

July 1999

THE LAFF SOCIETY

For the men and women engaged in Life After the Ford Foundation

The LAFFing Parade

Marilyn Megargel since retiring wonders how she ever found time to work. She serves as president of the Kappa Alpha Theta Alumnae Club of Scarsdale and lower Westchester, and is on the Secondary Admissions Committee for the University of Pennsylvania. "With three granddaughters in Brearley, I go to everything and pick up the girls after school whenever possible." (7 Midland Gardens, Bronxville NY 10708).

David Heaps (International Affairs) continues to pen letters to the *NY Times*, this time challenging the notion that Western-style democracy is the only viable alternative to socioeconomic disaster for many developing countries. Referring to events in Indonesia, he writes that many such countries, crippled by poverty, "want neither Communism nor Western-style democracy," adding that "when issuing injunctions to countries seeking their own forms of emancipation, policy makers should recall that the United States ranks last among industrial countries in per capital contribution to international development." (317 Carter Road, Princeton NJ 08540)

Marilyn Reichstein (Communications), whose good taste has been reflected for the past dozen years in the design and illustration of the Foundation's handsome publications, has retired and will be devoting her time to music and art, including sharpening her skills on the piano.

After five years serving as a deputy in the Dinkins administration



No More Evaluations

*Another LAFFer bringing us up to date on her activities since leaving the Manila office, where she was deputy representative and program officer, is **Mary Racelis** (26 First Avenue, Beverly Hills, Antipolo City, Philippines):*

"Just when I was beginning to conclude that when LAFF begins, contacts with the FF in New York cease, your letter came! I'm glad to know than an army of 510 [a bit less actually], now 511 with me, keeps in touch with the Foundation and one another.

"LAFF for me has gone on almost one year, my departure date having been September 10, 1997. After my retirement in Manila, I returned to my first love of 20 years earlier—teaching at the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila (Jesuit) University. Although I left academia in 1979 because I wanted to do something more with my social development knowledge than theorize and debate, now 20 years later, having worked on development programs with UNICEF in New York and Africa and the Ford Foundation in the Philippines, I am excited to be participating once more in sometimes esoteric but always fascinating academic happenings. University involvement also means writing serious research papers once more, forcing me to review seriously the literature in my field which I have long set aside. I love it!

"At the same time I have started writing a monthly newspaper column on
(cont. on p. 8)

"and one year for that *other* Mayor," **Marian Krauskopf** (National Affairs) has "metamorphosed" into a consultant and has taken on assignments for the FF. (12 West 96 St, NY 10025)

Pat Addeo (Reports) traded in her job with Rockefeller and Co. to devote full time to caring for Justin Shiv Rai, born Aug. 16, 1998 and named after her father-in-law. "Motherhood is a real joy - BUT what a job. Never ends." (18 Old Farm Lane, Hartsdale NY 10530)

Tom Seessel (National Affairs) has retired from the presidency of

Seedco (Structured Employment and Economic Development Corp.) and is devoting his time to commercial real estate and the political scene in New Jersey, where he has lived for many years (Featherbed Lane East, Hopewell 08525). His successor is **Bill Grinker** (National Affairs), who founded the organization more than a decade ago to promote community development partnerships linking higher education and health care institutions with neighborhood-based groups. Another recent Seedco staff addition: **Roland**

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The LAFF Society

c/o Mary Camper-Titsingh
531 Main Street, Apt. #1110
New York, NY 10044

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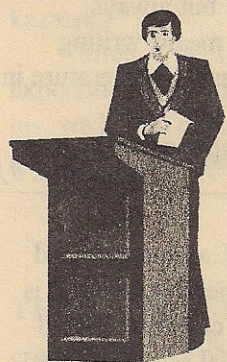
A Comment on 'The Color of Truth'

Kai Bird's recently published biography, The Color of Truth, of the Bundy brothers, McGeorge (the Foundation's president from 1966-79) and William, provoked a long letter to Bird from Francis X. Sutton, former International Division deputy vice president, taking issue with the author's interpretations about the fateful decisions by the United States government, and the Bundys' role therein, to intervene militarily in Vietnam. The letter, which Frank shared with LAFF, is interesting in its own right, and readers may want to ask him for a copy (80 Bellair Drive, Dobbs Ferry NY 10522 -fax: 914 693-3420, email: fxsutton@aol.com).

