



# BEYOND BARRIERS

My Fulbright Experience

Fulbright  
ASSOCIATION  
singapore

# 10 YEARS 1998 to 2007

*“The preservation of our free society in the years and decades to come will depend ultimately on whether we succeed or fail in directing the enormous power of human knowledge to the enrichment of our own lives and the shaping of a rational and civilized world order...”*

*It is the task of education, more than any other instrument of foreign policy to help close the dangerous gap between the economic and technological interdependence of the people of the world and their psychological, political and spiritual alienation.”*

[From *Prospects for the West*, Senator J. William Fulbright] Courtesy of Fulbright Association [U.S.]

# **BEYOND** BARRIERS My Fulbright Experience

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# DEDICATION

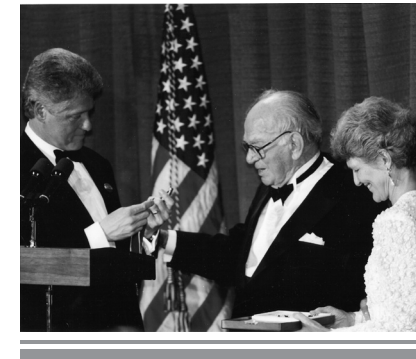
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Senator J. William Fulbright

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Senator Fulbright receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the Fulbright Association's 88th Birthday Tribute to Senator Fulbright on 5 May 1993.

This book is a tribute to the founder of the Fulbright Program. Through sharing how the Fulbright experiences have enriched our lives, we hope to inspire readers to live Senator Fulbright's dream.

We reproduce an article published in the International Herald Tribune in 1995 detailing Senator Fulbright's faith and hopes for the Program.

## The Fulbright Contribution To the Survival of Mankind

J. William Fulbright's crowning achievement came in the earliest days of his long and distinguished Senate career. Only two weeks after the first atomic bomb destroyed the city of Hiroshima, Mr. Fulbright sponsored legislation creating the international educational exchange program which bears his name. The program was his pride and consolation for 50 years.

“The exchange program is the thing that reconciles me to all the difficulties of political life,” he once said. “It’s the only activity that gives me some hope that the human race won’t commit suicide.”

Bill Fulbright continued to actively promote his exchange program well into his ninth decade, even from a wheelchair. He never stopped believing in the program’s purposes and always spoke about them powerfully and eloquently.

In recent years, even as he was less prominent on the public stage in his own land, other nations on every continent continued to bestow on him their highest honors. They recognized that his program had helped to educate several generations of leaders around the globe. Mr. Fulbright’s name has become part of the world language. Speak in India or Japan or Sweden of a “Fulbrighter” and the reference has widespread instant recognition.

In 1945, the freshman senator from Arkansas looked out on the devastation of World War II and on the new atomic age. He took seriously the admonition of Albert Einstein: “We must acquire a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.” Remembering his own experience as a Rhodes Scholar, Mr. Fulbright reasoned that people and nations had to learn to think globally if the world were to avoid annihilation.

He believed that if a larger number of persons came to know, understand, work and learn beside their counterparts in other cultures, “they might,” he said, “develop a capacity for empathy, a distaste for killing other men, and an inclination for peace.”

His legislation establishing the Fulbright Program slipped through the U.S. Senate without debate. Its first participants went overseas in 1946, funded by war reparations and foreign loan repayments.

Since then the program has brought more than 120,000 foreign nationals to teach, study or do research in the United States, and sent more than 90,000 Americans overseas to do the same. The master of Pembroke College, Oxford, once called this “the largest and most significant movement of scholars across the face of the earth since the 15th century.”

Many foreign Fulbrighters have returned home to become prime ministers, cabinet members, diplomats, newspaper editors, and academics. Some, like the United Nations secretary-general, Butros Butros-Ghali, have gone from national to international prominence.

American Fulbrighters have included university presidents Derek Bok and Hannah Gray, economist Milton Friedman; scientist Joshua Lederberg; historian Henry Steele Commager; authors John Updike and Eudora Welty; musician Aaron Copland; actor Stacy Keach; and politician Daniel

Patrick Moynihan, among others. They have also included not-so-well-known Americans – hundreds of elementary and high school teachers who have exchanged classrooms with foreign counterparts for a year and returned home to broaden the views of their students.

Inspired by the value and generosity of this U.S.-funded program, some of the 130 countries where the exchange operates now contribute up to half the funds needed to run their individual programs.

In 1984, more than 100 former Japanese Fulbrighters returned to the United States on what they called a “sentimental journey,” bearing a gift of \$1.6 million they had raised to bring more American Fulbrighters to Japan. Some in this Japanese delegation had studied in the United States immediately after the war. Said one who went on to become Japan’s ambassador to the United States: “In those days, just after the Occupation, there were articles in the Japanese press which were very anti-American. After living in the United States for a year, I simply couldn’t believe those arguments.”

Last spring, Fulbright Program staff at the U.S. Information Agency and the Institute of International Education worked tirelessly to find and bring two Rwandans out of refugee camps in Zaire to take up Fulbright scholarships at Oregon State University and the Berklee School of Music in Boston.

In his book *The Price of Empire* published in 1987, Bill Fulbright wrote: “It is a modest program with an immodest aim – the achievement in international affairs of a regime more civilized, rational and humane...I believed in that possibility when I began. I still do.”

Others do, too. The people in Mr. Fulbright’s hometown in Arkansas endorse the vision of the world he brought them and the importance of the program he sponsored. In a flower garden in the Fayetteville town square is a bust of their favorite son, inscribed with these words: “In the beauty of these gardens, we honor the beauty of his dream: peace among nations and the free exchange of knowledge and ideas across the earth.”

Source: *The Fulbright Contribution To the Survival of Mankind* by Joseph Duffey, International Herald Tribune (Courtesy of New York Times Syndicate)

# PREFACE

The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by then Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, to enhance mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Since its inception, approximately 279,500 “Fulbrighters” - 105,400 from the United States and 174,100 from 155 other countries - have benefited from the Program, including 230 Singaporeans.

The Fulbright Association (Singapore) [FA(S)] is the membership organisation of Singapore Fulbrighters, committed to promoting the objectives of the Fulbright Program.

The FA(S) celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, with a commemorative publication prepared for the 10th Fulbright Annual Dinner on 26 April 2007. The Guest-of-Honour is a Singaporean Fulbrighter, Minister for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean, who was also the first to submit his reflection on his Fulbright experience. Through this compilation of Fulbrighters’ sharing of their Fulbright experience, the FA(S) hopes to inspire future generations of Fulbrighters to further strengthen the bridges of understanding between Singapore and the United States. We chose the theme ‘Beyond Barriers’ to reflect the role the Fulbright Program plays in breaking down national and cultural barriers and overcoming the fear “to think ‘unthinkable’ thoughts”.

Throughout its ten years of existence, FA(S) has continuously promoted the objectives of the Fulbright Program through various activities such as FA(S)-Friends

Programme which hosts Fulbrighters from the United States, discussion forums in partnership with local universities to engender exchanges between Fulbrighters and the academia, and hosting seminars for enterprising students. The FA(S) will be hosting the academic programme for the Scholar Ship, a floating university that will be in Singapore in January 2008.

The success of FA(S) is due in no small part to its supporters, in particular its distinguished Patrons. Singapore’s Fulbrighters do enjoy a fine spirit of camaraderie despite our diverse backgrounds.

Executive Committee 2006/2007  
Fulbright Association (Singapore)  
April 2007

## Executive Committee 2006/2007

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# FOREWORD

FROM

President, Fulbright Association (Singapore)

Like any great enterprise, the Fulbright Program is fuelled by two main things – good people and a good idea. Yes, the Program also needs money but good people with good ideas have always been able to surmount that obstacle.

In some ways, it could be said that the Program has some of the highest ideals that humanity can aspire towards – international peace and cooperation through better understanding of one another. Like clean air and water, peace is a “hygiene” factor often taken for granted until its absence rears some ugly heads.

It is an honour to be associated with a program that has such lofty goals. Because these goals are lofty, they are also inspiring. And so more than ten years ago, a group of Fulbrighters planted the germ of an idea to start the Fulbright Association (Singapore). Similar associations have been started all over the world. These associations share the common goal of fostering better understanding between the U.S. and Fulbrighters’ home countries through cultural exchange and intellectual discourse. Last year, I was privileged to attend the first-ever international conference of these associations of Fulbright alumni which was held in Marrakech, Morocco.

I found the Morocco meeting to be inspiring, just learning that there are people like us who are out to change the world for the better. We had a quiz where the answer was 35—the number of Nobel Prize winners who had been Fulbrighters. We had a presentation from Alex Counts, who runs the U.S.-based Grameen Foundation. Alex had spent his Fulbright year in Bangladesh in 1988, and saw for himself how microcredit—loans as small as tens of dollars—could lift borrowers out of the grinding poverty they would otherwise be mired in. Alex returned to Bangladesh to work under Mohammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank and who won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. In 1997, Alex started the Grameen Foundation with US\$6,000 and the charge to channel resources from the U.S. towards the microfinance movement. In 2005, the Foundation’s annual budget was US\$11 million.

We hope that this collection of reminiscences will help others appreciate the genius and value of the Fulbright Program. For many of us, the support from the Program enabled us to encounter people and incidents we would have never been able to experience otherwise.

Special thanks to committee members Wei Ling, Anne, Jeremy, Vincent and Rosemary for coming up with the idea and then working together to bring this commemorative book to fruition. I found many of the stories warm, touching, funny in parts, and yes, also inspiring. I hope you do too.

Associate Professor Ang Peng Hwa  
President, Fulbright Association (Singapore)



# MESSAGE

FROM

## Singapore's Ambassador to the United States

I am privileged to be counted as a Fulbrighter. I received a Fulbright travel grant to the U.S. to pursue graduate studies at Cornell in 1965. This brought me to Indiana University in Bloomington where I attended the Fulbright Orientation Program. It was most useful as an introduction to the American academic establishment and campus life. I moved on to Cornell where I graduated with a Masters' degree in Government. My student days seem so long ago. As an academic at the National University of Singapore, I continued my engagement with American universities and have had the good fortune to move along the academic track and meet many stimulating and distinguished Americans.

I have been in Washington as Singapore's Ambassador to the United States for more than ten years. Over my tenure, I have seen the bilateral relationship grow from strength to strength. In fact, a good bilateral relationship between Singapore and the U.S. has been the norm. Singapore and the U.S. share many values in common. We both are egalitarian and meritocratic societies. We embrace all ethnic groups, and seek integration and accommodation. Singapore and the U.S. share the same advocacy of rule of law, an open international economic environment and open trading system. We give equal opportunities to men and women and place strong emphasis on education. Singapore welcomes the U.S. contribution to the peace and security of the Asia Pacific, a role it has played since the end of the Second

World War. Together with its allies, the U.S. defeated Germany and Japan in World War II, fought in Korea and Vietnam. Their effort and sacrifice in blood and treasure enabled the newly independent countries of Asia and in particular Southeast Asia to build their political institutions and strengthen economic development over the crucial years. The U.S. is today among the leading trading partners of ASEAN. It is among the top three trading partners of nearly all the countries in the region and it is also amongst the top investors. In 2006, the U.S. was the second largest trading partner for Singapore, and Singapore is the 16th largest trading partner of the U.S. In 2003, Singapore and the U.S. signed the Free Trade Agreement, the first Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and an Asian country. Total bilateral trade between the U.S. and Singapore in 2006 amounted to S\$90.3 billion or approximately 11.1% of Singapore's total trade. The U.S. is the second largest FDI in Singapore after the U.K. but in previous years the U.S. has been traditionally the largest FDI. There are now over 1,500 U.S. firms in Singapore.

This strong economic relationship is buttressed by the strong defence relationship. Singapore signed the Strategic Framework Agreement with the U.S. in 2005. Singapore believes the U.S. can contribute positively to the peace and security of the region.

But the strength of the U.S.-Singapore relationship goes beyond goods and services or a military connection. It is the healthy people-to-people ties and the development of warm relationships between Americans and Singaporeans over the years especially through cultural exchanges that form the bedrock of the relationship. A large number of Singaporeans have been educated in American universities. The Fulbright Program has played a major role in fostering this connection. I would like to thank the U.S. Government for sponsoring five to seven Singaporeans each year on a Fulbright Program as one of the ways to keep this connection going. 230 Singaporeans have been to America on Fulbright grants and scholarships. They return to Singapore to take on important decision making positions and through their own channels work to promote strong ties between the U.S. and Singapore.

Professor Chan Heng Chee  
Singapore's Ambassador to the United States  
Patron, Fulbright Association (Singapore)

# MESSAGE

FROM

United States Ambassador to the  
Republic of Singapore

**H**eartiest congratulations to the Fulbright Association (Singapore) on your tenth anniversary! For the past decade, U.S. Ambassadors have been honored to serve as the Association's Patron, and we've watched proudly as you have promoted the goals of the Fulbright Program.

The Fulbright Program was born in difficult times, at the conclusion of World War II. A young Senator from Arkansas, William J. Fulbright, believed that individuals can make a difference in the world and that governments should promote opportunities for them to do so. His vision of increasing mutual understanding through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills is as relevant today as it was more than sixty years ago. Nations still need leaders in all fields of endeavor with a Fulbright mind-set – endowed with a sense of discovery, willing to embrace the new, and respecting the practices and cultures of others.

Senator Fulbright's vision led to the creation of the Fulbright Program by the U.S. Congress in 1946. From the Program's inception, the fundamental principle of international partnership has remained at the core of the Fulbright mission. The Program operates in more than 150 countries, and more than 280,000 Fulbright scholarships have been awarded worldwide. Fulbrighters develop

lifelong friendships with host country citizens and share a common bond through their experience in a program synonymous with excellence.

The Fulbright Program was designed to foster bilateral relationships in which our partner countries and the United States shape the Program to meet shared objectives. The United States appreciates the Government of Singapore's strong support for the Fulbright Program, which enables more Singaporeans to study in the United States and strengthen the bonds of understanding between our countries.

I wish the Fulbright Association of Singapore continued success. The U.S. Embassy looks forward to working with you in the coming decades.

With warm congratulations,

Patricia L. Herbold  
United States Ambassador to the Republic of  
Singapore  
Patron, Fulbright Association (Singapore)

# MESSAGE

FROM

Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large

I thank my good friend, Associate Professor Ang Peng Hwa, the President of the Fulbright Association (Singapore), and the members of his committee, for inviting me to contribute a message to this book to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Association. I was glad to have played a small role in the founding of the Association. I am very proud to be a patron of the Association.

In 1946, one year after the Second World War ended, a freshman Senator from the State of Arkansas, J. William Fulbright, sponsored a Bill in the U.S. Congress to promote educational exchanges between the U.S. and other countries. The Congress passed the Bill and President Truman signed it into law, which has come to be known as the Fulbright Act.

