



4 March — AAFSW
Board Meeting

12 March — Foreign
Born Spouses
Group
(Christine Zarr:
301-229-7218)

7 and 21 March —
French Group
(Christel McDonald:
703-525-9755)

7, 14, 21, 28 March —
Playgroup
(Anne Sullivan:
703-359-6955)

Tell Us What You Think!

Contact AAFSW at:
5125 MacArthur Blvd., NW
Suite 36
Washington, DC 20016
(tel) 202-362-6514
(fax) 202-362-6589
office@aafsw.org
The office is normally open
M-F, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Membership in AAFSW is
open to all members of
the U.S. foreign affairs
community for just \$40
per year. Join today!*

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FLO today: Secretary of State Colin Powell (center) pictured here with most of the staff of the Family Liaison Office during a recent impromptu visit. From left to right: Executive Assistant Billy Variava, Abidjan CLO Marti Doggett, FLO Deputy Director Judy Ikels, Program Assistant Emily Soroko, Jakarta CLO Chris Butzgy, Education and Youth Officer Rebecca Grappo, Support Services Officer John Reddy, Secretary of State Colin Powell, FLO Director Faye Barnes, Naturalization Program Specialist Vanja Huth, Special Employment Projects Coordinator Melissa Hess, Employment Program Coordinator Katie Hokenson and CLO Support Officer Cathy Salvaterra. Missing from photo: Program Assistant Liza DeWindt Bright, Publications Coordinator Sarah Genton, and Program Assistant Nancy Dolce.

Congratulations to FLO for 25 Years of Service!

March 1st marked the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Family Liaison Office (FLO) in the Department of State. For a quarter of a century, the FLO has shouldered the increasingly complicated responsibility for supporting both the welfare of our Foreign Service community and by extension, the mission of the Department of State. For those of us with a certain seniority, we can remember life before FLO and can only marvel at what the office has become. For those who have entered the Foreign Service more recently, they assume that the FLO has always existed and cannot comprehend that in the be-

ginning, there was tremendous opposition to the FLO's establishment.

Establishment of the FLO:

By now the role of the AAFSW in establishing the FLO is well known. In 1976, the FORUM of the AAFSW was formed to be the issues-oriented group within the organization. Shortly after its formation, it distributed some 6,000 questionnaires to employees

Continued on page 4

Welcome

New and Returning
AAFSW Members:

Monica McCafferty
Baltes
Sheri M. Bochantin
Nicholas Eicher
Neil Eynon
Svetla Hanrahan
Elaine Johnsen
Mary V. Kane
Yonnas Keffe
Meg Macy
Mari McCord
Marta Muller
Alexandria L. Panehal
Marian Precht
Erin M. Sunde
Chung R. Taylor

Thank You!

Generous Donations
In Memory of
Elizabeth Haselton

Ms. Margaret Beam
Ms. Dawn Cuthell
Mr. Norris (Chip)
Haselton
Major General and
Mrs. A. J. Maroun

AAFSW is especially grateful to Mr. Norris (Chip) Haselton for his generous donation in honor of his mother. Betty Haselton's family has asked that contributions in her name be made to AAFSW's BOOKFAIR, an annual fundraising event where she worked as head cashier for many, many years. AAFSW remains grateful to those who have made donations to AAFSW.

Security Alert for AAFSW Volunteers

A AFSW volunteers who have State Department identification badges have until April 30th to obtain a new type of identification called a "smart card." It will involve getting a new picture taken at State at the ID Office in the Columbia Plaza Courtyard #520 (Tel.: 202-663-3093).

If you already have a valid State ID, the ONLY form you will need to obtain the new "smart card" is the DS 1838—the "Request for Building Pass Identification."

Since I work at State, I will be glad to assist you in completing the process in one trip. We can do the following:

1. Please call me at 202-647-4028 (W) or 301-320-7698 (H) and we can fill out most of the DS 1838

over the phone. If you want to send it by e-mail, I will need: (1) name, (2) Social Security number and (3) home address. You will also need to tell me (4) whether your current pass has escort authority and (5) if hours of access are 24/7 or normal business hours. (6) Birthdate is also required. If you prefer, you can fill this out yourself when I mail the form to you.