In view of Frank's familiarity with the book and given LAFF's preoccupation with matters involving Ford and Ford people, we asked him to write a review of the book that, while not neglecting the White House years, would focus more on Mac Bundy's Ford presidency. He graciously complied and it follows with only slight excisions to fit the available space.

Encore! Encore!

In September, LAFF sponsored a highly successful "LAFF Conversation," an evening of wine and cheese followed by a talk by Gordon Conway, former FF staffer who now leads the Rockefeller Foundation.



He's a hard act to follow, but, encouraged by the turnout and tenor of the evening, we hope to have another "Conversation With..." What we need are suggestions of speakers who will

draw an ample audience. They can be former staff members who have distinguished themselves in one way or another. They can be a panel of two or more on an interesting subject. Or they can be outsiders with something of moment to say to former Ford Foundation staff. Please send suggestions to Dick Magat, Westbourne Apts., Bronxville NY 10708. E-mail rimagat@aol.com

The Ford Foundation and Carleton College had presidential relations for many years. Laurence Gould, geologist and Antarctic explorer, was a Ford trustee from 1954 to 1966 during his time as Carleton's president. **Howard Swearer** went in 1970 from the Foundation staff to head Carleton, and when he left Minnesota for Brown, **Bob Edwards** came from the Foundation to take his place. So it was not at all remarkable that Ford's president, **McGeorge Bundy**, should, one day in November 1972, have been telling his views on the Vietnam war to a Carleton seminar, though he could hardly have suspected that he would get a biographer out of the visit.

Kai Bird was a Carleton undergraduate in 1972. He and some 88 other undergraduates had been arrested a couple of years earlier for "the largest act of civil disobedience in the history of the state;" they had blocked the doors of a draft-induction center. He tells in the introduction to *The Color of Truth/McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy: Brothers in Arms* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1998) that he came angry to a hot, crowded room to hear and see a man whose "complicity in a senseless and therefore immoral war...had divided America like nothing since the Civil War..." He stayed curious about McGeorge Bundy, and now has written a full-length book about him and his brother William, who also had high responsibilities during that war.

True to its origins, this is above all a Vietnam book. There is a chapter on Mac as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, and a later one on his presidency of the Ford Foundation. But most of the book keeps trying to explain how these superbly intelligent and decent men, as Bird came to know the Bundys to be, could have steered the tragic American course in Vietnam.

There is clearly an important function to the accounts of ancestors, childhood, and schooling in the opening chapters of a biography subtitled "Brothers in Arms." Bird's original intention was to include the Bundy brothers' father, Harvey, as a full figure in a kind of family biography. As it turned out, Harvey Hollister Bundy, "the patriarch," remains an important character, with a chapter of his own that introduces Henry Stimson, under whom Harvey served as assistant secretary of state during the Hoover administration and later as special

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assistant in World War II, when Stimson was Secretary of War. After World War II, Mac Bundy became "Stimson's scribe," drafting a famous *Harpers* article on the decision to use the Bomb on Hiróshima and then a full-length book of Stimson's memoirs. Henry Stimson became for young generations of Americans a kind of ancestral voice justifying war. When Bird comes to tell of the Bundy brothers' fateful decision, after the assassination of John Kennedy, to stay on with Lyndon Johnson, "though the personal chemistry was all wrong," he calls them "quintessential Stimsonians: tough-minded realists who nevertheless had liberal sensibilities about America's role in a world dominated by the Cold War."

Kai Bird is hardly a Stimsonian; he is so regularly critical of the use of force in international affairs as to bring himself close to those who think all conflicts can be resolved if only enough diplomatic skill, empathy, and patience are exercised. He finds the Bundys were "loyal to a fault when they should have abandoned" President Johnson. This quality of loyalty he makes perhaps even more important than Stimsonian toughness in bringing about the Vietnam tragedy. He documents carefully the doubts the brothers had about Johnson's actions in 1964-65 and faults their lack of "courage" in not insisting on them. And he almost indignantly asks, "Why did presidential loyalty require [Mac] Bundy to continue to defend the war long after he left government in 1966?"