What was Senator Fulbright's inspiration in proposing the law? His inspiration was to use educational exchange as a means to increase mutual understanding between nations and to reduce the danger of war. Under the Fulbright Program, hundreds of thousands of Americans have had the opportunity to study, teach or research in foreign countries and hundreds of thousands of non Americans, like me, have had the opportunity to do the same in the U.S.

In 1963, I received two gifts from the United States: a fellowship from the Harvard Law School and a Fulbright

Award. My year at Harvard, as I have explained in the "Crimson Essays", changed the course of my life.

In 1976, the United States had a double celebration, the 200th Anniversary of its Independence and the 30th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program.

I was told that the names of all the former foreign Fulbright scholars were put into a lottery. Twenty lucky ones were chosen and each was assigned, for a fixed period, to a different university. I was one of the lucky winners and, because of my involvement in the Law of the Sea Conference, was assigned to the famous Scripps Institute of Oceanography at La Jolla, California. At the end of our attachments, we were all invited to participate in a conference in Washington, D.C., whose agenda was to help the Fulbright Commission reflect on its achievements and shortcomings and to determine its future directions.

In 1976, I had the great pleasure of meeting the great man, Senator Fulbright. Later, when I was posted to the Singapore Embassy in Washington, D.C. from 1984 to 1990, I saw him several more times at his Senate office. He was always happy to meet a Fulbrighter.

In 1986, the Fulbright Commission celebrated its 40th Anniversary. The Commission requested me to write a 100-word essay on what my Fulbright experience had meant to me. The following were two of the points contained in my essay:

"Having studied in this country (USA) has certainly made it easier for me to understand the extremely complex nature of the U.S. government, to understand how the system works, to understand America's virtues and idiosyncrasies, its dreams and nightmares.

... the Fulbright experience has reinforced my belief in the value of cross-cultural communication and the importance of international cooperation in all fields of human endeavour, including education."

In conclusion, I would like to make the following suggestions for your consideration:

(i) Each of us should consider "adopting" a foreign student, studying at one of our universities or polytechnics. A few years ago, my wife and I attended a students' function at NTU. We met a student from India, who had studied at one of our JCs

and then at NTU. He told my wife that in his four years in Singapore, he had never been invited home by a Singapore family for a meal. We should rectify this deplorable state of affairs;

**(ii)** The Fulbright Association (Singapore) should consider convening a meeting of the various branches of the Association in the other ASEAN countries. What could such a meeting discuss? It could discuss the state of relations between the U.S. and ASEAN and how to enhance educational exchanges among the ASEAN countries and between ASEAN and the United States.

**(iii)** The Singapore government should consider the possibility of upgrading and merging the various existing schemes of educational exchange between Singapore and other countries into a coherent, high quality and greatly expanded programme like the Fulbright Program. Educational exchange is one of the most effective means of enhancing mutual understanding between Singapore and other countries.

Professor Tommy Koh  
Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large  
Patron, Fulbright Association (Singapore)

# BEGINNINGS

FROM

Founding President, Fulbright Association  
(Singapore)

How time has flown. It is now nearly a decade since the Fulbright Association (Singapore) was inaugurated in 1998. In 1994, the USIS head Denis Donahue had a lunch meeting with Professors Tommy Koh and Chan Heng Chee, myself and the Vice-President of the U.S. Fulbright Association to discuss the establishment of the Singapore chapter of the Association. Both Professors Koh and Chan turned the offer down because of their many commitments. I turned it down because I did not have the social clout nor the financial muscle to head it. But the idea of the association did not stop there. In 1997, I remember distinctly the two meetings we had in Michael Anderson's (Head, Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy) home contemplating the pros and cons about establishing a Singapore chapter of the Fulbright Association. All the usual suspects of Fulbrighters were at the meeting; a mix of academics, the arts, private sector and civil service personnel. Thank God we had Kim Seah, our lawyer who drafted the Fulbright constitution. The founding members of the Fulbright came from this original group. Anderson was very passionate about getting the Association up and about especially when he noted that several countries had operational associations. He felt that Singapore had come of age and hence was in a position to run its own Association. Generally there were positive vibes amongst all of us at these meetings though many did express worry about the sustainability of the association and its

directions. Unfortunately, we had no rich benefactor who could sponsor the association. Somewhere along the line my name was proposed by Dean Tong Chee Kiong (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS) to be the first President of the Association. I was not very enthused being suggested, but then I accepted the nomination given that there were no other candidates.

After much deliberations and with the U.S. Embassy support, the Association was inaugurated on 31 July 1998 at the NUSS Orchard Guild House with RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean, the then Minister for Education as our Guest of Honour. He gave a speech on “Singapore as a Hub for Higher Education” which reflected the government’s intent on making Singapore a global schoolhouse. The inauguration was a semi-formal and yet congenial and pleasant evening attended by about 100 people. Given that at that time there were said to be only over 200 Fulbrighters from Singapore, we did rather well. The inauguration of the Association was also the time when the executive board members were elected. At the first meeting of the executive committee, we decided to have three patrons: Professor Tommy Koh

(our Ambassador-at-large), the U.S. Ambassador to Singapore (beginning with Ambassador Steven Green) and the Singapore’s Ambassador to the U.S. (Professor Chan Heng Chee).

Over the years, the Fulbright Association (Singapore) held several activities during my term as President (1998-2004). Our highlight event has been the Annual Dinner at the Churchill Room, Tanglin Club (with thanks from Dr. Yip Wing Kong). We had a wonderful array of good speakers at our dinners: U.S. Ambassador Steven Green (1999), Professor Tommy Koh (AGM, 1999), Professor Wang Gungwu (2000), Ho Kwon Ping (2001), U.S. Ambassador Franklin Lavin (2002), K. Kesavapany (2003) and Professor Mohammad Amien Rias, Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament (2004).

During the initial years of the Association we began the Fulbright In-Town talk series from 1999 to 2003 which we held in the library venues both at the National Library in Stamford Road and the Library@ Orchard. These public talks covered a wide range of subjects such as Dr. Ryan Bishop’s “Perceptions of Asians in the American Public Imagination”, “Singapore’s Global English” by Dr.

Kirpal Singh, Dr. Low Ee Ling, Dr. Leong Liew Geok and Dr. Lisa Lim, “Ghosts and Spirits: Asian Sightings” by Pugalenthii, Dr. Timothy White and Dr. Carole Faucher to Bernard Harrison’s “Surviving the Corporate Jungle: Leadership in the Animal Kingdom”. With Anne Pakir as the former Director of the American Studies Centre (NUS), we initiated a Fulbright Book Prize for the best student. Besides a donation from the U.S. Office of Public Affairs, we received a donation of \$2000 from the Westin-Stamford Hotel for the prize. I was fortunate to be invited to the U.S. Fulbright Association’s annual conference and awards activities and gave a paper on multiracialism in Singapore. I also represented the Association at the Malaysian Association of American Studies International Conference in August 2002 where I was elected Vice-President of the Asian Federation of American Studies Association (AFASA) at their Annual General Meeting.

Over the years, the Association has moved from humble beginnings to a more stable platform of younger, enthusiastic members. The success to date of the Fulbright activities would not have been possible without

the enthusiastic support of the U.S. Ambassadors in Singapore, the U.S. Embassy’s Public Affairs Officers (Mike Anderson, Thomas Gradisher, David Andresen, Valerie Fowler) and the wonderful Public Affairs support staff of Celin Leung and Goh Hwee Lian. We have held many of our AGMs in the Deputy Chief of Mission’s home and were invited to many educational functions at the U.S. Ambassador’s residence.

All of us remember the good times, the eventful memories and the educationally rewarding experiences in America under the Fulbright scholarship. The Association’s activities hopefully will underscore the importance of a global education we all received. But more important at this time of troubled global political tensions, cultural misunderstandings and social divisions, we can take heart that we have been a chosen few to hopefully become good educational ambassadors of Senator J. William Fulbright’s academic programme in bringing “a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs”.

Associate Professor Victor R. Savage  
Founding President, Fulbright Association  
[Singapore]

# STEVEN **ANG** BENG WEE

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** New York University

**Year of programme:** 1999

*“I teach courses on employment law and intellectual property rights at NTU. My current research preoccupations include an exploration of the intersection between the protection of intellectual property and ethics.”*

I spent the Fall of 1999 (between the tail of August and the tip of December) at New York University (NYU) School of Law as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar. It was an interesting time to be in America on such a programme, with the freedom to indulge one’s inquisitiveness, but without quite the pressure to perform in courses to which those on student scholarships were subjected. We were on the brink of a new millennium and wondering what it would be like, and the clouds of globalisation that had been gathering for decades were just beginning to generate unease and discontent. In Seattle this was reflected that year by the disruption of the WTO Ministerial Meeting by rioting protesters and the eventual breakdown of talks. When I next returned to New York in 2005, I was to gaze at the horrific chasm where the Twin Towers once stood. Between then and now, the world has seen challenges and crises and rents in international relations – not least of which those involving the United States – which make the Fulbright Program’s vision of achieving international

understanding through exchange ever more urgent and important.

My primary purpose for being at NYU was to audit a course on Employment and Discrimination Law conducted by Professor Paulette Caldwell, as I was then doing research on issues relating to employment equality. I also managed to attend most of a term long colloquium series on Law, Philosophy and Social Theory conducted jointly by Professors Ronald Dworkin and Thomas Nagel. This last was an intellectual feast as I sat in on papers delivered by Jeremy Waldron, J. J. Thompson, Frances Kam, Eric Rakowski, and others. I also sat in on – ‘gate crashed’ may be a more accurate description – other colloquia at NYU.

I was fortunate also in being able to get residence at the International House where I made several friends and acquaintances amongst the community of post graduate, professional and academic residents. The mainland and overseas Chinese residents, led by a couple of Singaporean New Yorkers, organised a little celebration of the Mid-Autumn Moon festival which were attended by some residents

from other cultures, It is interesting how explaining one’s tradition forces one to get a better grasp of it. The experience at International House really drove home the truth that understanding and exchange are best achieved informally over coffee tables. International House made interaction amongst students and academics easy with an almost nightly array of cultural events and talks. Those that stand out in the memory are talks by patrons like Paul Volcker and Henry Kissinger.

Not all of the lasting memories of the visit are of intellectual matters. I remember hay rides and apple picking one weekend after the harvest at a New England farm: the burnt gold of shorn corn fields and rioting reds of fall foliage are vivid memories. And I recall a Saturday afternoon listening to chamber music on a barge on the East River followed by a walk to Manhattan with other visiting Fulbrighters over the Brooklyn Bridge as the sun was setting. From that end, we could see the skyline of the city which still had the Twin Towers then, outlined as the sun sank.

One of the most illuminating insights I gained from the visit came, unlooked for, on one of these cultural excursions which were organised by Metro International for the Fulbrighters in the New York area. It was a Sunday visit amongst the Amish at Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Amish make a striking contrast with New Yorkers, or, for that matter, with Singaporeans. They dress plainly in contrast with much of the modern world’s obsession with attention grabbing styles, use horses and carriages instead of motor cars, and technology like tractors, telephones and televisions is kept at arm’s length. Visiting amongst them was like going back in time, but *not backward*, for, despite initial appearances, they have not chosen to reject technology or modernity. Instead, they are attempting to take technology on their own terms, rather than let modernity transform them against their will. They are open to the use of biotechnology, because developments in this field may be important to solving problems that small communities like theirs may be prone, and some traditions permit access to a telephone (perhaps a pay phone) outside the home for use in emergencies. I remained fascinated

with their example because of my interest in the way intellectual property spurs technological and other forms of creativity and how this transforms the world, and the ethical dimensions of this relationship. The Amish are for me a reminder that there are radically different ways of looking at this matter. Theirs is not a model I would advocate everyone adopting, but they remind one that technology transforms lives, relations and communities for better or worse. We are faced, especially in the 21st Century, with the task of fashioning social structures that determine the path that technology will take us on – as regards the quality of our environment, the threat of destruction by our own weapons and the genetic basis of our identity as human persons, amongst others – and reflecting on the ethical basis of these choices. The alternative may be the societal equivalent of being in a runaway rail car without a clue as to what lies around the bend.

I can’t say I have many helpful answers right now, but the Fulbright experience has not fallen short in terms of food for thought.

# ANG PENG HWA

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 2000

*"I am a researcher in internet law and policy issues and while studying in the U.S., also learnt how to make pizza from scratch."*

## Strange and Wonderful

My Fulbright experience in Fall 2000 as a research fellow at the Kennedy School of Government in Harvard University consisted of some strange and wonderful discoveries. It was a mind-expanding and life-changing sabbatical that was wonderful for me. I came away with some ideas that I applied in my administrative roles, ideas that may have been strange for my colleagues.

First, I discovered myself – that I was a teacher at heart. A former colleague, who had returned to work in the Boston Globe, took me out for golf a few times. On one of those outings, I scored my first par in Boston, a rarity for me. It was a par-four hole and when I had sunk the ball at the fourth stroke, I danced a jig in uncontained excitement. My friend, a much better player who had also sunk the ball in four strokes, smiled at me and said, "I'm happier for you that you parred the hole than for me." I stopped my ungainly jig, and reflected for a second that, my goodness, we are both teachers at heart – we are happier when others succeed than even when we succeed. That was a wonderful discovery.

Second, I discovered some best practices in Harvard that I took back to Singapore. I visited the business school, where the carpet was lush and the food unlimited. Then I had a presentation at the law school where, surprisingly, there were no carpets, at least in the areas I went. Clearly, infrastructure does not a great school make.

Instead, I discovered that values were what drive that great university, and all great universities. One value was honour: all great universities honour their faculty. Just to cite three examples from that one value: Every year begins with a photo of the entire School – something that I practised in my School. And when I went to the room named in honour of renowned defence analyst Graham Allison, there large as life was Graham Allison himself. (In the U.K. tradition, he should have been long deceased.) Allison himself had given an employee-of-the-year award using his frequent flier miles for a pair of air tickets, which that year was won by the webmaster. And so back home, I have instituted a staff-of-the-year award for administrative staff. That was wonderful.

Third, I discovered America's democracy: I had a front-seat view of

an unusual electoral process because November 2000 was when there was the controversy over who won in Florida and so won the presidential elections. The Kennedy School had live television news in its foyer running all day. Practically every faculty member who could speak sensibly was interviewed by the media, this after all was THE School of Government. That was strange and wonderful.

I consider myself very fortunate to have spent the sabbatical in 2000. I had arrived in Logan Airport on September 9. One year and two days later, on September 11, two planes left Logan Airport but never reached their originally intended destinations. And the world changed. What a reminder of the relevance of the Fulbright Program's ideals.



# MELISSA ARATANI KWEE

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University; and  
Tribhuvan University

Year of programme: 1995

*“I remain an idealist at heart and believe in the power and grace of ordinary people to create joyful, purposeful and inclusive communities.”*

I received my Fulbright nomination from Harvard University and was selected as an American Fulbright Scholar to Nepal. My Fulbright experience in Nepal built on my nearly five-year love affair with the tiny, land-locked state. I had previously lived in the wild and gorgeous hill region below the Annapurna range, and worked with a pioneering, participatory development initiative in one of the village headquarters. Living there taught me the value of working with people to solve problems and create new solutions for better living.