2. Send me a self-addressed and stamped business-size envelope to: 5108 Scarsdale Road, Bethesda, MD 20816.

3. After we have filled out the form together over the phone (or from e-mail information), I will obtain the signature it needs.

4. I will then use the stamped self-addressed envelope to return the completed DS 1838 for you to fill in any other information required.

5. You can then take the completed form to Columbia Plaza to get your picture taken.

Mette Beecroft

AAFSW Simplifies Your Life Again!

By the time you read this, you should be able to simplify the way you pay for AAFSW membership renewals and donations by using your credit card online through our website www.aafsw.org. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of our webmistress Kelly Midura and our office manager Margaret Teich, we hope this obvious next step can finally be accomplished! They are overcoming tremendous obstacles to make it happen!

Membership in AAFSW allows you to access the Members Only portion of the website for contact information on other members and much more. The Members Only password changed in January, so be sure to contact the office to obtain a new one. Email office@aafsw.org or call 202-362-6514. **Don't miss great information! Check out www.aafsw.org today!**

SOSA Donations Welcome!

We are trying to bolster the Secretary of State Award for Volunteerism fund so that we can continue to recognize FS employees and spouses who have made a significant impact on their communities through volunteerism. Each year, one person from each geographic bureau is chosen and the winners come to Washington to receive their awards on Foreign Affairs Day. Your donations will help us continue to highlight and reward their efforts. **Donations can be sent to AAFSW, marked SOSA account.**

Retiring?

Everyone in the family has a stake in the changes this transition brings. Did you know spouses are welcome to attend the Retirement Seminar and also many of the sessions in the Job Search Program? AAFSW hosts a welcome session especially for spouses on the first day of the Job Search Program to go over the program highlights and discuss the ramifications of leaving the Foreign Service. Tell your employee spouse to make sure you also get the invitation to the program. Upcoming sessions are August 4 and October 6, 2003. Make plans now to attend.

Job Opportunities with AAFSW:

- w **Office Manager** (work in our office!)
- w **Newsletter Editor** (work from home in the Metro area!)
- w **Website Editor** (work from wherever you're posted!)

Application deadline: April 1, 2003.
Contact AAFSW at office@aafsw.org
or at 202-362-6514.

New Insurance Plan Pays Immediate Benefits

On January 30, 2003, Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources, announced a new insurance program now available to U.S. citizen direct hire State Department employees. The Office of Casualty Assistance has found that many bereaved families lack the immediate resources they need to meet the unexpected and extraordinary expenses incurred in the first days and weeks following the death of a loved one and before other benefits are paid. The American Foreign Service Protective Association now offers an "Immediate Benefit Plan" which will provide \$15,000 to a designated beneficiary within two work days of notification of death of an employee. All employees are encouraged to consider enrolling.

Facts about the Immediate Benefit Plan:

W Administrator: American Foreign Service Protective Association (www.afspa.org);

W Eligibility: all U.S. citizen direct hire Foreign Service and Civil Service State Department employees (no AFSPA membership is required);

W Enrollment for Current Employees: May 1, 2003 to June 15, 2003, immediately prior to an overseas assignment, or during occasional open seasons;

W New Hire Enrollment: within 60 days of entering on duty, prior to first overseas assignment, or during open seasons;

W Benefit: \$15,000 payable to a designated beneficiary(ies) within two work days of notification of employee's death, regardless of cause (at age 70, benefit is reduced to \$7,500)

W Cost \$2.00 per pay period;

W Method of Payment: payroll allotment;

W Duration of Enrollment: until withdrawal from program, or resignation or retirement from the Department of State.

Transition Center Schedule of Courses

March-April

Annuities & Social Security Benefits Seminar (RV 104)
April 30

Communicating Across Cultures (MQ 802)
March 1 (Sat.)

Emergency Medical Care and Trauma Workshop (MQ 915)
March 8 (Sat.)
April 26 (Sat.)