Those of us who worked with Mac at the Ford Foundation or elsewhere would not find the strength of his loyalty to the American government and its President at all strange. I believe Bird simply fails to understand this strength of Mac's institutional loyalties, maybe because of his belonging to a younger generation that, rightly or wrongly, does not put

as much weight on such loyalties.

Bird is much more positive about Mac's liberalism, and his sympathies with it make the chapter on the years at the Ford Foundation a bright burst of sunshine after the somber skies of Washington and Vietnam. According to Bird, the pre-Bundy foundation had been "exceedingly cautious" and needed big changes, as Mac had written John McCloy, Ford's chairman, as early as 1962. When he came to Ford in 1966, Mac actually made less radical changes than he proposed to McCloy. In 1962 Mac thought the Foundation staff should be cut to one-third or even one-fifth of its existing size. Those around at the time found our numbers swelled during the boss's first years. Bundy also told McCloy that except for Overseas Development, he would cut the number of Foundation grants to no more than 50 a year. In a 1988 reminiscence for a Columbia University seminar on philanthropy, Bundy declared that the style of Ford's work was established when he came; he said it was a professional organization when he arrived and it was that way when he left. And as for its programs, nothing that was changed was as important as what was continued.

Bundy, in the modest way that came on him in his last years, thus depicted himself as a steward of continuity at Ford. This is not Bird's story. He tells how Mac moved briskly after his arrival to put the Foundation into the social and cultural upheavals of the late 1960s and, as *Fortune* and Congressman Wright Patman said in differing accents, tried to make it into an engine for social change. He gives lively accounts of the Bundy-Friendly sallies into public television and the many expressions of Mac's passionate commitment to addressing the problem of race in the U. S. He tells of the innovations in community develop-

ment, public interest law, program-related investments, and doesn't neglect the troubled history of school decentralization in New York City, the grants to Bobby Kennedy's staff, and the Congressional wrath that brought the 1969 Tax Act. For Kai Bird, Bundy at the Ford Foundation was a liberal social reformer who, undismayed by criticism and mistakes, led the way to a new activism of philanthropic foundations.

The dissonance between Bundy's own retrospective on his Foundation years and Bird's story comes largely from Bird's focusing on only a part of the Foundation's programs in those years. Except for a glancing reference to population programs, Bird neglects the overseas development programs which continued in nearly full vigor, despite the disastrous effects of the 1970s stagflation on the Foundation's resources. There were other continuities on the domestic side, too. But there is, of course, fundamental truth about Mac Bundy in Bird's portrait of him as Ford's president. It brightens and complements the tough Stimsonian profile of other chapters, capturing some of the vision and optimism that made Mac a leader inspiring affectionate loyalty, even awe. It is in some ways too "political" a portrait of a wondrously faceted man whose intelligence, wit, and character made everyday business occasions for pleasure and excitement.

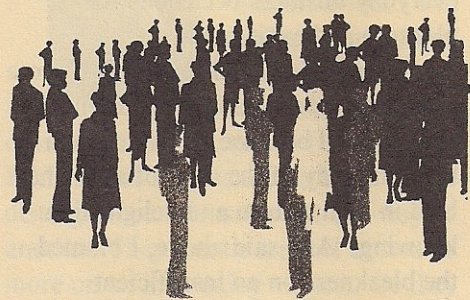
When I first read this book I wrote to Kai Bird protesting that I found it hard to read because he had made a bleak tragedy of the lives of men I had held in high esteem and delighted in knowing. As I said above, I blamed the bleakness on an insufficient appreciation of the Bundys' loyalties, and also of the inescapable moral imperfections of governmental action. After Mac left the Ford Foundation and Bill the U. S. government and the editorship of *Foreign Affairs*, they

continued to wrestle with the awesome problems of statesmanship in a nuclear age, producing influential policy initiatives and major historical works. Mac was working on memoirs when he died, and we are told that his collaborator, Gordon Goldstein, is bringing them to completion. But it is also good to remember that the passions of the Ford years still held him; he told me not long before he died that he was reading *The Bell Curve*, keeping up the good fight for affirmative action!

Scholars Read of LAFF Society

The LAFF Society is celebrated in an article in the latest issue of *The Independent Scholar*, the publication of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. Titled "Playing It for LAFFs: A Wholly Disowned Alumni Group," the article was written by **Richard Magat**, co-founder with the late **Ed Meade** of LAFF.

