of someone in the group.

So the question I put to John was: How did you guys get a “casting call” to be extras in *Out of Africa*—and where in the film did you appear? This was John’s reply:

While posted to Kenya in 1987, my wife saw a nondescript advertisement on the wall of a small grocery store in the Westlands neighborhood of Nairobi. This is a relatively well-stocked shopping area frequented by expats living in Kenya. We often stopped there on our way home from work. The advertisement announced the filming of a new movie and that the production company needed several “European looking” men and women for extras. The announcement did not mention the movie title, but it was well known at the time that *Out of Africa* was being filmed on location, just a few miles from the actual Karen Blixen home in the foot hills of the Ngog Mountains. The notice gave a number to call for more information. My wife thought it odd that women had to send in a photo, but for men, this was not necessary.



I called the number and was given directions to a drab warehouse in the industrial section of Nairobi for a fitting. The warehouse was chock full of trunks and racks of period clothing sorted by hats, pants, jackets, shirts, ties and other accessories. Everything was authentic and some of the trunks had labels coming from other movies covering British Colonial history in the early 20th century.

The filming was done on a weekend - a time convenient to those who had jobs during the week. Most of our time was spent standing around chatting with friends and waiting for instructions, while the production crew filmed close-ups and indoor scenes. We passed the time admiring ourselves in our costumes and behaving like royalty. Those who had cameras slipped in their pockets (we were told NOT to bring cameras, fancy watches, or anything modern that might spoil the scene) took a few shots. With several USAID colleagues on hand, we joked that maybe we should have a staff meeting. I can’t remember who took the picture, but everyone was having a great time showing off and enjoying the countryside. We did not receive any payment, but the production company provided meals and gave each of us the equivalent of around \$10 USD in Kenya Shillings to reimburse our transportation expenses.

My role, along with my USAID colleagues and about 50 other “European looking” extras, was to mingle in a grassy field in clusters of picnickers far, far from the action. The real filming was taking place in front of an equestrian field bordered by a white wooden fence. This was the scene when Bror (Klaus Maria Brandauer) asks his wife Karen Blixen (played by Meryl Streep) for a divorce. I was standing at the far side of the equestrian field leaning on the fence. At points when a horse and rider came in line with me and the camera, I lifted my pith helmet and wiped my brow, thinking that this movement might be noticeable on the screen. Alas, I was too far off in the distance to even know if I was captured on film.



[Note: Close scrutiny of the above image capture from the film's DVD indicates that John was likely the sole person seen in the distance between the horse on the left and the "7" on the right.]

Although I did not get a starring role, I did stand just a few feet from Meryl Streep. At the end of the filming when the picnickers were told their job was done, I wandered over to the side where the cameras were still set up. Meryl Streep was there talking with one of the production managers. She had brought her daughter on location and was relaxing, holding the child in her arms. I was not close enough to hear the conversation, but I sort of looked over her shoulder as I slowly made my way past. To this day, Meryl Streep is my favorite actress and I try not to miss a movie in which she is starring. It was a memorable occasion, and my only disappointment was that Robert Redford was not in the scene that was being filmed that day (John Thomas, personal communication).

While John's appearance in *Out of Africa* did not translate into more casting calls from Hollywood, his USAID career continued, his next "on location" assignment being to Madagascar to serve as the Director of the Office of Market and Business Development with USAID/Madagascar. In the end, John's 28-year career as a Foreign Service Officer—and subsequent work as an advisor to USAID—proved to be a much longer career and certainly one taking him farther than many "wannabes" trying to break into Hollywood.