Financial Management & Estate Planning Service (RV 103)
May 1

Going Overseas for Families (MQ 210)
March 15

Going Overseas for Singles & Couples without Children (MQ 200)
March 15 (Sat.)

Going Overseas — Logistics for Adults (MQ 220)
March 15 (Sat.)

Job Search Program (RV 102)
March 3-April 30

Personal Finances and Investments in the FS (MQ 852)
April 9 (Wed. p.m.)

Post Options for Employment and Training Overseas (MQ 703)
March 20

Protocol and U.S. Representation Abroad (MQ 116)
April 12 (Sat.)

Regulations, Allowances and Finances in the Foreign Service Context (MQ 104)
April 22-24

Retirement Planning Seminar (RV 101)
April 29 - May 2

Security Overseas Seminars
Call for schedule

Targeting the Job Market (MQ 704)
March 18-19

Tax Seminar (MQ 117)
March 5 (Wed. p.m.)

The OBC Information Center will be open during regular work hours (8:15 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) and certain Wednesday evenings and Saturdays.
Families are welcome in the Center. Tel: 703- 302-7276.

FSI Transition Center courses are open to USG employees and eligible family members going to or returning from overseas postings. Classes are held at FSI, 4000 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA. (NEATC) Non-State employees/family members submit an SF 182 (with fiscal data) through their training officer to the Registrar at FSI; State employees submit a DS-755 through their CDO, while family members register for all courses through FSI/TC. For all **non-tuition** workshops, regardless of agency, register through FSI/TC at 703-302-7268; FSITCTraining@state.gov.

FSYF Calendar

Children living in the U.S. or who have recently returned from overseas should check out the Foreign Service Youth Foundation's programs: AWAL (ages 13-18) and Globe Trotters (ages 9-12).

FSYF supports and promotes these two clubs to assist young people through reentry and provides training and social programs for FS youth going overseas. The Foundation's programs enable youth to share their experiences and concerns and to have fun with their peers without having to explain their "foreign" background. FSYF also maintains a commitment to assist parents raising children in this mobile lifestyle.

AWAL Activities:
March TBA—Washington Wizards Basketball Games
April 15 — The 8th Annual KidVid Contest deadline

Globetrotters Activities:
March 29—Paint and Style Your Own Pottery Event in Fairfax, VA
Contact FSYF at globetrotters@fsyf.org.

For more information or to register for specific programs/events, contact Melanie Newhouse, FSYF Director, at 301-404-6655, email fsyf@fsyf.org or check the Foundation's website www.fsyf.org.

Thank you!!!

Foreign Service Link

Continued from page 1



Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Janet Lloyd, the first Director of the Family Liaison Office at the ribbon cutting ceremony opening FLO on March 1, 1978. Seated to the right are (left to right) Mette Beecroft (then Deputy Director of FLO) and Gay Vance, wife of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

and family members of State, USAID and the then-existent USIA and ACDA, asking people to comment on their concerns about life in the Foreign Service. There was a good return on the questionnaires, which the FORUM then analyzed. This analysis became the "Report on the Concerns of Foreign Service Spouses and Families," which was presented to the late Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, in March of 1977. The report included 10 recommendations of which the second was the establishment of the Family Liaison Office. In his reply to the second proposal, the Secretary wrote: **"The concept is a good one and I support it. It responds to a real need for a channel of communication between individual families and the Service. I believe we should establish FLO...with all deliberate speed."** Thus, within one year of presenting the report, FLO opened its doors in March of 1978.

In bureaucratic terms, one year from proposal to establishment is astonishing speed. In fact, I know of no other example in which dedicated volunteers, in this case members of the AAFSW FORUM, succeeded in inserting an entirely new function, the Family Liaison Office, within a government bureaucracy. It seems fair to say that this accomplishment is unique. Once the Office had actually

opened, the next and on-going challenge was to establish its legitimacy. From the start, the Office encountered not only bureaucratic apathy but also outright hostility. However, as the requests for information and support came to us in ever-increasing numbers, it very soon became apparent that the FLO was an idea whose time had come. Already towards the end of the second year, the late Ben Read, then Under Secretary for Management, wrote: "The Liaison Office has now become such an accepted part of our overall operations...that it is hard to realize that you have been operating for less than two years."