Recalling that the Foundation declined to provide names and addresses when the organization began, the article notes that expansion has been by word of mouth. (Is there a parallel to the 1950s, when the Foundation regarded the Fund for the Republic, which it had founded, as a



"wholly disowned subsidiary," as the late Dwight MacDonald wrote?) The article speculates that the potential LAFF membership is easily twice the present number (492). It says that

expectations for the group have been met and exceeded. These were "to remember old bonds, possibly renew acquaintances, perhaps even help one another professionally, and satisfy sheer curiosity. The enterprise was also "topped with a dollop of nostalgia, for which we make no apology."

Various LAFF Society activities are reviewed—the newsletter and directory, the two reunion galas, and the "evening with..." experiment. Also recalled are various essays in the newsletter, ranging from **F. Champion Ward's** "Life in a Man-Made Cocoon" to **Robert Schrank's** "On Doing Nothing."

Copies may be obtained without charge (please include self-addressed envelope *with* stamps or equivalent: the treasury is again showing signs of anemia) from Dorothy Nixon, 420 DeWitt Avenue, Belleville NJ 07109 (E-mail: nixondo@umdnj.edu).

The Laffing Parade

(cont. from p. 1)

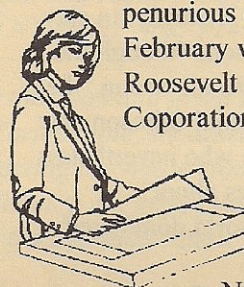
Anglin, senior vice president, who has been deputy director of the Foundation's Office of Community and Resource Development.

Judith Samuelson, who has managed the Foundation's program-related investments office, now is with the Aspen Institute's Initiative on Social Investment, a project that is examining the impact of corporations on society's various stakeholders (845 Third Ave, 3rd Fl, NYC 10022). Her predecessor in that office, **Tom Miller**, most recently with the Foundation's Nairobi office, is now living in Knoxville and consulting for the East Tennessee Community Foundation.

An item in the *New York Times* about the risky business of investing in overseas capital markets makes prominent mention of **Lilia Clemente**, once a member of the Foundation's

investment staff and now chairwoman and chief executive of Clemente Capital, one of top performing international fund managers (152 W. 57th St). Given the recent performance of these markets, Ms. Clemente, according to the *Times*, is staying away from Russia, reducing her exposure in Latin America, and looking favorably on the economic outlook in Thailand.

Mary Camper-Titsingh (Investments), who keeps the books for this penurious organization, in February was appointed to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's Capital Planning and Development Committee by **Joseph Lynch**, commissioner of the NY State Division of



Housing and Community Renewal. Mary is a resident of Roosevelt Island, which is located in the middle of the East River with a gondola-tram providing transport to Manhattan Island.

Recent addition to our ranks: **Carla Precht** who worked for the Foundation in 1978 helping **Jim Kelly** of the public education staff prepare a bibliography of Foundation-supported research during his tenure. Carla is currently a program officer at the Robert Bowne Foundation after spending 20 years "running and working for social action and social services agencies in NYC. My last job was executive director for the Riverdale Neighborhood House, a settlement house in the Northwest Bronx. I have a husband and two young children." (439 15th St, Brooklyn NY)

Pencil always at the ready, especially when the welfare of New York City is at issue, **Lou Winnick** (National Affairs) in a *NY Times* op-ed laments the imbroglio that has arisen over the the Cooper Square Urban Renewal Project on Manhattan's

Bowery. The dispute pits two fiery feminist activists; Kate Millett who is trying to block demolition of an ancient tenement where she rents two spacious lofts for a puny \$500, and Councilwoman Kathryn Freed who wants the building razed to make way for new housing and other amenities. In other times and circumstances, Winnick writes, "it would have been inconceivable for Ms. Millett and Ms. Freed to be in opposition. But history instructs us that radical cadres evince a sharp appetite to devour their own, the enemy within."