My Fulbright year was supposed to be based in the city with an attachment to the national Tribhuvan University. However, the strikes or *bandhs* by both students and teachers made it impossible to commute on a regular basis. So I became a freelance researcher interviewing my way across

and through the lives of many local Nepali minorities. One interview I will never forget is with Man Bahadur Gurung, resident of Sikles, Kaski District, my former village base. It was a misty day and the clouds had rolled up against the hills, sweeping a cottony gauze over the fields. I greeted him as ‘Sir’ as I knew he had been a Gurkha and that that specific salutation was probably the best way to communicate respect. My intention was to ask him about his life and the leadership of the village, but we meandered off into exploring his personal history. He spoke of his experience in World War II, marching through Italy along the wide roads lined with people. He recalled the large machines “bigger than five buffalos” used to plough the land. As he spoke, he glanced across the verandah of his mud, wood and thatch home. Below his house were his workers ploughing the fields on a stubborn, lone mud-crusting buffalo. The anachronism was jarring, but Man Bahadur didn’t flinch. There was a certain dignity and wisdom about him that I recall vividly to this day. Instead he continued to speak of the refined ladies he saw on that tour that wore gloves, and ate with silver utensils.

He chuckled to himself amused. Raising his brow, I could tell from his smile that it was in pity for the ladies’ inability to savour delights with ‘the natural spoon.’

# CHAN WEI LING

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Year of programme: 2002 to 2003

*"I miss Ann Arbor; but not the cold."*

Prior to my Fulbright stint, I had visited the U.S. a couple of times as a visitor. But the privilege of the Fulbright scholarship allowed me to holistically experience the U.S. as a resident – for two years.

I had never previously lived outside of Singapore before this, and I greeted the prospect of this overseas stint with a sense of trepidation, yet excitement for what was to come. All my friends who had previously lived overseas assured me that the experience would be 'life-changing'. So with a brave front, I embarked on my adventure to Michigan.

## The Shopping Experience

When I first arrived, my landlady drove me around the little university town of Ann Arbor and introduced me to what would become very familiar to me. I must confess I was a little disappointed that this place was quite unlike the big U.S. cities I was familiar with. I was surprised to learn that there was only one shopping centre, and quietly wondered to myself "how will I while away my weekends?". I even asked a classmate where locals bought their clothes from, and she gave me a quizzical look.

## The Weather

Strange to me was how everybody talked about the weather all the time, and how cold the winters could get. It seemed that even the Michiganders could not get used to the cold. Rumour was spreading that the coming winter would be harsh, as the previous year's was mild. True enough, by the first week of November it started to snow. The sub-zero winter lasted till early April. When the temperature dipped to its low of minus 29°C, I told myself that if I could get through this winter, I could weather anything.

## The Singapore Accent

I hadn't really thought Singaporeans spoke with such a strong accent, and only realised it one day when a group of Asian students speaking in a familiar accent caught my attention. 'Do I really sound like that?' I wondered. It was a rather embarrassing revelation, and I vowed to articulate in proper English from then.

## The Rich Culture

As I slowly adjusted to life in Ann Arbor, I began to appreciate the quiet and simplicity of a lifestyle I never knew – being a city-dweller all my

life. This town of just a little more than 100,000 residents exposed me to another world. Picnics at the lakes during spring, miles of street art fairs in summer, sipping piping hot cider with donuts at orchard mills in autumn time. I was in awe of the vibrant arts scene entertaining the small population, with bands that sang of the Blues, weekly music concerts, and a culture that supported artisans with amazing creativity and flair. This town was also home to the Wolverines and the largest college-owned stadium in the U.S. I often wondered how a town as small as this could support such a vibrant cultural scene.

## The Life-Changing Moment

My stay in the U.S. became even more meaningful when I got to share my Ann Arbor lifestyle with my then-boyfriend (now husband), each time he came over for a visit. Being a tour guide to him allowed me to reflect on my enriching experience there. He proposed to me on his third visit.

Indeed, Ann Arbor will always have a special place in my heart.

# ERNEST C. T. CHEW

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Harvard University; and Stanford University

**Year of programme:** 1988

*"I collect old picture postcards, mainly of Southeast Asia."*

During Fall-Winter 1988, I was awarded a Fulbright Visiting Fellowship to prepare a course on American military history. While I was formally affiliated to Harvard and then Stanford's Hoover Institution, I also visited several other universities and colleges, and met specialists in military, naval and air-force history.

Through the good offices of Professor John Hattendorf of the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, I visited Yale University and met Professor Paul Kennedy, a naval historian whose widely acclaimed book on *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* had recently been published.

I also met one of the leading American military historians, Professor Russell Weigley of Temple University, Philadelphia. He had written a book on *The American Way of War*, whose title I later borrowed for the course which I offered on my return to Singapore.

In Washington, D.C., Professor Tommy Koh, then-Singapore's Ambassador to the U.S., facilitated a visit with Dr. Richard Kohn, the Chief Air Force historian at Bolling Air Force base. Dr. Kohn ensured that I received

several cartons of official histories as resources for my course.

I also recall giving a talk at Hope College, Michigan, on "Teaching War and Preaching Peace", arranged by a former NUS colleague, Dr. Keith Taylor. There were both pacifists and "just-war" advocates among the faculty and students in the audience.

All in all, the Fulbright award provided marvellous opportunities to prepare materials for an academic course, to meet eminent scholars, and to engage in fruitful dialogue with them and with their students.

When I offered "The American Way of War, 1775-1975" to my History students in Singapore, it provided a relevant back-drop for them to understand the ending of the Cold War, and the Gulf War of 1991. Like me, they also became beneficiaries of the Fulbright Program.

# CHONG

YEAN JOO  
AUGUSTINE

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of California, Berkeley  
Year of programme: 1968

The Fulbright Program enabled me to land in the American continent for the first time in my life.

At Berkeley, I did research work in the famous Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, studying the properties and measuring the nuclear spin of the isotope of tin, Sn123, which has a half-life of 40 minutes.

I enjoyed the International atmosphere of the community of the University of California at Berkeley interacting with people from many different countries.

The city of San Francisco, just across the bay, was near enough to be like living in that city and yet not being caught in the midst of the hustle and bustle of that busy commercial hub.

Driving a car along the beautiful California coast was an unforgettable experience.

I enjoyed visiting some of the resorts and climbing some of the mountains in the Sierra Nevada.

Towards the end of the programme, I went to New York to attend an International Conference on Atomic Physics.

# CHUA

CHONG JIN

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University  
Year of programme: 1997

An international PR assignment which started off casually with a kind recommendation by a contact made at an MIT seminar in Boston. Exposure to passionate advocates of community outreach in developing countries whose influence and advice led to a project in Yunnan, China. For me, these two contrasting examples (one pertaining to enterprise and personal gain and the other related more to helping others) sum up the real impact my brief but meaningful Fulbright experience (based in Boston, Harvard University) has had on me – even years after the stint.

The balance between the drive for one's career (a very Singaporean trait) and the same kind of drive directed more at non-profit work (an evolving but still a minority quality among Singaporeans) is the most enduring gift I've received from my Fulbright experience. Looking back at the path my career has taken since this experience, I cannot but be thankful for how the way I think about success has changed. For example, I have learnt to search for significance – even way before I have had my quota of achievements often deemed necessary before one starts “doing good”. At the same time, I have learnt not to embark on community work

based purely on good intentions – a pitfall we sometimes fall into, thinking that kindness and all things nice are all one needs to be of help.

Post-Fulbright, I've been more convinced than ever that even in voluntary work, credentials don't hurt – both for the real skills underlying them and, no less importantly, for the branding behind them. This keen awareness, I feel, has helped me stay motivated to build on the tools of corporate success which I may feel less inclined to work on if there isn't the possibility of some significance, however modest, in community outreach. In my subsequent trips to places like Chengdu, Yunnan, Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi for projects, I have often brought with me my fondest memories of my Fulbright experience, including the many associated with my supervisor Dr. John Thomas whose blessedly fine combination of intelligence and warmth was exactly what I was looking for.

This central point aside, I am of course also grateful for many other things my Fulbright experience gave me. For instance, I will treasure the opportunity to interview leading China scholars

like Ezra Vogel, Orville Schell and Lucien Pye who were as insightful as they were engaging and even indulgent. Then there was the chance to approach leading newsmakers in fields like business, arts and sports in different US cities whose open door policy (as long as I could ask good questions, whoever I was representing) revived my interest in good, old journalism.

# PETER IGNATIUS DE COSTA

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Harvard University

**Year of programme:** 2001 to 2002

*"I enjoy museums which create narratives that are at once both strange and familiar."*

In the Fall of 2001, I found myself starting on a Master of Education at Harvard. Having spent four and a half years in a Singapore school, two of which working part time on my Masters in Applied Linguistics, I embraced this sabbatical afforded by the Fulbright stint with deep appreciation. My nine months there turned out to be an eye opening experience as I came into contact with peers from Buenos Aires to the Bronx, Jamaica to Japan. Perhaps more fascinating were the education contexts they worked in: I met people who worked with the incarcerated, and others who helped immigrant workers obtain their General Educational Development (GED) while attending night school. Through them I became more aware of the inequalities in society, and consequently the need to transform lives and bring about greater social justice through education. One way to do this was by working within and through the academy. Two years after returning to Singapore, I found myself back in America, but this time in the Mid West, where I am currently working towards a PhD that enables me to marry my two passions – linguistics and education. I would never have dared making such a bold move had it not been for my Boston sojourn. For that, I will always be grateful as it has also enabled me to re-think the value and power of education, and to see the world through a different lens.

# CALVIN EU

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Johns Hopkins University

**Year of programme:** 1985 to 1986

*“Whenever my schedule permits, I will work to further reduce my golf handicap. Always value those diving experiences in the former Indonesian islands of Ligitan and Sipadan, as well as the elephant trekking in the Chiang Rai jungles.”*

After about five years in the service, I was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship to read a Master in International Public Policy course in the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). It was both a memorable and enriching stint for I was able to interact, learn and share our experiences with a diverse group of well honed and dynamic professionals from various countries. The intensity of the coursework had been reinforced with the robust and vigorous exchanges of knowledge and experiences among the participants. I was fortunate that the Fulbright Scholarship had offered me this unique holistic experience of learning at SAIS and allowed me to network with an international group of top notch professionals.

As a mid-career student and professional, I was amazed at the remarkable and diverse scope that Washington D.C. offered. From the well established institutes like the Brookings Institution, Smithsonian complexes, to agencies

of government like Congress and the White House, I hardly had a single dull moment. Political debates within the Beltway and U.S. international relations were easy distractions. It was a challenge, albeit enjoyable, to remind myself that I was student largely because my American course mates had been relentless in helping me to understand the intricacies of the domestic political dynamics. These informal but valuable tutorials left an indelible impression on me, and I often draw on them in the course of my work years later. I also recall fondly the heated but friendly exchanges between my Japanese and American colleagues on Japan’s voluntary export restraint policy to the United States. We still reminisce about this almost 20-year old topic whenever we meet in different parts of the world.

My Fulbright experience is a special treasure. It was the very first of the other U.S.-sponsored programmes that I was to go through in subsequent years. My days in SAIS broadened my global perspectives, and accorded an invaluable opportunity for me to be friends with my colleagues from the four continents.

# HAROLD FOCK MUN HONG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Bentley College

Year of programme: 1999 to 2001

*"I co-write a blog on globalisation with Minister George Yeo at [beyondsg.typepad.com](http://beyondsg.typepad.com)"*

## The Courage to Include

During my last year in Boston, IIE (International Institute for Education) organised a symposium in Colorado for all Fulbright Fellows based in the United States. It was the first time I would meet Fulbright Fellows from all over the world. I can still recall the incident with complete clarity as it defines my Fulbright experience. At the welcome dinner, I sat at a table comprising mainly Europeans. They started speaking in German and were excited to trade stories among themselves. I was the only Asian at the table and I tried to break in to the group politely but they smiled and moved on with their own conversations. I will never forget that moment. A German lady at the table spoke firmly and admonished her German friends, "Hey, all of you are so rude, you know Harold is from Singapore and he does not speak German. All of you can speak English. Can we all speak English so that we can communicate?" My German friends quickly apologised and we started talking. As a former currency trader, I followed

Bundesbank's (Germany's Central Bank) monetary policy very closely and my new German friends were astounded that an Asian from the Far East actually knew more about their respected central bank chief, Dr Hans Tietmeyer than them. That very moment epitomised what Fulbright is all about. It was not about writing the perfect business plan in my B-school entrepreneurship class. It was not all about learning new E-commerce processes and business strategies. It is about people who respect other people. It is about listening not just learning. It is about the courage to speak out for your fellow man. It is about being kind to strangers and yet firm among your friends. It is about reaching out not because it is profitable or politically correct, but it is the *right* thing to do.

My Fulbright experience would have been incomplete had this brave lady not spoken up and invited me to join in. Today, I am still trying to live by her example. While running my company, I try to listen to my quieter colleagues and encourage them to speak up. They often surprise me with ideas and solution I cannot even imagine. When

I meet foreigners and my regional customers, I try to understand their point of view instead of dictating my world view or my needs to them. They often become fast friends and surprise me with a contract or lend me a hand in my darkest hours. Upon introspection, I should not be surprised at all – it is what Fulbright is really about.

# BURHAN GAFOOR

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 1996 to 1997

*"I remain a poor golfer."*

Taking a year off from work to go back to school is an energising experience. It was all the more energising for me at the Kennedy School, which brings together Americans and foreigners from very diverse backgrounds. I found this mixing of ideas and experiences educational. I remember a classmate who gave this advice: "don't let your studies get in the way of your education". He was not wrong because I learned much from discussing and debating issues with my classmates, mostly outside the classroom. A memorable experience was my economics study group meetings, which always started with a pot of chicken curry and rice made by the wife of one of my classmates from India. This was one study group I never missed. The greatest value of the Fulbright experience is that it helps one to better understand America and Americans. I had as a classmate a young ex-Senator from Florida who much later played a decisive role when the votes were carefully recounted in the U.S. Presidential elections of 2000. Another classmate was fire-chief of a state and yet another was an actor from Los Angeles. They came from different backgrounds but they shared a questioning spirit that was

never content with the *status quo*. They had clear political convictions and had different ideas to make America a better place. I found them deeply patriotic. I was also impressed with their sense of civic duty because they were very active in volunteer activities. I still keep in touch with several of my classmates. Finally, as in any good university, we had excellent teaching faculty. A memorable experience was meeting John Kenneth Galbraith, the iconic economist and later a diplomat, who apparently once said "In economics, the majority is always wrong". I suppose his rule may also apply to other fields of study.