Early Challenges:

Even if no organization is perfect, it seems accurate to say that the establishment and development of the Family Liaison Office are a real success story in spite of some periods when its continued existence was seriously menaced. In the late '80s, the FLO survived attempts to completely eliminate or at least substantially reduce the program for budgetary reasons. At another time, the AAFSW went to the Hill to successfully fight a bureaucratic battle which would have placed the Office farther down in the STATE bureaucracy with greatly reduced access to Senior Management.



Undersecretary for Management Benjamin Read at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for FLO in 1978.



Lesley Dorman, President of AAFSW (the organization credited with establishing FLO), greets State's Director General Harry Barnes at the 1978 opening of FLO.

The FLO/CLO "Mentality":

From the start, what I can only call the FLO/CLO mentality emerged and has remained at the core of the Office's many functions. This mentality is characterized by: (1) the will to safeguard and improve the quality of life for us all; (2) the patience to advocate for change no matter how tedious; (3) the concern to provide people with individual non-bureaucratic support when they need it; and (4) a sense of outrage in the face of situations, regulations, laws, policies and practices that are unacceptable and that need to be changed.

FLO Then:

It is striking to note that even in the beginning, most of the current FLO's specialized functions existed in embryonic form. From opening day, the staff of two (the Director and Deputy Director) responded to questions about education and employment. They worked to establish pilot FLOs overseas (as the CLOs were first called) and to provide support for the new offices including an early Airgram that went out on the subject of "FLO Guidelines" suggesting what the new offices might do. When the FLO dealt with the Department's first big evacuation (some 400 evacuees from Islamabad), it also started to define the Department's role in such situations. Providing information and support

Foreign Service Link

for divorced Foreign Service spouses was another function. In this connection, the FLO also had occasion to deal with immigration officials. In addition, it produced a number of widely used documents including the "FLO Update" (an early version of the "FLO Focus") and the "Washington Assignment Notebook." Almost immediately, the staff was expanded to include an experienced senior Foreign Service secretary. An Education Officer and an Employment Officer were soon added. After the first Deputy Director left the Office and became the FLO/CLO in Bonn, she and the FLO Director convened the first CLO Conference in Bonn for the CLOs from a number of Iron Curtain countries. Subsequently, the former Deputy Director traveled from Bonn to six posts for what amounted to an early and much simpler version of CLO training.

FLO Now:

From these very modest beginnings, the FLO has become a veritable State Department institution that is recognized by many other government agencies for the crucial support it provides for our Foreign Service community both here and overseas. From the original staff of two, the **Director** and **Deputy Director** now manage a staff of 12 plus temporary personnel such as the Abidjan and Jakarta CLOs, who have been evacuated and who are working from the FLO to help their respective evacuated communities. An evacuated computer specialist is also providing additional expertise at a very busy time. The Education Officer has become the **Education and Youth Officer**. The family member employment portfolio has increased dramatically. There are now an **Employment Program Coordinator**, a **Special Employment Projects Coordinator** and an **Employment Program Specialist**. A **Program Assistant** also works full-time on employment issues. The electronic age has created possibilities undreamed of earlier and the FLO utilizes the services of one full-time staff member as **Publications Coordinator**. To provide specialized assistance to people experiencing a personal or post crisis, the **Support Services Officer** was designated to deal especially with evacuations and divorce. In response to the



The first CLO Conference was held in Bonn in May 1982, for the CLOs from Iron Curtain countries. Such regional CLO training is now a regular part of FLO's role in training and supporting CLOs around the world.

problems which foreign-born spouses were experiencing when they applied for citizenship, the **Naturalization Program Specialist** was added to the staff. Finally, to manage the worldwide CLO program, a **CLO Support Officer** was created. From the initial 15 pilot CLOs, the number has risen to an incredible 173. They are staffed by 240 CLOs, Co-CLOs, Assistant CLOs and "Faux" CLOs who are sometimes FSNs who serve when there is no family member. A **second Program Assistant** provides information and assistance in the areas of support services, evacuations and education and youth. There is also an **Executive Assistant** who supports the Director and Deputy Director and serves as Office Manager. And finally, there is the **Front Desk Receptionist** who functions as a Program Assistant as needed. Even with such an expanded staff, the FLO is often taxed to the maximum as the Office endeavors to continue its advocacy agenda, manage numerous programs, supply individualized help and fulfill the administrative requirements of working in a bureaucracy.