Hilary Feldstein, a member of the National Affairs staff from 1968 to 1970, checks in with the news that she is now with the International Center for Research on Women in Washington DC. "After taking time out in New Hampshire for small children and a very small photography business, I ended up in 1981-82 working as program officer in the Nairobi office with **Goran Hyden**. It was an ideal perch for getting back into international development work. From 1983 to 1998 I was a consultant principally helping agricultural researchers appreciate the gender dimensions of their work, first with farming systems research and then with CGIAR [Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research]. In both cases FF was a major contributor to this effort." (1735 New Hampshire Ave NW, Apt 603, Washington DC 20009)

Rainmakers Needed

The mails have been a mite thin of late. So herewith a plea, once again, to send LAFF your personal and professional news, reminiscences, critiques, anecdotes, even bad jokes. We have been trying to publish three times a year but may be forced to cut back to two if the drought continues. Especially appreci-

ated are essays of 750 words or so on virtually any subject that you think will interest colleagues. We want to hear especially from alumni of the 1980s and 1990s, who correspond with us infrequently. Send your news (and dues, now \$7.50 per year) to Mary Camper-Titsingh, 531 Main Street #1110 NY 10044.

About Face

Among alumni(ae) who have changed careers since leaving the Foundation is Joy Carol, formerly of the Education staff (549 W. 123 St Apt. 13H, New York 10027). She writes:

"Some of you may remember that I had a brain tumor several years ago and that I underwent successful surgery for it. In fact, I'm thrilled to report that last November I passed the benchmark five years. Brain tumors—especially when they are accidentally discovered in the nick of time by a terrible, but blessed, freak accident—can certainly make a person stop the usual busy treadmill activities and take stock!

"Two years ago I did an 'about face' in my life and went back to school again—this time at the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church in New York City. In May 1998 I graduated with a master's degree in spiritual direction after two very special years of intense study. Now I work as a spiritual director with a number of people assisting them as they progress on their life journeys. I also work as a volunteer chaplain at Bellevue Hospital and at a hospice program of the Beth Israel Hospital. In addition I help an organization that contributes stories to the wonderful new magazine *Spirituality and Health*, available through the web site: www.spiritualrx.com. I also lead workshops and speak on healing and spirituality for churches and other organizations.

"But one of my greatest challenges these days is writing a really exciting book focusing on healing (not necessarily curing): spiritual, physical, emotional, political. The stories are of people (from the U. S., South Africa, Northern Ireland, Vietnam) who have suffered deeply and have gone through a very special healing process. It's very inspiring to interview and write about them. And although I've left my work in international development for the time being, I still have had some incredible travel opportunities this past year: in Laos, Vietnam, Ireland, Switzerland, Greece, and Turkey—all spiritual journeys."

More on Fred Friendly

Stuart Sucherman's warm account of Fred Friendly's presentations to the Ford Foundation's Trustees (No. 18, Summer 1998, p. 4) sparked more memories from Will Hertz (Reports, International, Secretary's Office) of Fred's bravura performances in the board room:

"In the eight years I regularly attended board meetings, Fred was the master of the fast come-back to Trustee questions. On one occasion, a Trustee expressed some exasperation with Fred's continuing requests for funds for a certain activity, and asked, 'Fred, do you see any light at the end of this tunnel?' 'Oh, I see the light at the end of the tunnel all right,' Fred responded, 'but it may be New Jersey. You wouldn't want to stop there, would you?'

"But many of Fred's best lines were carefully rehearsed. I know because I was sitting next to him at the board table and he often tried them out



on me. Once he asked me whether Chair Alex Heard's eyes were green, gray, or blue. Gray, I guessed. Sure enough. Alex asked a tough question, and Fred began his response" 'Alex, when I look into your steely gray eyes...'

"Under Fred's crusty and sometimes flippant exterior, he was a man of great kindness. After I joined the Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan, I brought Fred's 'Delicate Balance' road show to Flint, using local participants. Before he would expose them to Arthur Miller's aggressive questioning, he asked to meet with them ahead of time over a cup of coffee to break the ice and calm their nerves. Everyone left the room convinced that Fred was the calmest, most patient man on earth."

Upping the Ante...Reluctantly

Since The LAFF Society began in 1991, dues have been \$5 a year. That means barely scraping through, and in fact, we have been so short that a few of us have had to make loans to tide the organization over.

As we have complained frequently about being short (and about some people not paying anything), various members have said we should simply raise the dues.

This is something we have now decided to do, albeit reluctantly. Henceforth the dues are \$7.50 a year.

We ask all members to provide the additional \$2.50 now. If you have never paid, we ask you to pay \$7.50 now.