# GANAPATHY

## NARAYANAN

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Year of programme: 2003

The 2003 Fulbright Foreign Researcher Grant was awarded for a period of three months from September to December 2003. For both intrinsic and instrumental reasons, I chose to be based at the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and had the opportunity to work with Professor Chris Eskridge who is also the Executive Director of the prestigious and influential American Society of Criminology.

The Fulbright stint was simply an amazing one and it was such an enriching experience, academically, socially as well as culturally, that I have now developed, and have begun to *practise*, quite consciously, a renewed and refreshing perspective towards not only the academia but also towards the social and communitarian aspects of life.

As a sociologist, I am fascinated with the way of life in Lincoln and am motivated to believe that one's performance in the academia and one's passion for life are indeed complementary and mutually reinforcing, and how together they provide for a more holistic and empathic appreciation of (modern) human living. Spending three months in Lincoln, a quiet, semi-urban, university town where personalised relationships prevail and are emphasised has been most cathartic, and to an extent therapeutic, for someone who has been socialised into meeting the demands

of everyday life engendered by a fast-paced, highly industrialised, decidedly capitalistic and vastly urban society – Singapore.

My research on 'Victims' Experiences of Policing in Situations of Domestic Violence' took off very well, both conceptually and empirically from the very outset. I managed to gain access to the data on inter-personal crimes kept by the Lincoln Police Department (LPD) and had the opportunity to interview Sgt Jeff Gade who was the officer in charge of the Family Crimes Unit at LPD. He was very helpful and a naturally enthusiastic person, and was receptive to the research I was undertaking. We exchanged notes – I gave him copies of my academic articles on domestic violence – and truly had a productive time discussing the progress and shortcomings with regard to the history of policing domestic violence. To speak to an officer who had accumulated more than 30 years of experience as a police officer was simply amazing and an eye-opener. Through him, I also had the opportunity to do some ride-alongs with the police and that provided me with an insight of how local policing was spatially and at times culturally located with respect to local sensitivities and demands for police work. It also gave me a nice overview of the social positionalities of the various ethnic communities in

Lincoln and police perceptions of and responsiveness to these communities in terms of dealing with domestic violence. My visit to the Rape and Spousal Abuse Centre (RSAC) in Lincoln confirmed many of my anecdotal observations and through informal dialogue sessions with volunteers of that centre I managed to gather some valuable data.

Though the Fulbright research study specifically aimed to draw out a cross-cultural, comparative examination of the various aspects of police response to situations of domestic violence using Nebraska (Lincoln) and Singapore as the focus of research, I wasted no time to acquaint myself with other aspects, processes, structures and institutions of the criminal justice system. In this pursuit, I visited the Nebraska State Penitentiary, Juvenile Detention Centre of Lancaster County, County Jail, CASA and the Juvenile and Summary Courts in Lincoln. My visits to these places were very warmly welcomed and representatives of the various institutions always took their time to explain their in-house facilities and programs, and more importantly, the rationale and ideology behind these processes. I found these visits truly refreshing and intellectually stimulating, and I believe I have made life-long contacts with these practitioners of the justice system and its related institutions.

# GANESH<sup>S/O</sup> R. KALYANAM

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Emerson College

**Year of programme:** 1996 to 1997

*“Love the arts and the outdoors. Will grab any opportunity to help the youth realise their passion and live life to the fullest.”*

The Fulbright Scholarship offered me an opportunity to pursue a master’s degree in an area that was relatively new in Singapore – Arts Management. It was also my first trip to the United States.

The whole experience was a cultural eye opener! The U.S. was more wonderful than I had imagined! But I also realised that it had its inherent flaws. My interaction with several international students and U.S. students helped me realise, just how diverse views can be, on issues that often appear to be black or white. While I learnt a lot about the U.S., ironically I also learnt a lot about being Singaporean. At the risk of being corny, I felt more Singaporean pride and identity there than when I was in Singapore. I started to see Singapore in a new light.

The Fulbright offered me an opportunity to broaden my mind, my experiences, my network of friends and potential international partners and most of all my deep calling to reach out to others and provide for the less privileged, opportunities to grow and find passion in what they do and do them well. The arts management programme, was well designed and allowed me to see the arts and media as tools and platforms for active community engagement and development.

A most enriching period of my life, and for this I sincerely thank the Fulbright Program.

Meanwhile back in the University, Professor Eskridge had arranged for two presentations to take place. The first one was organised at the Omaha Campus, University of Nebraska, and I addressed the faculty staff in the Department of Criminal Justice. The title of my presentation was “Rethinking the Problem of Policing Marital Violence: A Singapore Perspective”. It was well-attended, and stimulated a lively discussion afterwards. The meeting with the faculty staff also presented an opportunity to develop collaborative research with Professor Robin Oogle, a renowned criminologist working in the area of feminist criminology. The other presentation was held at the Students’ Union at Lincoln Campus and it was meant to address the entire University. Many staff and students, even some practitioners from the local police department attended the talk on “Organized Crime in Singapore”. It generated some intriguing questions and comments from the audience who have been so acquainted with the popular and populist images of Singapore as one which has a low-crime rate, and is highly disciplined and regulated.

I was also very fortunate to be in the U.S. at a time when the annual American Society of Criminology (ASC) Meeting was being held. That year it was held in Denver, Colorado

and the trip was covered by CIES under the Occasional Lecturer Program (OLP) Award. I am very grateful to CIES for their assistance. It was simply fantastic to meet and exchange views with so many criminologists from all around the world. It was particularly exciting to talk to renowned criminologists whose work I have read as a student and now as a junior academic. Of course, my host being the Director of the ASC wasted no time to take me under his wing and always had me introduced to all of his friends and colleagues as a “Fulbright Scholar” from Singapore. I have made some good contacts and am exploring the possibilities and potential of some kind of collaborative research or institutional links.

Overall, the Fulbright experience was an amazing and unforgettable one. It has certainly enriched me academically, socially and culturally. I am very grateful to my host, Professor Chris Eskridge, and to CIES staff in Washington, especially Ms. Susan McPeck, who were always there to assist and guide me whenever I needed them.

# ROBBIE B. H. GOH

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Washington

Year of programme: 1998

Receiving a Fulbright allowed me to spend three months in 1998 at the University of Washington's English Department. I had earlier met a Victorian scholar, Lauren Goodlad (who was then at UW, and is now at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), at a conference; the Fulbright allowed me to spend valuable time with scholars like Lauren, sharing my work and learning more about theirs. Lauren contributed an excellent chapter to a book I co-edited, *Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures*. I also had a chance to meet other interesting UW colleagues like Kathleen Blake, Srinivas Aravamudan, Ranjana Khanna, and others. The Chair of the department then was Shawn Wong, the well-known Asian-American writer, and I wasn't familiar with his work before I went to UW, but over the course of the Fulbright Fellowship I got to know him better. Subsequently, I invited him to Singapore to give a plenary paper at a conference that I was organising, and we had the opportunity to pick up where we'd left off at Seattle. The result was the book *Asian Diasporas: Cultures, Identities, Representations* (2004), which we co-edited. I later had a chance to re-visit Seattle and UW for a conference, and as Sub-Dean representing my University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for discussions on Student Exchange Programmes, and the earlier familiarity with the city and

university that I had gleaned from the Fulbright certainly came in handy.

Thus there were quite a number of concrete and beneficial outcomes from my Fulbright, but also a number of fond memories and experiences under the category of "personal development": seeing the absolute magnificence of the Olympic Peninsula and the incredible view north from Port Angeles; driving through Bainbridge Island, about which I had heard so much from architectural magazines and film references (and taking the ferry back to Seattle); hosting old friends from my Chicago PhD days who flew out to Seattle to see us. The most memorable experience, however, was seeing my firstborn son Gavin take his first steps in my Seattle apartment when my family came to visit.

Like most academics I've had to travel a fair bit, including spending protracted periods of time in certain locales, but that Fulbright Fellowship at UW (as long ago as it was) stands out in my memory. It came early enough in my career, and in my personal life, to make a significant impact and become etched indelibly in my memory.

# HADIJAH

## BTE RAHMAT

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley; Harvard University; and Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

**Year of programme:** 2002 to 2003

*"I love reading and writing – academic as well as creative works."*

### **My Fulbright Journey – In Search for American Connection to the Malay World**

Much has been written about British and European history in South East Asia (S.E.A). However, very little is known about historical links between America and S.E.A., particularly with the Malay World. Was there American contact with the Malay World? I wanted to seek answers to this question, specifically on American links to early Malay literary development. The Fulbright Program provided an excellent platform for me to embark on an academic journey in search for American connections to the Malay world.

This search, instead, exposed me to the first American scientific journey – the United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842, led by Lt. Charles Wilkes (1798-1877). In 1842, the expedition stopped over at Singapore and Wilkes purchased several old Malay manuscripts. His collection of manuscripts was initially deposited at the Smithsonian Institute but in the 1860s was moved to the Library of Congress, Washington DC. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (A.B.C.F.M) station in Singapore (1836-1843) also kept a collection of Malay

manuscripts and rare books. When the station was closed down in 1843, its library collections were shifted to its headquarters in Boston, and were subsequently transferred to the Houghton Library, Harvard University in 1942. These two significant but unexplored collections of Malay manuscripts and rare books, were the focus of my study as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar from November 2002 to May 2003.

I was assisted by my husband, Hajis Salim, whose skills in classical Malay and Jawi script were instrumental for the study. We were attached to the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University California, Berkeley, the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. and at Houghton Library, Harvard University. The primary materials consulted and gathered from these libraries were indeed rich and stimulating, including invaluable information and documents on the early history of Singapore. So far, I have written several papers and shared my experiences and preliminary research findings at local and international seminars. The research is still going on and more papers or publications will be produced based on the experiences and materials gathered in U.S., in years to come.

Our research at the above institutions provided us with greater knowledge and understanding of their organisation and professionalism. During our stay, we established excellent contact and friendships with several Americans who provided us opportunities to learn and to enjoy first hand the experience of American cultures and life. We are grateful for their kindness and hospitality. Besides the academic atmosphere, we also enjoyed the colourful and vibrant cities of San Francisco, Washington D.C., Boston and New York.

On the whole, the Fulbright Program had provided my husband and I fruitful and invaluable academic and social experiences. We reached our research destination to trace historical links between Malay literature, Singapore and America in 19th century; but more significantly, we have gained greater understanding and appreciation of American history, philosophy, its richness and varied lifestyles. The journey has truly widened our intellectual and cultural horizons. We really treasure our enriching and wonderful Fulbright journey in search for greater understanding of our shared history and knowledge of humanity.

# HO CHEE LICK

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of California, San Diego

Year of programme: 1996

*"Professionally I am a linguist; at heart I am an artist."*



# TONY T. N. HUNG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of California, San Diego

Year of programme: 1989

*“My main interests are still music and film, but since moving to Hong Kong in 1997 I’ve taken to walking in the countryside (a hobby it would be foolish to pursue in the heat and humidity of Singapore!)”*

My Fulbright visit was short (two to three months), and I was back in my own alma mater (UCSD) with people I already knew, so there were few experiences that could be called new or transforming. Besides, I lack the poetic talent (which some others have in abundance) to immortalise that period in verse.

However, for totally unexpected reasons, that particular period will always be indelibly marked in my memory, because that was when the Tiananmen massacre took place in Beijing (4 June 1989). The trauma it caused to every civilised human being, and most of all to educators (including myself) who had spent their entire lives working with students, could not be told. Being in the U.S. at the time, with round-the-clock coverage in the media, I was deeply moved by the public and private outpouring of compassion and sympathy for the students and workers who were killed, injured or arrested. The tragedy made the whole world one, and for a while everybody in the U.S.

was ‘Chinese’ and talked about little else but Tiananmen. Almost every student that I knew from China who was studying in the U.S. at the time came out to demonstrate against their own government. Whatever political motives the cynics may like to attribute to it, it was a generous humanitarian gesture for the U.S. government to offer these students asylum, and all my Chinese classmates at UCSD ended up staying on, and are now leading free and more fulfilling lives.

I realise that my reflections on my ‘Fulbright experience’ have very little to do with the programme itself. But still, it is in the spirit of Senator Fulbright’s ideals for the programme, which were (in his words) to *“bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs”*. He would have been proud of his countrymen’s response to the Tiananmen tragedy, and the lives that this compassionate response has changed.

# HUSSIN MUTALIB

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 1992

*"I read (and find solace) in books about philosophy, religion, politics; these readings not only help me to better understand, if not appreciate, the vicissitudes of life, but also the unending dramas, trials, triumphs, and frailties of peoples and countries, especially in these times of our lives."*

I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to visit about two dozen cities in the U.S. – meeting the elites, seeing the contrasting lifestyles of ordinary Americans, experiencing home-stays, attending numerous academic sessions from Boston to Utah, and Florida to New Orleans. Two memorable experiences, however, continue to linger in my mind even until today. The first was a three-day stint to better understand the workings of the American civic movement – where I chanced to meet Ralph Nader (*Editor: Nader is an American attorney and political activist who ran for President of the United States in 1996, 2000 and 2004*) and attended some boisterous meetings that pitted civil society NGOs and establishment authorities on the matter of consumer rights.

The second was the attachment at Harvard University for a few months – where I was exposed to the active intellectual culture of the campus, listening to gurus such as Samuel

Huntington and Bob Scalapino, attending a seminar in the Business School (whose students then included Winston Choo, former Chief of Defence Force in the Singapore Armed Forces), seeing the demonstrations by Harvard students on U.S. foreign policy, and successfully coaxing ten international scholars to contribute chapters to my book. The dream that I entertained at the time was that perhaps one day my own children would excel academically, such that they could join the Harvard fraternity and benefit from its rich intellectual environment – and I thank God that this dream was finally realised, when my daughter, Iza Riana Hussin, won the Public Service Commission Merit Scholarship to study there.

# PHILIP JEYARETNAM

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of Iowa; and  
Harvard University

**Year of programme:** 1990 to 1991

*"My interests straddle law and literature, and I was lucky that my  
Fulbright experience encompassed both."*

I enjoyed two strongly contrasting experiences of America.

Iowa City in fall colours: bonding with established writers from across the globe over visits to hog farms and tractor plants, mixed in with occasional teaching of undergraduates eager to understand a new world emerging after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Harvard Yard in winter: burrowing in the library to understand American constitutional law, lively discussions with my host Alan Dershowitz about civil liberties and American foreign policy, new year's eve wandering through dozens of events in Boston with my wife, Cindy.

The standout memory from each half of my Fulbright tour? In Iowa it is dinner with Professor Peter Nazareth, a renowned expert on Elvis Presley, and the author of a fine novel about a young Indian political activist in Uganda before Idi Amin's regime. Simon Tay was there too, and

a writer from the Philippines, Rofel Brion, who both remain fast friends to this day. The evening began with insights into Elvis's borrowings from black musicians, but ended in rather different oblivion of the soul. At Harvard, it was meeting Francis Seow, who pulled me along for an Amnesty event and I witnessed his charisma at work undimmed by age or exile.