Two Useful Lessons:

It is instructive to examine the role of the AAFSW as an independent entity. The FLO would probably never have been created from within the bureaucracy which is by nature conservative and which resists change.

Twenty-five years ago it was perhaps even more conservative and resistant to change than it is now. It took an outside and independent organization such as the AAFSW to give the bureaucracy a nudge and to act as a catalyst for change. Of course, there were other factors which just happened to work in everyone's favor—what the first FLO Director described as "...a felicitous constellation of the right people working together at the right time." In any event, I hope that the AAFSW will continue to use the "independence advantage" constructively.

The second useful lesson is that if the AAFSW believes that something is worth doing, it should always take a stand even if the beginnings are on a small scale. The FLO began modestly enough through the efforts of a group of determined, well-informed and committed volunteers. What it is today is the result of many, many people working together and building on the efforts of those who preceded them in the office.

The AAFSW is delighted to see what an irreplaceable institution the FLO has become.

Congratulations on the occasion of your 25th anniversary!

We extend our gratitude and our admiration to the FLO and to the CLOs for the immeasurable support they have provided through the years for the well-being of our Foreign Service community.

*Mette Beecroft
AAFSW President Emerita*

Editor's Note: *Mette was the first Deputy Director of the Family Liaison Office. In addition to serving on the AAFSW Board, she also is a State Department employee in the Division of Travel and Transportation.*

Foreign Service Link

Why FLO? — An Interview with Lesley Dorman, former AAFSW President

Q. Many people have credited you with being “Mother FLO” because of your role in getting FLO off the ground 25 years ago. How would you describe your role?

A. Well, back then I was serving as President of AAFSW. This organization was concerned about the prevailing attitude toward spouses in the Foreign Service. There were a number of problems that needed to be addressed. We established a Forum Committee, of which I was an active participant, to look into ways in which the State Department could better concern itself with family issues. We did an extensive survey of Foreign Service Spouses. From our survey and our Forum meetings came a report, which covered a broad range of issues and included a recommendation to establish an office within the department to deal with these things. Really, the Forum Report was the most important tool. It’s still quite relevant and worth reading.

Three AAFSW board members, including myself, testified before Congress (before the House and then before the Senate) and brought witnesses (members of AAFSW) to give their firsthand accounts. We also testified before the White House Committee on Families. We went directly to State’s Director General of the Foreign Service and to the Undersecretary for Management, who luckily were very receptive to the notion of establishing an office devoted to addressing family issues. The Family Liaison Office opened its doors in 1978, and shortly thereafter, its funding authorization and establishment were written into the Foreign Service Act. This is important because it meant that the FLO couldn’t be dissolved at the whim of new Department management. And AAFSW has always been there to support FLO.

Q. Who or what would you credit most with generating the concept of the Family Liaison Office?



Lesley Dorman, former AAFSW President (who lobbied to establish the Family Liaison Office) with Melissa Hess (now a member of the FLO staff), who received last year’s Dorman Award for service to AAFSW.

A. AAFSW’s Forum can be credited with generating the concept of FLO, but we were also extremely fortunate to have the right people at the right time. Our Forum group started at the top, which is probably why we were so successful. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Undersecretary for Management Benjamin Read and Director General Carol Laise and later Harry Barnes were very amenable to addressing family concerns and establishing an office to deal with them. Of course, establishment of the FLO would cost money and State would have to be convinced. But, as I said, the time was right. We had spoken with other agency heads and spouses from other agencies (who were AAFSW members) and we really had consensus and support for establishing FLO.