In the meantime, thanks to those have consistently paid annually, and especially to those who have paid several years in advance—including one stalwart who recently sent \$75 to cover herself, her husband, plus a "contribution to the cause."

As always, the year paid up will be noted in your address label, but because of the transition, there may be some kinks, for which forgive us.

Finally, those who have for whatever reason not paid dues, we ask you to join your brothers and sisters who do.

In Memoriam

ELINOR BARBER

Elinor Barber, who was a member of the Foundation's International Division staff from 1967 to 1979, died in early February of a pulmonary embolism. She was married for more than 50 years to Bernard Barber, now an emeritus professor of sociology at Columbia and at one time a consultant to the Foundation on the ethics of research on human subjects.

Elinor was born in 1924 in Prague to the Petschek family of prominent European industrialists. In 1938 the family fled to England and then in 1940 to the United States, where Elinor enrolled in Vassar College, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1945. She went on to graduate work in history at Harvard, writing her dissertation on the *The Bourgeoisie in 18th Century France*, which was published by Princeton University Press and sold 20,000 copies, something of a record for an academic book at the time.

Elinor and Bernard were married in 1948 and both taught at Smith College before moving to Columbia in 1952. From 1961 to 1967, Elinor was biographies editor for the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, a 17-volume work only now being replaced as the standard social science encyclopedia. In 1967 she came to the Ford Foundation, joining a small staff in **David Bell's** vice-presidential office for the International Division. When

David Bell learned of Elinor's death, he wrote to Bernard saying:

"I always thought of her as a leading member of the classy **Sutton-Barber-Goodwin-Sweaver** team that worked on area studies, foreign students in the U. S., and other aspects of international education during the Bundy years at the Ford Foundation. That group was enormously innovative, hard-working, and effective in a time of rapidly changing demands and—regrettably—shrinking Ford resources."

Elinor's work at Ford quickly became devoted to these subjects. When McGeorge Bundy took the presidency of the Foundation in 1966, he decided he would need to reduce the major program of support to international studies in American universities that John Howard and his colleagues had built up over the preceding decade and a half. He did so partly in expectation that the federal government would replace Ford monies. The relevant legislation was passed but never funded and soon there was a procession of distressed university presidents coming to the Foundation. They declared that what they had only recently built with Ford grants might wither and pass away if they were not helped with new Ford monies. David Bell's list of worthies and many others all across the International Division were put to various forms of rescue work and bridge-building. But it was Elinor who became known throughout the leading American universities as the person who could be counted on to be attending every day to their international needs. An important milestone was a special transitional program amounting to \$8 million in the years 1969-71 but the seventies continued as a difficult decade for the Ford Foundation and international studies. The innovations Dave Bell praised had often to be Elinor's inventions from necessity as we stretched inflation-thinned dollars.

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Programs for women in the Foundation gave Elinor another field for her industry and talents, one that was then expanding, not contracting. With a group of women program officers that included Mariam Chamberlain and the Foundation's current president, Susan Berresford, Elinor promoted the upsurge of these programs in the 1970s that has gone on to distinguish the Foundation ever since. After leaving the Foundation, Elinor became director of research for the Institute of International Education. There had long been feelings that IIE should not confine itself to administering large and small programs of educational exchange—one rude Ford officer said, "IIE is all brawn and no brains." Elinor went to correct that image by directing a strong program of research that illuminated what exchanges meant and were achieving. A regrettable dwindling of funds for this sort of educational research led to her subsequent departure for Columbia, where she became an assistant to the provost. At her death she was working on a study of undergraduate choices for graduate education.

Elinor and Bernard were an inseparable couple who had a rich family life with four children and eight grandchildren. Elinor may have had to be stingy with university presidents but she was famously generous with family and friends. And those of us who knew her as a shy person also like to remember how she loved to sing and could always be counted among the faithful when it was time for the holiday season carolling in the atrium

—F. X. Sutton

Directory Now Ready

A new edition of The Laff Society directory is now available. The directory may be ordered for \$3.50 from Mary Camper-Titsingh, 531 Main St., Apt. 1110, New York, NY 10044.

WHITMAN BASSOW

Whitman Bassow, formerly of the Office of Reports staff, died of kidney cancer February 24 at the age of 78. Bassow, the author of a highly praised account of American correspondents in the Soviet Union—*The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York: William Morrow, 1988)—had no news experience when he joined United Press in 1955, but he spoke Russian and had just received a Ph. D. in Russian history from the Sorbonne under a Fulbright grant.