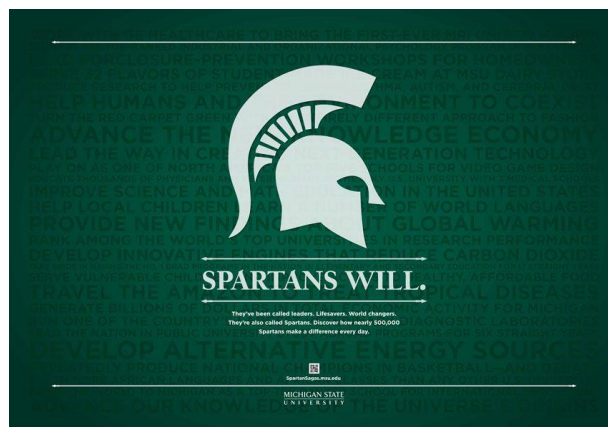
Although John didn't receive an Oscar nomination for his role as an extra in *Out of Africa*, in 2008, on the occasion of his retirement as a Foreign Service Officer, the presidentially-appointed Board for Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) recognized John for "outstanding work" during:

an illustrious and dedicated career of service to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the American people, [serving] tirelessly in USAID Missions and Washington to advance the foreign assistance goals of the United States, [working] faithfully to improve the lives of impoverished people around the world, unflinchingly [exhibiting] the true spirit of generosity and compassion...of the American people, [serving] BIFAD...with distinction on issues related to international food and agriculture, [retaining] the trust and confidence of the university and Title XII community, and...[managing] the Office of Agriculture with the highest professionalism, effectiveness and success amidst difficult challenges.

In the world of international development, one could view this recognition as akin to receiving a “lifetime achievement” Oscar, perhaps only to be topped by being honored with the World Food Prize (see **Per Pinstrup-Andresen** vignette) or the Nobel Peace Prize (see **Norman Borlaug** vignette).



While John was not quite a “giant” or celebrity among *Film and TV Personalities*, his vignette could alternatively could have been presented in the *Development Leaders* section or the *Spartan Educators* section. While we’ll never know how far John could have gone in Hollywood beyond his extra role in *Out of Africa*, Hollywood’s loss was a gain for international agricultural development, all of which started with John earning his B.A. in natural resource management from Michigan State University. No big surprise: Spartans Will!



Every day, MSU scientists, scholars, and students go where the tough problems exist and work to find solutions that make life better in Michigan and around the world.

Virtual Stopover Epilogue

While I am neither a film nor TV personality, our virtual stopover in the ***Realm of Film and TV Personalities*** provided memorable off-screen encounters with some famous and some not so famous celebrities with whom I had close encounters over the years. Yet I recently got a taste of what it must be like when a stranger approaches you and asks for your autograph. During a recent visit to Cartagena, Colombia, we hired a driver to take us on a tour of the city. When it got near the lunch hour, the driver recommended La Olla de Cartagena as a restaurant having a menu with a variety of choices.

Just after we had been seated the waitress approached our table and point blank asked: “¿Es usted un artista de cine?” (“Are you a movie star?”). I smiled and said that I wasn’t but asked if she would like to have my autograph. She laughed, waived her hand to indicate “no” and walked away from the table. Of course, I could have said yes but who knows into what trouble I might have then gotten myself.

Our next virtual stopover begins at the start of [Vol. 3](#) (Chapters 8-14) where we make a quick stop in **Chapter 8** for some ***Happy Meal Encounters in the Realm of Superheroes, Muppets, and Clowns.***

To continue to **Vol. 3**, click on the following link: [Vol. 3](#)



Bangladesh

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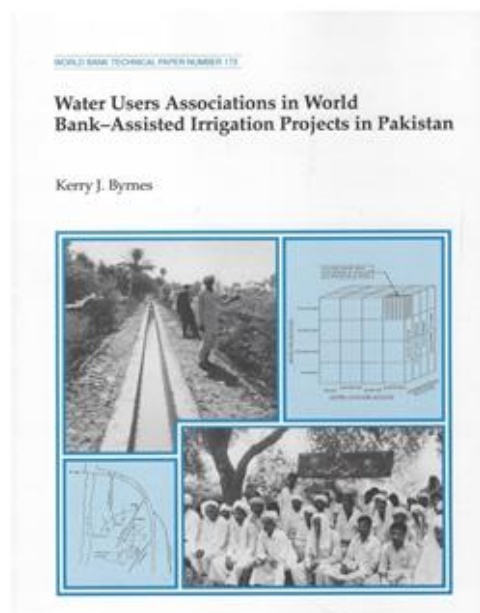
Guatemala



Indonesia



Report for USAID



Report for The World Bank