These few months in America were also the time when I broke the back of the first draft of *Abraham's Promise*, and for that reason too will always be cherished by me.



# ROBERT K. KAMEI

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Udayana University School of Medicine, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

**Year of programme:** 2000 to 2001

*"I am a third generation Japanese-American, born in Los Angeles, California. However, I was educated and lived most of my adult life in San Francisco. It was living in SF where I learned from my best friend, a Singaporean restaurateur, to love hawker food."*

In 2000, our blended family decided to spend the year living together in Indonesia. We had been splitting time between San Francisco and Bali and thought a sabbatical year in Indonesia would be perfect timing for us because our youngest daughter was a newborn. A childhood friend of mine mentioned that I should apply for a Fulbright grant because of my interest in education. I immediately applied but found that almost all of the Fulbright posts were already closed, except for a handful of countries holding a few more positions open, including Indonesia!

I was extremely fortunate then to be awarded the Fulbright and grateful for the opportunity that it provided me. Since part of my life was already in Indonesia, it was not hard to settle in there. But my Fulbright position gave me the open door to really accomplish things at the medical school that I would otherwise not have been able to achieve on my own. I worked with the faculty on several projects, including teaching them to use medical references found on the

internet to base their medical decisions. This was quite a new idea for their faculty who otherwise previously had very few (and mostly outdated!) library resources available to them.

I was really delighted that my ideas were well accepted by my faculty colleagues. A French diplomat in Indonesia told me that he was very surprised how well I did, considering that the hospital I worked at typically tires of volunteer foreign doctors and quickly asks them to leave! Several years after my Fulbright, I returned to the medical school for a visit. One of the Deans excitedly took me to see their new computer facility set up for their faculty and students. You can imagine how extraordinarily honoured I was when he then told me the room was developed from my inspiration!

Our family had many wonderful experiences during the Fulbright year. Returning at dusk to our hotel by elephants from the ancient ruins at Borobudur near Yogyakarta counts as one our most memorable experiences, as well as being invited by the U.S. Ambassador to stay with him and his family at their residence in Jakarta. Probably the highlight was at the end

of the year, when I hosted a party at my house for all of my medical students and residents... it was those students that truly made my year special as I had learned so much from them. After returning from Indonesia, I published a short article on some of these thoughts: "Why Dying Doesn't Seem to Matter", a Teaching and Learning Moment, in *Academic Medicine*, Vol 78. No 6 June 2002.

It is hard to believe how well my Fulbright year in Asia helped to prepare me for my new job here in Singapore. Although I had no idea at the time that I would be working on the new Graduate Medical School in Singapore, my Fulbright was a tailor-made experience for much of what I'm doing now.

# ROSEMARY KHOO

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 1994

*“My professional interests are in everything to do with language and human communication. My passion is to work towards a better world for seniors and women. For recreation, I like travelling, window shopping and chatting with friends.”*

## Bright Memories of a Full Experience

Red and gold autumn colours, brightly-lit Christmas trees through window panes, gently falling snow – these pretty as a postcard scenes are what my mind conjures up of the New England I experienced. Street performers, theatres, museums, bookshops, the Coop, hot coffee outside Au Bon Pain, and the homey burgers of Mrs. Bartleys stand out in my memory of Harvard Square, Cambridge. Most striking of all must be historic Harvard Yard with its imposing statue of John Harvard, which seems to breathe intellectual vigour into the minds of those that daily traverse its terrain.

My Fulbright experience enabled me to further my research in educational linguistics at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education (HGSE) as well as soak in American culture and know American tertiary education first-hand. This I did through discussions and through the numerous lectures and brown bag lunches I attended at Radcliffe College, the Bunting Institute, JFK School of Government,

the Law School, Business School and MIT. I recall learning from Nadine Gordimer, Deborah Tannen, Cokie Roberts, George Lakoff, Paulo Freire, Jeffrey Sacks and Noam Chomsky to name a few. A significant event for Singaporeans at Harvard then was the launch of Francis Seow’s controversial book *To Catch a Tartar* at the Law School, which some Singaporean students were ambivalent about attending. Vivid also in my recall are the talk I gave on ‘A Linguistic Perspective of Culture in Singapore’ and my participation in the 12-session Fall seminar ‘Feminist Perspectives in Research: Inter-disciplinary Practice in the Study of Gender’ organised by the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies at Radcliffe College.

At El Paso where I was invited to give a lecture on the linguistic manifestations of culture at the University of Texas (UTEP), I saw a different face of American higher education as UTEP’s students were predominantly Mexican-American.

Celebrating Halloween in Salem, enjoying Thanksgiving dinner in Kathleen Cloud’s home and singing along with African Americans at their Sunday worship service in the public square one train stop away

from Harvard all constituted vastly contrasting experiences that left an indelible impression about the diversity and richness of American culture.

Back in Singapore in January 1995, I resumed with enthusiasm my work of starting the University Women’s Association, which would encourage graduate women in Singapore to take on a more active interest in issues affecting society, and to engage in lifelong learning. I also met up with Tracy Thiele of the American Embassy for discussions on our aspirations of having a Fulbright Association in Singapore, and practical steps to take.

Now in 2007, both associations are celebrating their tenth anniversary. Recently, during the Chinese New Year season, I received a surprise call from my faculty associate at HGSE, Prof Courtney Cazden, here in Singapore on a research attachment at the National Institute of Education. As we renewed our ties over lunch, the bonds of friendship with my American friends despite the march of time struck me as being the best thing that has come out of my Fulbright attachment.

# ANNIE KOH

University of Fulbright Affiliation: New York University

Year of programme: 1983 to 1987

*"My interests are in reading, interviewing folks for articles watching movies and having great conversations."*

I am grateful for the Fulbright scholarship which was awarded to me to pursue a PhD in International Finance at New York University. For four and a half years after graduating from the Singapore University with majors in Economics and Sociology, I worked as a foreign exchange trader in DBS bank. It was a wonderful first job, but I knew I wanted to return to academia one day.

That 'one day' took place in late 1981, when I was approached by Professor Lee Soo Ann, then-dean of NUS business school, and told that there was a senior tutor scheme available with a Fulbright scholarship to pursue PhD studies. As usual, there was a bond attached and NUS required I serve as a tutor for two years before deciding if academic life is something I wanted to pursue. I took to teaching like fish to water and was quite happy being the lowest member of the food chain in the business school then, tutoring business and accountancy students in Monetary Economics and Public Finance course.

I commenced my application to a slew of U.S. schools as the scholarship would only be awarded if I managed to get

into a list of schools determined by the Public Service Commission as credible schools for pursuing a PhD program.

It was an interesting period of my life. I actually went to University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) for the first academic quarter and found that while it was a great school, it did not suit my lifestyle. I didn't know how to drive a car and that was very inconvenient for someone studying in California. I was staying right next to the Anderson school at Landfair, surrounded by sororities and fraternities...not quite the life I had anticipated for myself for the next four years.

So I called up the Institute of International Education (IIE) folks in Washington and asked if I would be allowed to transfer my credits to New York University, or NYU for short (I was given a place there which I originally rejected). Living in New York City, having a car was considered a liability. Within a week, after the December quarter, I was on my way east.

The four years at NYU and being a Fulbright scholar opened up opportunities. It was not just the

financial support which I appreciated together with the book allowance and travel allowance.

What was amazing was that scholars were always given first-run tickets for off-Broadway shows and concerts at Carnegie Hall and other great performances. I was busy juggling classes on finance and attending a slew of great concerts and performances courtesy of being a Fulbrighter.

What was even more amazing was that half a year into my programme, I received a phone call from the Institute of IIE folks administering the Fulbright scholarship informing me that they lined us first year foreign students up with a mentor, just for a year to ensure that we were settling down in school and in the U.S. nicely.

On hind sight, I kick myself for not getting in touch with my mentor more...I only met her once when she actually arranged for me to witness a Federal Reserve Bank of NY meeting. I recalled clearly that the chairman presiding at the meeting then was Paul Volcker and my mentor introduced me to him (*Editor's note: Paul Adolph Volcker is probably best known as former Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve,*

*...serving from August 1979 to August 1987 under Presidents Carter and Reagan). I was allowed to sit by the side of the long table as an observer. It was in the early 80s, 1983 to be precise, and the discussion then was on whether some tightening of the market was needed to put a curb on inflation. It was a magical moment and it also brought to mind the importance of having astute policy makers.*

My mentor asked if I was settling in nicely and whether I needed any help. I told her everything was hunky dory and being Singaporean, I had no problem getting adjusted to the Big Apple. So she reckoned I did not need her help and left me alone to continue my happy ways.

Guess what, my mentor was Madeleine Albright, former ambassador to the UN and former Secretary of State.

So you see, I am not so bright for a Fulbrighter!

# KOH TAI ANN

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Cornell University

**Year of programme:** 1987

*“Previously with the Department of English Language and Literature at the National University of Singapore, I joined the National Institute of Education of Nanyang Technological University in 1994 as its Dean of the School of Arts, then became the NIE Dean (Academic) and subsequently, NTU’s first Dean of Students from 2003-2006. Now back in academe, I expect to complete at the end of this year an “Annotated Bibliography of Imaginative Literature in Malaya/Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore” with author biographies and titles dating back to the 19th Century and up to the present (2007). Interrupted by other projects and administrative duties, it had its origins all those years ago during my tenure as a Fulbright Fellow when I toiled, reading till late at night in the dank, ghostly basement of Olin Library, Cornell University, which housed the Wason-Echols collection of rare Asian and Southeast Asian literary texts.”*

In 1996, as the then-Dean of the new School of Arts at the National Institute of Education (NIE) at Nanyang Technological University seeking to broaden the academic horizons of BA students and research opportunities of staff, I found welcome assistance from the then-Director of USIS (the U.S. Information Service) Dr. Michael Anderson, at the U.S. Embassy and his Cultural Affairs staff. NIE teaching staff such as Dr. Dudley DeSouza and Dr. Max LeBlond went to the US under the Fulbright and other exchange programmes, while we also hosted in succession, two Visiting Fulbright professors from the U.S., one of them being

the former Malaysian poet and now U.S. citizen and academic, Professor Shirley Geok-lin Lim. American writers also visited and gave talks, sometimes through video-conference links. Because of such cultural and educational collaboration, and being myself also a former Fulbrighter, I was approached by Dr. Anderson, to be the master of ceremonies and deliver the welcome address at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Fulbright Association Program (1946-1996) held on December 7, 1996, at the Singapore Art Museum. The Keynote Speaker was visiting Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch, President of the U.S.-Japan Foundation in New York City and, as U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, the first Asian American Ambassador. Other notable former Fulbrighters present were the then-U.S. Ambassador to Singapore, Timothy A. Chorb; and Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large, Professor Tommy Koh, who both also made brief remarks before Ambassador Bloch's keynote address. The evening's celebration concluded with the opening of an Arthur Tress photo exhibition and a reception at the Glass Hall of Singapore Art Museum.

I include my full speech (reproduced in the section "Pages from the Past" ) for two reasons. One, is that it provides an account of my experience as a Fulbrighter at Cornell University in 1987. The other, perhaps more importantly, is my quite independent proposal made in the speech that Singapore form its own chapter of the Fulbright Association. This idea was sparked by the U.S.-based Fulbright Association having recently sent me, never having ever contacted me before, a membership form and information leaflets. I believe this idea was taken forward subsequently by Professor Tommy Koh, and our own Fulbright Association was formed on July 31, 1998. Victor Savage was the founding President with myself as founding Vice-President. Then-Minister for Education, Rear-Admiral Teo Chee Hean, himself a Fulbrighter, was Guest-of-Honour at the inauguration of the Association.

# LILY KONG

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley  
**Year of programme:** 1998

*"I am a social and cultural geographer, with wide research interests in the study of issues ranging from religion to cultural policy and creative economies, nature and environment, and national and cultural identity."*

Finding accommodation in Berkeley is difficult in the best of times. Finding short-term affordable accommodation is even more difficult. I therefore made arrangements to stay with a friend and her family in San Francisco and commuted to Berkeley. I watched a transnational family strengthen its roots and build a home – Lilian, a Chinese Singaporean, trained lawyer-turned-banker; Scott an American firefighter training to be a paramedic and working shifts, and little Audrey, a product of a transnational marriage, growing up with a Cantonese-speaking nanny, a Spanish-speaking weekly house help, and a pariah dog, Max. It felt right, as I was writing about Chinese migration at that time. My best memories are that of coffee with Scott on a sidewalk of San Francisco discussing life and philosophy, Lilian's comment about my rolling out of bed and getting immediately to writing in my pyjamas, and Audrey's girlish voice piping up from her potty, shouting "Aunty Lily, I'm done!" Of course, it was good visiting the university too!

# DEVADAS KRISHNADAS

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Tufts University

Year of programme: 2003 to 2005

‘Welcome to the United States’, the immigration officer declared at Logan International airport. Past the terminal doors lay two years of study and play in Boston courtesy of the Fulbright Scholarship. I had been inspired to try for the Fulbright on my first visit to the United States as a participant in the International Visitors Programme (IVP). During the one month of the IVP, I crossed the continent from East to West (and back again) and gained a sense of the vastness and variety which define the tapestry of American geography and demography. The brief four weeks were sufficient to infect me with that particular American ‘can-do’ spirit. Twelve months later, I had the scholarship and was busy packing family and books for the East coast.

On reflection, I had already been welcomed to the United States when I gained acceptance to the Fulbright Program. The Program captures the essence of enlightened America. An essence which understands the value of education and of diversity and which places its faith in the multiplier effect of goodwill.

I was determined to spend the two years gaining a better understanding of the country and people. I traveled 15,000 miles by car and a further 3,000 by plane and 2,000

by train. I visited the pioneer New England towns (Plymouth, Gloucester, Nantucket), the battlefields of the Revolution (Concord, Lexington, Bunker Hill) and the Civil War (the Shenandoah, Virginia), the homes of the founding fathers – both grand (Monticello) and humble (the Adams’), the commercial giant and proverbial melting pot that is Manhattan, the throbbing administrative heart that is the Capitol, ran the divide between the eloquent, up to date North East to the earthy deep South (Louisiana).

I came to know people as friends that I could never have planned to meet. They took me into their homes and their lives and asked for nothing in return. I saw in their eyes a yearning to be understood and to understand and in their hearts, a compulsion to help everyone and anyone see the better rather than the worse of the grand American experiment. This experiment is paradoxical. It is more than the politics of democracy but is fully occupied by it, it transcends yet is also defined by its geography, it loves its tradition but thrives on its evolution, it looks for certainty but finds inspiration in an eternal questioning of purpose and it finds equal strength in the singularity of patriotism and the diversity of people and views which

tussle noisily under the patronage of a gifted Constitution.