In Moscow he covered the tumultuous de-Stalinization years. At CBS News he covered Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the U. S., and in 1960 he opened *Newsweek's* Moscow bureau. He was expelled by the Soviets in 1962 for "violating the standards of behavior of foreign correspondents in the USSR," but was given no particulars for the action.

After leaving the Foundation he served as press officer for the first United Nations conference on the environment in Stockholm in 1972. With UN development funds, he founded the World Environment Center, a nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance to developing countries. He retired as the center's president in 1990. Honoring this work, the Overseas Press Club established an annual Whitman Bassow Award for reporting on international environmental issues.

Bassow is survived by his wife of 19 years, Mimi Clifford, a daughter, Fern Bassow, and a granddaughter. Memorial contributions may be made to Connecticut Hospice, 81 Burban Drive, Branford CT 06405

Whit — A Recollection

by Richard Magat



After a distinguished career as a foreign correspondent, working in the Foundation's Office of Reports must have been weak tea for Whit. Who could compare the heady challenges of interpreting the mysterious and combative Moscow regime to the American people with grinding out news releases, brochures, and annual reports about the Foundation's work? If Whit ever felt diminished, he didn't show it. Although he was proud of his journalistic exploits, he never bragged about them.

Whit organized the first reunion of journalists who had reported from the Soviet Union. Appropriately, Whit's dissertation was a history of "a subject dear to the hearts of the Soviets," the pre-revolutionary Pravda, to which V. I. Lenin was a frequent contributor. His book, *The Moscow Correspondents*, examined the conditions under

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which "the most exclusive club in American journalism" lived, the frustration, the pressures, the rivalries, the excitement of covering that special place. In a full-page review, The New York Times Book Review called it "lively, entertaining and informative."

At the environment center, Whit made a singular contribution by expanding corporate awareness of international environmental issues. For the media, the center also published directories of specialists in environmental and energy problems.

Among Foundation staff, Eugene "Rocky" Staples knew Whit longest because they were friends in Moscow, where Rocky served in the American Embassy. He recalls not only Whit's uncommon dedication to his work but also something later friends would find improbable—"an extraordinary athleticism." For example, Whit, who was hardly of NBA stature, joined Rocky and other Americans in playing basketball against a formidable Russian team. For another, Whit once joined young Moiseyev dancers in a vigorous exhibition of the feverish kazatska.

Although my own journalistic experience was meager compared to his, we had in common having been raised in the Bronx. Our relations

thickened after he left the Foundation. For one thing, he hired my wife for the staff of the World Environment Center. For another, we shared many happy occasions with him and his devoted wife Mimi in New York, in their home in Guilford, Connecticut, and once at a dude ranch in Arizona where Whit, who always cut a dapper figure in bow tie and suspenders, adjusted to the local culture by purchasing a magnificent pair of cowboy boots. We will miss his soft sense of humor and his generous friendship.

No More Evaluations

(cont. from p. 1)

social issues that has proven to be quite a challenge as it means communicating in popular, non-technical language. Serving as consultant to the United Nations in the Philippines has also brought me into interesting international circles and report writing.

"Another major new venture for me is becoming the president of a new NGO which some veteran Filipino community organizers have formed, called the Community Organizers Multiversity. Fortunately, the bulk of the work is handled by a terrific executive vice president (I said I never

wanted to write another performance evaluation in my life!). The idea is to build capacity by improving the training of COs and enhancing especially their skills in conflict management and negotiating with government. We are creating CO learning centers in partnership with colleagues all over the country, advocating and fostering networking among community organizers and between community organizers and other NGOs, private sector and even government groups, and documenting, publishing, and disseminating the work of COs and the NGOs and People's Organizations with which they work. Through these efforts we hope to demonstrate the validity of alternative paradigms of society for mainstream evolution. Happily, the Foundation and other donors have provided a generous grant to promote the aims of the group.

"Returning to the Philippines with the Ford Foundation in 1992 after 20 years away enabled me to get back into the active and fascinating development world of the Philippines. For that and much more, I will always be grateful to the Foundation. And that involvement has catapulted me into yet another exciting phase of my activities—LAFF."

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