Q. What were some of the most important Foreign Service issues/concerns at the time?

A. Like today, spouses were extremely concerned about employment, education, and other family welfare issues, particularly when posted overseas. Back then, morale in the Foreign Service was extremely low. A good number of women who had given up, or never had careers because they were following their husbands overseas, suddenly were faced with divorce and the stark reality that they were due none of their husbands’ pensions. Wives posted overseas wouldn’t want to report abusive situations because most of the time it wasn’t taken seriously and if it was, the employee was dismissed. We wanted MED to understand the problems faced by families overseas and to offer additional support by providing psychological services. The establishment of Community Liaison Offices was essential to better communications with spouses. Also, education was a huge issue back then. We needed greater education allowances for children overseas, more international schools and counseling services.

Q. How has FLO’s role changed over the years since its inception?

A. Oh, it’s grown! It’s adapted to the changing world and in response to new challenges. I was hopeful this would happen. This is true for AAFSW also. I mean, look at *Livelines*—an entirely new way of reaching out to Foreign Service families. I really am pleased with how things are running.

Q. Can you explain the relationship between AAFSW and FLO?

A. AAFSW really was the force that established FLO and we are the only people who can continue to help FLO if its existence is in jeopardy. I cannot think of any other time that an outside, autonomous organization effected such a management change at

State. AAFSW made the Department realize the need for FLO. Once State agreed, AAFSW helped in the selection of the initial staff, lobbied to keep FLO directly under Management, and even helped choose its accommodation at State. We've always looked after FLO, like a mother hen. FLO has always been gracious about our role and even named its board room for AAFSW!

Q. What do you believe are the most important issues facing FS families today upon which both AAFSW and FLO are or should be focusing?

A. Employment for spouses probably remains the most important and difficult issue. Twenty-five years ago, the FLO established the Skills Bank, a way of identifying spouses' employment potential. Since then, FLOs employment support services have grown to include several full-time staff dedicated to helping spouses locate work both overseas and back here in the States. Certainly the Internet has changed the way in which FLO and AAFSW do businesses and are able to reach spouses. We need to do more.

Dealing with evacuations is another important and growing issue. AAFSW has always helped FLO provide support to those evacuees returning to the Washington, D.C. area. With increasing threats and dangers to Americans, we will see a great many more evacuations in the months and years to come. Foreign Service families need as much help as can be given in terms of coping with terrorism, briefing children, being prepared.

I know that FLO and AAFSW are searching for better ways to do things. CLOs should give FLO more feedback so that FLO can be more responsive. Those returning to the States should also give input to FLO and AAFSW so we can better meet the needs of those overseas. I'd also like to see more people join AAFSW, including FLO staff! It's always struck me odd that our membership never significantly increased after lobbying so hard to establish FLO. One would think people would want to support the organization that worked to ensure a better quality of life for Foreign Service families. All those people on *Livelines* who are getting wonderful free advice should pony up and join!

Editor's Note: Lesley Dorman served as President of AAFSW at the time the Family Liaison Office was established in 1978, and lobbied heavily for its creation. She serves on AAFSW's Board as Public Relations Chairperson.

Program Link

The Challenges of White House Press Secretaries

Anyone who watches the TV news broadcasts becomes well acquainted with the president's press secretary whose duty is to meet regularly with the members of the White House press for the purpose of answering questions regarding the President's policies, opinions or actions on wide variety of problems and events of the day. He/she is in effect standing in for the President until such time as the President decides to call a press conference himself.

A new book by our speaker, Dr. William C. Spragens, entitled "New Media for the New Millennium" attempts to analyze the roles of the White House press secretaries from Jim Brady to Mike McCurry and how journalists and the public perceive their work. An attempt is being made to have a representative from the press corps participate.

Dr. Spragens is chairman of the consulting firm of Spragens and Skinner Associates in the Washington area. He is also professor emeritus of Political Science at Bowling Green State University. A political scientist and author, as well as a political writer and former journalist, Dr. Spragens has actively studied the relationship between media and politics. For nearly two decades, he served on the editorial board of *Presidential Studies Quarterly* and was associate editor of that publication from 1991 to 1999. He has published a number of books, including "Electronic Magazines: Soft News Programs on Network Television" (1995) and "Popular Images of American Presidents" (1988), among others. Dr. Spragens and his associates currently are working on a research project involving interviews with department spokesmen including former State Department spokesman Ambassador Nicholas Burns.