Just as I felt the need to come to America, I was committed to bring my world to it. We celebrated all of Singapore’s major religious and cultural events with friends, showed picture books and enthusiastically circulated links to websites on Singapore. The Fulbright experience is not an education in academics but in life. The academic institutions we attend are but vehicles of convenience, and sometimes serendipity, leading us to opportunities to gain the only truly worthwhile knowledge – that of ourselves and our fellows. The Fulbright experience for me has not ended. It lives on in the many friends I have made and kept. Through them, I have come to know a nation which possesses and has achieved great ambitions. In these troubled times I hope they keep alight the flame of their inspiration with the oil of humility by recalling the old sailors’ lament, ‘Oh Lord, protect me, my boat is so small and thy sea so wide’.

AGNES S. L.

LAM

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Pittsburgh

Year of programme: 1986

*"I do research on language education in China, Asian poetry in English and write poetry."*

The Fulbright visit resulted in a joint research paper published with my host and several poems I wrote during my visit were later published in my first collection of poems entitled *Woman to Woman and Other Poems*.

### Petals

in three countries  
I can grow  
if but a little  
each time  
I transplant

breathing in the air  
pollen-dusted  
allergic to spring  
dripping with sodas  
in the heat of summer  
a chlorine bath later  
smelling burnt  
and crackling  
on autumn trees  
in the clear winter  
icicles break and bite

extremes in America  
modulated in Hong Kong  
negligible on the Equator

but always  
petals half-open  
I thrive  
on the spectrum  
of colours smells noises  
temperatures humidities  
degrees of pollution  
in the pervading air

ready to be  
watered by droplets  
pressed between a child's  
small fingers  
a gift for Father

without roots  
I grow

with but the scent  
for a season  
even a moment  
translucent petals  
dancing in a raindrop spectrum

mere petals  
of scent and light  
dissipated and mangled  
in an afternoon storm

as the traffic  
halts on the red light  
and pedestrians  
cross in their umbrellas

Agnes Lam, 28 June 1986, LRDC

# ASAD-UL IQBAL LATIF

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 2006

*"When asked whether I cook, my honest reply is: 'I can cook, but can you eat?'"*

I spent three months in 2006 as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. At the Center, I was struck by the degree of collegiate camaraderie amongst members from a variety of backgrounds, nationalities and ideologies. If the Center has any ideology, it is to let all ideologies have full play.

The Harvard/Cambridge/Boston area is another matter, however. I knew that I had stepped into the People's Republic of Massachusetts two weeks after landing there when I began to miss Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Not being as smart as I should be, I made the mistake of asking an acquaintance where I might find a KFC outlet.

A hush fell on the room. It was as if I had confessed to being a murderer in my youth. Her eyes narrowed, her lips curled up in a contempt that was older than Kentucky, fries or even chicken. "You surely don't mean to ask that question seriously?" she hissed. I stammered that I did.

What followed was a lesson in political economy that was intended to leave me in no doubt that the plight of chickens, workers, proletarian chicken farmers and proletarians generally in the age of advanced capitalism and consumerism could be traced to the doors of KFC. Eating there meant being on the wrong side of history.

I used to be a student at Presidency College, Kolkata, and Cambridge University, and had fancied myself as being on the right side of history. (We usually are.) But after receiving my lesson in the political economy of prolonging unconscionably the life of late capitalism by eating KFC chicken, I barely managed to flee the radical's presence while keeping my lefty pretensions alive.

I did not come across a KFC in my months at Harvard. May be there are some outlets, but I do not know where they are. I had my revenge. On a visit to Washington, I stumbled across a KFC and ate my fill there. But, back at Harvard, I did not tell anyone what I had done in Washington.

The laws of a People's Republic can be harsh.



# JULIA LAU BERTRAND

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Georgetown University

Year of programme: 2003 to 2004

*"I just married an American guy I met during my Fulbright experience, and am now back in the U.S. pursuing my PhD. Back in Singapore this July!"*

I got married in Singapore on December 30, 2006. Half-jokingly, one of my wedding guests wrote in our guest book: "Dear Julia, I always knew you would contribute to our great-power relations!" Perhaps unwittingly, he aptly – but exaggeratedly – encapsulated how my personal relationship with the United States of America has deepened and become more complex since my Fulbright stint from August 2003 to August 2004.

The Fulbright experience for me has truly been a remarkable one, and my life has been enriched by it in ways I could not have imagined before I left Singapore more than three years ago. My husband, Stephen Bertrand, is an American who was in the MBA programme at Georgetown University, where we met. In the three years that we dated, I made many personal trips to the U.S. to visit him, his family, and my friends. Last Fall, I returned to Washington D.C. and Georgetown to pursue my PhD in International Relations.

One of the best memories I have from my Fulbright stint was the weekend seminar for new Fulbrighters I attended in Phoenix, Arizona in February 2004. There I met 120 other Fulbrighters from 60 countries, who were all bursting with energy and promise, eager to do their part for their own country and the world. The fellowship and sense of accomplishment among that group was more vibrant than anything I had experienced.

I have made lifelong friends at Georgetown – fellow Fulbrighters from Austria and Germany, as well as non-Fulbrighters from Malaysia, various states in the U.S., and elsewhere. Upon returning to Singapore, I was delighted to find in the members of the Fulbright Association and the newly established Georgetown Club of Singapore like-minded individuals who cared about the future of Singapore and its place in the world. While these latter friendships are still new, the sense of belonging we all feel is indisputable and can only go from strength to strength. The Fulbright label opens doors and hearts to you; many a stranger has struck up a lively conversation with me

simply because he or she shared the Fulbright experience at one point.

The Fulbright ideals of fostering exchange, debate and altruistic contribution to society have informed my personal life, my scholarship in international relations and my professional attitude as a civil servant (albeit on no-pay leave!) in Singapore. I believe I will someday return to where I can best serve the two countries closest to my heart – Singapore, my lifelong home – and the U.S., the behemoth I am still getting to know even after more than a dozen trips including a year's stay as a Fulbrighter.

I already know that for the rest of my life, I will toggle between Singapore and the United States. In today's globalised world, that is perhaps one of the best positions to be in. I have the Fulbright experience to thank for it. And it is a certain thing that many others after me will benefit from the intellectual expanse and opportunity a Fulbright award can bring.

# ANDREW LEE

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Singapore Health Services

Year of programme: 2006 to 2007

*"I recently graduated from Williams College with a BA in Chemistry and Political Science. In my free time, I try to understand the nuances of Singlish."*

Any illusions I had about becoming a star basketball player in Singapore vanished during my first game when the man I was guarding sank a three-pointer over my outstretched arm. "Welcome to Singapore," he taunted. I spent the rest of the game panting from the stifling humidity in the gym and badly missed the two shots that I took. Was I wrong to expect that my jump shot would be as accurate in Singapore as it was in America? After all, a basketball goal is ten feet tall anywhere in the world.

Every Tuesday I trek from the office to Anglo-Chinese School for my recreational basketball league games. The players in the league are a mixed bunch with Aussies, Americans, an odd Swede or German, and of course Singaporeans to round out the mix. Partly by luck and partly a result of my skill level, I joined the Breakers, a rookie team with mostly Singaporean players.

It doesn't matter that I can't reply to that player who taunted me in early September with a jump shot of my own. It doesn't matter that I spend most of my Tuesday

nights warming the bench. For me the basketball games serve two purposes. They help me keep in shape. More importantly, basketball games serve as an opportunity to make friends with the Singaporeans on my team, share a laugh over a poor shot, and spur each other on when the game is on the line.

I have trouble understanding my teammates' thick Singlish, and sometimes my American accent baffles them and elicits giggles from their girlfriends. First, come the requisite questions asked of Texans, "Are there a lot of horses in Texas," quickly followed by "How many horses do you own?" I pepper them with questions of my own, "What do you think about Americans" and "What's national service like?" Like most Singaporean males they have plenty of national service tales of hilarious hijinks tucked away in their memories for these sorts of occasions. I listen eagerly, unfamiliar with military life, unlike a Singaporean female who might roll her eyes at such hackneyed stories.

What I will remember most about the league is not our winning record but rather the shared experiences with these friends. They have tutored me on

how to speak with a "proper" Singlish accent, which I must confess I have not mastered. They have taken me to the best hawker stands for chicken rice and *kenay teov*. They have truly welcomed me to Singapore and we have I hope that if they are ever in Texas, I can return the favour. Perhaps I can teach them how to ride a horse... if only I knew where to find one.

# JEREMY LIM

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Johns Hopkins University

**Year of programme:** 2002 to 2003

*“The hours never seem sufficient as I strive to balance work, community service and family. Still, I am grateful for the opportunities to be useful, and the occasional “Good job, daddy!” makes it all worthwhile.”*

Seeing the intense questioning of the man in front of me by the U.S. immigration officer, I was quite prepared for an unpleasant start to my ‘Fulbright experience’. After all, it was post-9/11...

“What you coming here for, boy?”... “Studying? You sure? You don’t look like no student!”... “What’s this?” he muttered, pulling out the letter from the U.S. Embassy detailing the grant award. “You’re a Fulbrighter!”

The questioning ended. “Welcome to America!” The burly officer exclaimed as he came out from behind the counter to escort me to ‘Baggage Claim’. “I hope you have a wonderful time here.”

I did have a wonderful time and three episodes in particular stand out that represent the paradox that is America.

## ‘Show and Tell’

What started as a light-hearted attempt to get to know one’s classmates better grew into a fully-funded ongoing programme where students from different continents took turns to share their cultures and countries during lunch time

presentations. Nigeria was colourful and flamboyant, Japan was demure in a kimono and Singapore dazzled with a wide array of food. The enthusiasm for mutual understanding and friendship stood out as did the school’s readiness to support the ‘Show and Tell’ with nothing more convincing than a bunch of students with a vision and a half-page proposal.

## “Stupid Question”

The teaching assistant had finished her explanation of the work at hand. “Any questions?” She asked with a heavy accent that betrayed her African origins.

“What is the...?”

“That is a stupid question. If you had bothered to read your notes, you wouldn’t be asking it.”

I silently applauded her bravery in exposing the inane question for what it was. It seemed that a small proportion of students could not resist the allure of their own voices.

Still, in politically correct America, I was not totally surprised that a complaint had surfaced to the Dean’s Office and the TA ‘counselled appropriately’.

## KFC

An irrational urge to eat KFC chicken led a Nigerian classmate and I to wander into the worst parts of Baltimore. I was amazed to see a restaurant with bullet proof windows and steel bars with reinforced counter glass separating customers from counter staff. We transacted dollars for chicken via a lazy Suzy and I ate as fast as I could lest the teenage pyromaniac in the next table succeeded in burning down the restaurant before we finished. Still, the American sense of community and concern persisted. Stepping out of KFC, a middle-aged woman urged us to get out of the area, saying, “This ain’t a good neighbourhood. It ain’t safe. My sons are around.”

My ‘Fulbright experience’ began five years ago and still continues. Senator Fulbright’s vision of ‘a little more knowledge, a little more reason and a little more compassion’ and learning to ‘live in peace and friendship’ resonates across national borders, cultures and time.

### Going West, Meeting East: My Fulbright Experience

In the Fall of 1997 when a sudden cold snap frosted the trees and blanketed Iowa City with several inches of snow, I was doing tai chi on the snow-covered banks of the Iowa River with a poet from Slovakia. We were both attending the International Writers' Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa, in Iowa City in mid-west America. If it weren't for the Fulbright Grant through the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, I wouldn't have met my Slovakian tai chi teacher, and through him discovered the Iowa City Zen Center where I had my first encounter with an American Zen nun from whom I learnt *zazen*, sitting meditation. The Iowa City Zen Center was a tiny apartment above Willowwind School in South Johnson Street. It was opened at six o'clock every morning for sitting meditation. The American nun with shaved head and dressed in a black robe was in attendance. The people who came to meditate in the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition were Americans of European descent. Through sitting in silence with them, and later talking over a cup of coffee and bagels, I discovered the thin thread of Eastern spirituality running through that region of America that is sometimes derided as 'corn-and-hog country.' That encounter helped me to look at America, not through the eyes of the mass media but through my own eyes.

### To the Slovakian Poet & Tai chi Teacher in Iowa City

Can two persons perform poetry in motion,  
And not have feelings for each other?  
It's a question I ask only because I'm Singaporean,  
And Singaporeans always want to know,  
Seeing everything in the white light of their noonday sun  
Even when things are better in the grey half light of a  
winter morn.

You ask me with a smile each morning,  
"Hello, who are you?"  
"Don't know," I reply. "Who are you?"  
"The mad monk who got drunk last night."  
"How d'you know it was you who was drunk?"  
"Who cares?" You laugh.  
Knowing seems too easy.

"It's easy for a Chinese to do tai chi.  
You're born graceful."  
"Concept. Just a concept," I smile,  
"No, not a concept. Five thousand years of culture."  
You mirror my move; perfect we stand  
Motionless as cranes in a dream.  
"I don't have it. I'm from Singapore."  
My words ripple through the morning's calm.  
A flicker of shadow crosses your eyes.  
Can we stand still, perfect as cranes again?  
I don't know.

WILLIAM  
S. W. LIM

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of Programme: 1956 to 1957

*“Currently, I write and lecture on a wide range of subjects relating to architecture, urbanism and culture in Asia as well as on current issues relating to the postmodern, glocality and social justice. A recent book published is *Asian Ethical Urbanism: A Radical Postmodern Perspective* (2005) and I am presently working on my new book *Asian Alterity with special reference to Architecture & Urbanism through the lens of Cultural Studies.*”*

I completed one academic year (1956-57) in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Harvard University.

I benefited enormously through my exposure to excellent graduate credit courses by great teachers such as Charles Haars and Kevin Lynch. The courses ranged from land and development economics, planning law, urban sociology, regional geography and public administration to urban spatial and transport strategies.

The library is an incredible and vast knowledge bank for graduate students. My research paper on the *Relevance of Traditional Chinese Administration to the Establishment of the British Civil Service* was exciting and very challenging especially when many of the documents were in Chinese. I was able to obtain a distinction on this paper with a

scholarship offer to continue my study on the subject.

My one year stay included two months hitch-hiking to the deep South and mid-West. It gave me direct experience of the warmth and friendliness of the American people and as well as a deeper insight into the complexities of their political system and diversity in their cultural values.

Decades on, I am still in touch with many of my top academic teachers and continue to obtain invaluable advice for my subsequent theoretical work. Many of my classmates are very gifted in their own disciplines. One of them is architect, Frank Gehry, whose warm friendship continues to this day.

# LIM SWEE TECK

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Ohio State University

Year of programme: 1969 -1971

*"I am a pediatric dentist and author of the nine-book series "The Healthy Smile Series". These books are specially written to help the child and parent to understand and be motivated about oral health care."*

The Fulbright scholarship helped to turn my life around and gave me the opportunity to realise my full potential in life. Coming from a poor and impoverished background, it was the only means to allow me to go to the States to pursue specialised training in children's dentistry. At that time, the States had one of the best training programmes in this area of dentistry.

The programme at the Ohio State University helped to train me not only in clinical procedures but also in research and teaching. It inculcated a tremendous confidence for the career ahead. My mentors at the university were excellent and they spared no effort in guiding and spurring me on to serve my profession better on the completion of the training.

Although the scholarship carried no bond, I was so grateful for the opportunity and training provided that I came back to Singapore to contribute to the local university. With the experiences garnered during my training, I helped to

establish and build a good program for Children's Dentistry at the Faculty of Dentistry which was lacking at that time.

The knowledge acquired in doing research also helped me to explore and produce numerous papers in the various areas of children's dentistry. Not only was I able to contribute to the undergraduate but I was also able to add to the postgraduate programme.

Immersion in an academic environment of continuing education in the States spurred me to continue to achieve academic and professional excellence. It also helped to spark off my innate creative abilities. As a result I am now rounding up a most fruitful career by realising a dream through the publication of the *Healthy Smile Series* – a nine volume series of books on the various aspect of oral health care for the child and parent. The books will help to motivate both child and parent and allow them to understand in a simple manner the various complexities of routine dental procedures. This will help to 'remove the unknown' and avert the many common fears of the dentist.

I am indeed grateful for the wonderful opportunity to be a Fulbright Hayes scholar, without which I would not have been able to realise my dreams and potential and contribute back to society.

# LIN CHUNG YING

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Tufts University

**Year of programme:** 1977 to 1978

*“My main interest outside my work is the anti-drug cause. I have been a volunteer in the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association since 1996.”*

I was a young Foreign Service Officer in 1977 when I was told that I was selected for the Fulbright Scholarship to study for my Masters at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Massachusetts. Coming just five years after my nine-month post-graduate diploma course in international relations at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands, I felt I was fortunate to have received two study awards through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The time I spent at Fletcher and the United States in 1977-1978 left a stronger and more lasting impression on me than my earlier study stint in Europe. Perhaps it was because Fletcher was located in Boston, at that time a town with many young university students in a post Vietnam War environment. In The Hague, my classmates came from all over the world; we had only one Dutch student in my class. This contrasted with Fletcher where almost all students were young Americans, and very bright ones at that. I felt like I was joining a class filled with America's best and the brightest. My most famous (or infamous)

classmate was Jonathan (Jay) Pollard, who after graduation joined the U.S. Defense Dept and was later arrested for spying for Israel. He was convicted in 1986 and is still in jail. I did not realise then that the American students whom I mixed with in Fletcher were mostly American Jews. One of them joined the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a powerful Jewish lobby group, and she invited me to visit her at her office, which I did in 1986. I was very impressed that a non-state organisation could have a much bigger and organised research outfit than our own MFA. And the ADL was 'just' a lobby group!

In those days, Fletcher was administered jointly by Tufts University and Harvard and Fletcher students could take courses in Harvard. It is an arrangement which I understand no longer exists now. Because of this arrangement, I had the chance to make use of Harvard's vast library and other resources. My weekends were invariably spent at Harvard Square and the Harvard Cooperative. One lasting impression was that while American students appeared on the surface to be

very playful, they were in fact very hard working and determined individuals. The “Thank God It is Friday” parties held in the dormitory were de-stressing sessions before every one got back to their rooms or the Library to go through the volumes of reading material we had to digest before classes started again on Monday.

# JEREMIAH LO TUCK SENG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Johns Hopkins University

Year of programme: 2006 to 2007

*"I think G. K. Chesterton's short story "The Secret of Father Brown" contains a useful lesson for social scientists."*

## Some Lovely Americans

More than anything else, I will return to Singapore with fond memories of two groups of people outside the Masters programme. Don't get me wrong. The experiences at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies have been enriching. But as I start thinking about my last four months in the U.S., there are some faces that I am sure I will miss when June 2007 arrives.

## Helping Others

I got involved with a small church group that gives out food and clothing to some of the homeless near Union Station. The group is not made up of nice little religious old ladies with time on their hands to do good. The group was not even started by the church leadership. It was started and continues to be run by lay members (that is, people who are not full-staff from the church). They come from a variety of backgrounds: civil engineering, investment banking, academia, and the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. They are soft-spoken, down-to-earth

people who simply try to solve the nuts-and-bolts problems that go with trying to help their fellow human beings, even when this service is sometimes taken for granted by those they help. I will remember their faces, especially when I am tempted to look only at the negative press reporting on American actions. I will remember that they are part of a larger but largely unreported trend of Americans who go out of their way to serve others. One U.S. government estimate puts volunteerism in the U.S. at around 25 per cent of the population.

## Homeless, not Faceless

I will also remember that the homeless are not mere figures in some statistical table. Some are mentally ill and it is admittedly difficult to engage them. Others are trying to get back into the workforce. I chatted with one of the men recently and realised he had a PhD in science. Unfortunately, he had gotten involved in drugs, which started his downward spiral. He's been gradually trying to get his life back on track. Another had been a salesman in the mid-West; now he's trying to rid his life of cocaine and alcohol. One of the ladies had been the spouse of

a military man and lived in various places all over the world. Perhaps I will learn from her in the next few weeks how she ended up on the streets. Some may never reintegrate into the workforce. One of the guys told me he had been homeless for 11 years. His current spot for sleeping is somewhere near the Thomas Jefferson memorial. They prefer that our Wednesday night dinner-and-discussion sessions end by 7 pm. Why? Because if they arrive too late at the shelters, there may not be a bed for them. Sleeping on the street when it is three degrees Celsius can't be much fun. One hopes that, given the right support, at least some of them will get back on their feet permanently. But I will remember, that each one is a person with a face, and is not just a number.



# VERNON LOH

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Davis; and University of San Francisco

**Year of programme:** 2004 to 2005

*“My interests lie in travel, learning about new cultures and photography.”*

The Fulbright experience went beyond fostering mutual understanding between the people of the United States and its global participants. Instead, many lasting friendships were forged during my time in the programme.

The Fulbright Spring Conference in Washington D.C. was memorable. Apart from the robust exchange on global security issues between the American and Middle Eastern participants, deeply etched in my memory is our presentation to a classroom of high school students in Maryland who were really interested in learning more about matters such as what languages Singaporeans communicated in and whether we could chew gum. This dynamic American classroom environment was prevalent even in the college classrooms, a forum where many creative ideas were always being thrown up for discussion by all present. There is an undying curiosity and search for knowledge that makes for an excellent learning environment.

I thoroughly enjoyed being a resident of San Francisco. The hilly streets, liberalism, deep sense of diversity and community and Bay Area hospitality have left a strong, lasting impression on me. There was always a festive mood in the air in this city of street parades, be it for the Chinese New Year, Veteran’s Day, Pride Parade, Filipino Independence Day, or Halloween. Lastly, how could I ever forget my classic American road trips up and down the “101” which was just two blocks away from my apartment?

# LUI HAH WAH ELENA

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Michigan State University

**Year of programme:** 1987

*“I have a passion for Lifelong Service Learning: ‘learn to serve’ and ‘serve to learn’.”*

The Fulbright Association (Singapore) is going to celebrate its 10th birthday on 26 April 2007. On this happy occasion, I would like express my gratitude to the United States Council of International Exchange for awarding me the scholarship, and the former Director of Institute of Education, Dr. Sim Wong Kooi, for his blessings in my application for the Fulbright Program in 1987. This six-month doctoral scholarship helped me sail through the last lap of my PhD study in Curriculum and Instruction (Affective Education) at Michigan State University (MSU) in East Lansing, the Capital of Michigan. From the Spring of 1980 to the Fall of 1987, I had an eight-year ‘long march’ of post-graduate studies for three degrees: Master of Arts (Education), Education specialist and PhD (Curriculum and Instruction). It was a combination of part-time “Education Overseas Studies” in Singapore, Taipei and Hawaii, and full-time study in the main campus (on sabbatical leave). The ‘Fulbright-ship’ is the most significant landmark in my career and lifelong learning journey. In recognition of my services to more than 15 voluntary organisations in Singapore and beyond, I

was conferred the “MSU Distinguished International Alumni” in 1994 and “MSU Distinguished Alumni” in 1995.

There were bountiful opportunities for my professional and personal development as well as volunteer services for Singapore society, after I obtained a basic degree in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. On 4 September 1974, I started my first job in Singapore. The appointment was Assistant Training Officer of the Training & Research Section in the then-Ministry of Social Affairs. On 20 October 1975, I joined the then-Institute of Education as one of the two Social Work Lecturers recruited by the late Dr. Ruth Wong. In addition to the learning of affective education, training & research, IT applications, guidance, counseling and school social work, and so on, I was also inducted into Service-Learning (SL) when I resided in the main campus of MSU. Actually SL has an important component: career exploration/education which is an integral part of the total development of a person. Service Learning is “a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experience with academic

learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility” (*Service Learning: An Overview, Corporation for National and Community Service*, 1994, p. 12). Since the beginning of this century, I have been advocating a synergised notion of Service-Learning, a cognitive circle: “Learn-to-Serve and Serve-to-Learn” for both personal growth and career development.

Looking ahead, my vision for the Fulbright Association (Singapore) is that it may become a global hub of ‘Fulbrighters’ who are distinguished professionals and academics across disciplines. This association may provide an international forum (real or virtual) for them to exchange expertise and also initiate community projects to engage them in ‘Lifelong Service Learning’. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the FA(S) President, Associate Professor Ang Peng Hwa, and all committee members for the resounding success of this very memorable celebration. Three cheers!

# STEPHAN MUENCH

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Irvine  
**Year of programme:** 1997 to 1998

*“I love cycling at East Coast and then having a rest at the seafood hawker centre. Hopefully our daughter will appreciate it as much as I do.”*

## **Do You Need a Pick-up?**

My first Fulbright experience happened before my actual exchange year even started. This for me makes it so memorable.

When I received the approval for the University of California in Irvine in Summer 1997, I immediately contacted the national Fulbright organisation asking whether there would be more “Fulbrighters” starting there with me. I got one name – I tried to call him but apparently that was his student home and he had moved already. So I wrote an email: It turned out he had just arrived at Irvine and was about to settle down. Without having ever spoken to him personally he offered to pick me up from the airport when I would be arriving some weeks later. That was more than an hour’s drive one way. Coming from my cultural background I found that really exceptional and I thought what a strong bond the Fulbright Program gave us already! You can imagine how relieved I felt knowing someone was picking me up. Everybody familiar with Los Angeles airport knows what a hassle public transport is there. So when I set my foot into this new life there was someone waiting to welcome me. We spent the year together and are still good friends even up to today.

# NGIAM TEE LIANG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of California, Berkeley

Year of programme: 1978 to 1981

*“One of the founders of the Fulbright Association (Singapore).”*

The Fulbright years in Berkeley with my family were among the best years of my life. Not only did I have my wife, Kim and daughter, Su-Lin with me, but our son, Kee-Min was born there, too. The educational opportunity at the University of California, Berkeley (Cal) was just exceptional. It was a rare privilege to have studied at one of the finest and top schools of social work in one of the best universities in the world. I learnt so much from the professors that I first knew through textbooks and journal articles I had previously read. Of course, the fine California state and weather also contributed to the wonderful experience of a lifetime. Coupled with the wonderful friendship of fellow residents at the University Village in Albany where we stayed, or of students I studied with, my time, and that of my family in America remains unforgettable and much cherished.

We have some close friends that we still stay very much in touch with through all these years. Among them is the Lubben family consisting of Jim, his wife Maureen and their children Steven and Kristen. When we were doctoral students studying social work together, Jim and Maureen

helped us immensely with generous and warm American hospitality. In fact, he even had a part to play in the delivery of my son. As we did not own a car then, he volunteered to drive my wife and I to a maternity hospital in Oakland in the middle of the night when she went into labour. We had to drive to the hospital twice that day, since the first round of labour pangs was too early for delivery and we were told to return home and go to the hospital again nearer the time. Jim and Maureen also introduced us to the joys and fun of outdoor camping at the various national parks that California is famous for. As my wife was a former Girl Guide and I was a former Boy Scout, we were thrilled at experiencing camping life again.

Another family we are fond of is a senior American-Chinese lady, Mary Yee, her daughter Barbara and son-in-law Wil. The older woman was working as a part-time cashier at the Students' Union building and we became friends through my frequent visits there.

I also had a short spell of residence at the International House (I-House) in UC Berkeley and got to know more students, including some from

Singapore. Having meals together, interacting with and getting to know some of the residents there was also another meaningful part of my American sojourn. I remember how, near midnight, some of us would quite regularly go in one of the students' cars to the San Francisco Chinatown in search of supper, such as wanton noodle soup and the like. Warmed by such comfort food, we would then return to our dorms for a few more hours of study.

Berkeley was a fascinating campus to be in. I saw student activism championing a myriad of causes and saw the upside and downside of life for ordinary folks, too, including those at the People's Park and along the pavements of Berkeley streets. I also saw the indomitable spirit of social capital at work among some segments of society. In short, the Fulbright experience enriched my education immensely both in and outside the classroom, and one I would enthusiastically encourage others to experience.

# NOR HIDAYAH

BTE MOHD AMIN

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Lehigh University

Year of programme: 2006 to 2007

*"An adventurous person, I travel widely from the hamlets of Morocco to the Everest region. I am also active in community work and going on humanitarian expeditions."*

From building houses for Hurricane Katrina survivors to preparing breakfast for the homeless; from smiling to terminally-ill patients at St Luke's Hospital to mugging away in the wee hours of the night; from driving across nine states in winter to taking a slow boat ride in the Bayou; from presenting papers to a class of intellectuals to listening to the inspiring speech of a Nobel Peace Laureate; from chilling at Red Robin to heating up a sorority meeting discussion; from solemn strangers to familiar friends.....

What I value most about my Fulbright experience is the exchange of ideas and the engagement of minds. A social psychologist once said that friendly and sustained contacts erode prejudice. True to the spirit of Fulbright, the way to achieve understanding is to build bridges of friendship between societies and cultures. And I am indeed privileged to be able to build many wonderful bridges in the United States of America.

# ONG<sup>CHYE HIN</sup>

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Year of programme: 1990 to 1991

*"I am addicted to physical activities and I run and work out in the gym whenever I can. Passed my half century mark last year and every year now is a bonus."*

It was an unexpected bonus to be nominated for a Fulbright Scholarship besides having a dream come true for me to study overseas. Living in the States for my family and I was very memorable. We had the opportunity to experience American university life, meet and befriend students from other countries as well as from Singapore. Till today, we are still corresponding with friends we had met and got to know in the church in Madison and we are still having annual gatherings among the Singaporeans we met there.

Post graduate study in the States exposed me to a very different approach to learning. Case studies were plentiful and these opened my mind to so many other perspectives. The chance to engage the professors during classes was certainly very stimulating. Besides, my classes consisted of PhD students, Superintendents, Special Education Specialists, school principals and many others. The rich sharing among us and the collaboration in working in group projects added to the unforgettable experience.