—Barbara Gordon, AAFSW Program Chair

Due to increased security, all names must be submitted at least three (3) business days ahead.

Reservations: Contact Pearl Richardson at 202-265-3301 or the AAFSW Office at 202-362-6514.

March 25th Program

(9:30 a.m. - 12 noon)

Please reply by March 19th

Name (as you wish it on name tag): _____

Social Security Number: _____

Telephone: _____ New Member? yes ____ no ____

Name(s) of Guest(s) and SSN(s): _____

Please send form with check made out to AAFSW (\$10 per person) to:
AAFSW Reservations, 5125 MacArthur Blvd. NW, Suite 36,
Washington, DC 20016.

No refunds can be made or reservations accepted after March 19th.

Member Link

Remembered: Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson Dies at Age 97

Editor's note: *Marvin was an amazing Foreign Service woman, who, through her MARPAT Foundation, was one of the most generous benefactors of AAFSW. Much of the following was drawn from her eulogy given on January 9, 2003 at Washington's National Cathedral by The Honorable Clarence J. Brown, Jr.*

Few people have packed as many accomplishments into their lives as Mary Marvin Breckinridge, a remarkable Foreign Service spouse and benefactor, who recently passed away at the age of 97. Descended from the famous Confederate General John Breckenridge and wealthy industrialist B.F. Goodrich, Marvin was imbued with confidence and determination to make her mark.

Within months of graduating from Vassar in 1927, at a time when few women were attending college, she helped found the National Student Association of America, had her formal debut in New York society and had learned to fly an airplane near the family vacation home in York, Maine, where she became that state's first licensed female pilot. She also began her lifelong interest in multiple flash photography.

In 1930, at the age of 25, Marvin made a black and white silent film called "The For-

gotten Frontier" about her cousin's Frontier Nursing Service. This film has been cited by the American Film Institute as an historic and all-time classic.

After studying still photography with Clarence White in New York, she traveled the world taking photographs that would appear in magazines such as *Life*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Town and Country*, and others.

Marvin eventually ended up in London, where famed CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow asked her to report on the impact on average British families of the war just begun in Europe. She wrote her own on-air portions of broadcasts from London and other locations in Western Europe, three times boarding the last train out of a nation as the Nazis invaded.

Her most lasting adventure, however, was her marriage to Jefferson Patterson, the Dayton, Ohio diplomat and son of a founder of National Cash Register. Assigned to Berlin after their marriage in 1940, a year before the U.S. entered the war, the two visited German prison camps under the auspices of the International Red Cross to interview captured American partisans and allied prisoners of war. When the State Department suggested

that it was "unseemly" for the wife of a diplomat to also serve as a journalist, Marvin acceded to her husband's career. She accompanied her husband on assignments to Peru, Belgium, Egypt, the U.N. Special Committee on the Balkans, and Uruguay, where he served as U.S. Ambassador. After giving up her professional career, Marvin took photographs and wrote articles only for the benefit of U.S. interests and family and to provide advice to the wives of diplomats and to the Department itself. She took seriously her duties as wife, hostess, staff director and exemplar of her country. As ambassador's wife in Uruguay, she kept records of her time and activities and found that she logged 80 hours a week!

For 20 years after their retirement from the Foreign Service, Jeff and Marvin Patterson continued to travel, write, and photograph, sharing their experiences and serving on the boards and committees of numerous organizations, including The Frontier Nursing Service, the Textile Museum, the National Symphony Orchestra, Meridian House International, International Student House, The Smithsonian Institution, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Marvin and her husband gave financial and material support to countless organizations and institutions. When her husband died in 1977, Marvin devoted her remaining 30 years to "decollecting" as she described her amazing generosity. She established the MARPAT Foundation to continue this legacy. For this and so much more, she will long be remembered.

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