The time we spent there also saw us experiencing one of the very rare occasions, where the Chancellor had to cancel classes because of a severe snow storm. It was also my first experience, not knowing that it was a snow storm, to trek all the way to the School of Education for the morning lecture to find out upon reaching that only the professor and one other student were there.

The time in the States also gave us the opportunity to drive to Niagara Falls and to Canada. We also took the opportunity to visit with my in-laws Disney World and Epcot Centre in Orlando and to attend a wedding in Minnesota. I also took the opportunity to attend a one-week Christian Conference at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago and listened to world renowned Christian authors. My family and I took part in the ski trip to Eagle River organised by the Students' Union for overseas students and experienced the beautiful snow and skiing, not forgetting the sumptuous food provided.

Autumn in Wisconsin-Madison is really stunning with beautiful red, orange and gold leaves. Winter saw the numerous

lakes in Madison slowly freezing over. Spring time was equally lovely with whole trees sprouting flowers. Summer brought people out from all over lying lazily over lawns in parks and around the university campus bathing in the wonderful sun. It was truly a Fulbright experience. Praise the Lord!

# 001 VINCENT

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley  
**Year of programme:** 2001

*"My reading interests: linguistics, literature, philosophy, and those that tell us more about the meaning of life. My other interests: movies, some exercise routines, and hanging around Starbucks."*

**M**y first encounter with the term "Fulbright" was when I was in my Honours year at the National University of Singapore. My classmates and I were told that there was a Visiting Fulbright Professor who would be teaching us. Indeed, it was not difficult to make him out at all when he first walked into class: he was full of intelligence, warmth, humour, and cultural understanding. Because of that one professor, I have always been in awe of anything remotely connected with the Fulbright experience.

My own Fulbright experience as a Visiting Scholar happened at a time when I was on a ten-month sabbatical leave. It was my first time in the U.S., and I entered the country via the immigration checkpoint at Chicago's O'Hare airport. It certainly seemed to me that, on learning that I was sponsored by the Fulbright Program, the immigration officer energetically stamped the necessary papers doubly fast and welcomed me to the U.S. with a wider than usual, toothy grin.

# ANNE PAKIR

I would have been happier then if I had not arrived 11 days before a certain Mr. Osama did his terrible work there. U.S. television during my three-month stay there was not (to put it mildly) too exciting, with images of the World Trade Centre building being replayed continually. Notwithstanding this, I had a wonderful three months' stay juggling my time between Berkeley by day, at the International Computer Science Institute (where I was privileged to use a SparcStation and desktop space worth \$50,000 a year), and San Francisco by night (since I was in a studio 'space' in expensive Nob Hill). It was an eye-opening experience, soaking in American culture and being told that I spoke 'English with an accent' (of the good type, I was reassured). The Director Emeritus of the Services for International Students and Scholars at UC Berkeley orientated the whole group of visiting Fulbrighters then by introducing six essential American traits for us to recognise, which are listed here without further elaboration: (1) self-reliance, (2) informality, (3) looking to the future, (4) believing in the goodness of human nature, (5) using time efficiently, and 6) being candid/direct.

I did not intend to do any cultural stereotyping, but kept an open mind for these traits and more. Certainly, I found Americans and visiting Fulbrighters of other nationalities who were very warm by nature. Since my period of stay coincided with Thanksgiving Day, the eminent linguist Charles Fillmore invited me to my first U.S. Thanksgiving dinner. At the dinner, his wife, Lily Wong Fillmore (a well-known linguist and educator in her own right) regaled everyone present with her first-hand immersion in Red Indian and Inuit cultures.

At a time when 9/11 had just happened, the Fulbright experience taught me the importance of not remaining trapped by one's narrow world and prejudice but to do what one can to foster genuine inter-cultural communication and global understanding.

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley; and Cornell University

**Year of programme:** 1977 to 1979; and 1990 to 1991

*"I am an associate professor with the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, in the Department of English Language and Literature and was a Director of the American Studies Centre at NUS. I serve on the TOEFL Board (ETS, Princeton, New Jersey) and visit the United States at least three times a year. I am the current Vice-President of the Fulbright Association (Singapore)."*

## **Once a Fulbrighter, Twice a Fulbrighter, Always a Fulbrighter**

Whatever else Senator J. William Fulbright might have done, in my view, his vision of strengthening the bridges of understanding between the people of the United States and the people from the rest of the world is the singular most important contribution of his life.

A lucky recipient of two Fulbright awards (one to the University of California, Berkeley, 1977-1979, and the other to Cornell University, 1990-1991), I have built a treasure trove of lovely memories of people, their languages and cultural orientations, and of places, especially two beautiful and vibrant American campuses.

My first Fulbright for a Masters in the U.S. gave me the unbelievable opportunity to live in the International House along Piedmont Way, Berkeley: a very, very fine House of 300 American students, and 300 international students most of whom were enrolled in graduate studies at the

# IRA RENFREW

distinguished campus. Every breakfast, lunch and dinner in the house that Rockefeller built and luminaries like John Kenneth Galbraith lived gave access to brilliant minds, idiosyncratic habits, and cultural friendships. Today, I'm blessed with enduring contacts with friends of my Fulbright yesteryear, whether American, Argentinean, Belgian, Canadian, Chinese, French, Iranian, Korean, German, Malaysian, Singaporean, Swedish or Swiss (and lots more), many of whom have also become university teachers and researchers. I definitely learnt a great deal from my Berkeley professors of English and American literature and of linguistics, enjoyed my classes with them, and was inspired to pursue a PhD, but I think I learnt a great deal more from my fellow students (within as well as outside of my discipline). I remember especially the fine spirit of camaraderie that prevailed in our collective activities whether it was a visit to the wine country of Sonoma or the Halloween pumpkin picking along the highways and byways of California or the featured rich cultural evenings at I-House.

My next Fulbright at Cornell was a short-term foreign researcher award, a wonderful stint of four months during the cold depths of winter in upstate New York. Whether at the Southeast Asia Program or the Department of

Linguistics where I was co-hosted, the fact that I was a Fulbrighter opened many doors to scholarship and to friendship. During the snowy weeks, the warm relationships with Americans and fellow Singaporeans on the Cornell campus also contributed towards my very fruitful and productive study leave from NUS.

The wonderful opportunities given by the Fulbright scholarships have made me ever so appreciative of my good fortune and I have tried to give something back. My forever Fulbright stance colours a lot of what I have been doing and have done at my institution. As the former Director of the former American Studies Centre at NUS, I tried to forge friendships and understanding between Fulbright visiting professors and the Singaporean community. In my current work as Deputy Director of the International Relations Office at NUS, I have oversight of our Singapore-Americas exchange programs.

Learning about America, its vastness and complexity, as well as its variety and verve, and having the opportunities in America to learn about other attractive cultures, peoples, and their backgrounds, have been among the best years of my life which I hope have provided useful lessons to me on how life should be lived in our limited time on planet Earth.

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** National University of Singapore  
**Year of programme:** 2006 to 2007

*"Originally from Maine, I studied International Relations at Stanford University. Some of my interests and hobbies include Islamic Studies, photography, snowboarding, and travel."*

Although my Fulbright research is focused on Islamic banking, one of my overall goals in coming to Singapore on an Islamic Civilization Initiative grant was to interact with and attempt to understand the Singaporean Muslim community.

It was with this goal in mind that I decided to attempt to fast in recognition of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Though I wasn't always successful, the decision to fast from sunrise to sundown for a full month led to some of the most precious memories of my stay in Singapore.

One of the greatest things about my experience with fasting was the warmth and camaraderie with which I was greeted by Muslim strangers and friends alike. A particular memory that stands out was the dinner that I had one evening at the beginning of Ramadan. I arrived at a local hawker center about 15 minutes before sundown and ordered a roti john from one of the Indian Muslim food stalls. My order came a few minutes before the *maghrib azan*<sup>1</sup>, and so I sat with my plate of food and a small bag of dates that I had brought<sup>2</sup>,

waiting for the last few minutes of the fast to pass. The workers and the manager at the stall noticed that I was sitting with my food untouched, and the manager soon walked over.

“Excuse me sir, are you Muslim?”

“No, I’m not,” I replied. “But I am fasting.”

“Alhamdulillah!<sup>3</sup> You want to understand what it’s like for Muslims?”

“Yes, exactly. I want to know how it feels to fast for Ramadan, so I can understand more about Islam.”

Just then, the scratchy radio that been playing pop songs went silent, and then the strains of the call to prayer hissed out. The manager and I lapsed into silence as we listened to the *azan*. The stall workers ceased their work and sat down at the table beside me, casting friendly smiles in my direction. They offered me dates from a plastic tub, and we all dug into our food.

After we finished eating, the manager and I talked for a bit, and then he sent me off with a warm invitation to return again soon. As I walked back to my apartment, I smiled to myself, thinking of the warmth with which I had been greeted. It had been a quick

interaction, less than half an hour, but the words, the smiles, and the offers of food had been as genuine and friendly as could be.

The rest of the month was full of similar moments of kindness – new acquaintances would invite me for break-fast meals, families would ask me along for post-Ramadan celebrations, and numerous Muslims would react with happy curiosity when they learned that I was fasting. Through the course of the month and through my imperfect attempt to fast, I came to know my new Muslim friends, the Singaporean Muslim community, and my own self much better than before. That was greatest gift of Ramadan and the reason that I remember with such fondness the experiences of that month.

Footnotes:

1. The evening call to prayer that marks sunset.
2. It is customary to break the fast with dates.
3. Praise be to God!

# SAMTANI ANIL

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley

**Year of programme:** 2001 to 2002

*“I am an Associate Professor of Law at the Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University and a Deputy-Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Technology Law & Policy (CAPTEL). My research interests lie in the field of intellectual property and information technology law and policy.”*

I have to say that upon my arrival at the University of California, Berkeley, I fell in love with the place almost instantly. The agreeable weather helped considerably and I liked the fact that there were people from almost every part of the globe at the university.

I thoroughly enjoyed my Fulbright stint and the opportunities to learn from the very best faculty in the field of intellectual property law and cyberspace law. These included Professor Mark Lemley and Professor Pamela Samuelson. It was also an opportunity for me to observe closely the workings of the Samuelson Law, Technology & Public Policy Clinic at the Boalt Hall School of Law which aims to provide opportunities for students to be involved in litigation as well as legislative reform that seeks to further the public interest. I was impressed by how academics as well as students at the university selflessly undertook work of this nature to counter what they perceive to be an agenda in American technology law & policy that was



dominated mainly by lobbyists and the government.

to be a recipient of this wonderful scholarship.

I was also fortunate to have lived at the International House during my stint at the university. There were ample opportunities to mingle at the I-House and the numerous debates and activities that took place almost every other day meant there was never a dull moment.

During the weekends, I made sure I spent my time touring various parts of San Francisco and the surrounding regions. I still remember vividly the gorgeously stunning Golden Gate Bridge, the breathtakingly beautiful Yosemite National Park and the meandering valleys of Napa and Sonoma. How I wish I could return to enjoy those sights once again.

Professionally, the Fulbright scholarship continues to open many doors for me. The respect that is accorded to the Fulbright brand name and the strong and fruitful network and insights gained during my time in the U.S. have served me well these past years since my return to Singapore. Needless to say, I am forever grateful for having been given the opportunity

# VICTOR R. SAVAGE

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Berkeley

**Year of programme:** 1976 to 1980

*“My interest is in listening to music, attending concerts, collecting Southeast Asian art and antique maps, travelling and reading.”*

I had a very enjoyable academic experience at University of California, Berkeley where I pursued my higher degrees (MA and PhD). The campus was just so vibrant and the town of Berkeley was full of creative expressions. There were numerous buskers, student demonstrations and street activities that really made Berkeley a unique learning experience. Given that there were so few Singaporeans and Malaysians when I was at Berkeley, we did not have an association compared to today and hence I was forced to mingle and socialise with other students especially the American graduates. I felt this was a blessing because I got to learn a lot about American culture and social systems from my American friends. I feel that once a student national association is in place, students mix amongst themselves and rarely socialise with Americans or other nationalities. What I enjoyed also about Berkeley was a fantastic Doe graduate library. It was a treasure house of so many interesting books and journals. You could even borrow books from the 18th and 19th centuries! Berkeley, San Francisco and the Bay area were also vibrant places for concerts and performances. I attended many great concerts in the Cow Palace (SF) and the Greek theatre (Berkeley) which included George Benson, Chicago, the Bee Gees, Neil Diamond and Keith Jarrett. The Berkeley Art Gallery was also a place I constantly visited and saw

some of America's progressive and avant-garde artistic expressions. Lastly, Berkeley was a great haven for second book shops. I spent countless hours in Moe's, the premier second-hand book store. I still treasure the large collection of second-hand books I bought as a student.

The graduate seminars at Berkeley changed my whole perspective of education. The professors were erudite and passionate about their areas of interests. There was a wide range of teaching styles and no one conformed to a set system and style of lecturing and presentation. Each lecturer was individualistic in the way they conducted their lectures and seminars. I realised how precise one needed to be in writing papers and what good research was all about. The lecturers guided and mentored us but they rarely tried to impose ideas and structures on us. They gave us freedom of expression and encouraged independent thinking. I also liked the idea that every lecturer invited their graduate class to their home for at least one dinner session. This is where the department's rich history and past faculty members were a subject of interesting stories and gossip. We graduates relished such stories.

Throughout my four years in the U.S., I did not return to Singapore and hence spent time in summer school

and traveling in the United States. I got to see other areas of the U.S. which helped me understand the regional and cultural contrasts of America. As a cultural geographer, seeing America was the first introduction to an exercise in interesting fieldwork lessons. Unfortunately the stipend I received was small so I stayed in very cheap motels and saw the underside of American poverty. Many down town cheap hotels were glorified old age homes. It was an eye-opener. I took the Grey Hound bus all over and got to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir doing a dress rehearsal of Christmas carols three days before Christmas free of charge in Salt Lake City. It is an experience I will never forget. What a choir – 375 strong singing with their philharmonic orchestra. I visited Taos the home of many American artists and centre of many art galleries.

I am indeed grateful for being given the opportunity of attending UC Berkeley under the Fulbright scholarship. It was an education that paved my career as an academic and my special interests in both cultural geography and environmental studies.

# KIM T. K. SEAH

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Harvard University

**Year of programme:** 1977 to 1978

*“Since leaving academia, life as a commercial lawyer has kept me busy, as have family and church activities. But I still have time for fellowship, travel and food! And never too busy to catch up with friends, especially those from my Fulbright days.”*

I was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship in early 1977, which allowed me to leave (just two days after receiving my undergraduate degree) for Harvard Law School in the Fall of 1977.

My time at Harvard (and in Boston) opened many windows for me. I learnt a lot – certainly not confined to the law – and shared many experiences with new friends from America and many other countries. There were many stirring discussions – within class and outside – as we debated contentious issues and policies with our professors and fellow students. We learnt of differences and of how to understand them, if not resolve them.

My fondest memory is of the eve of the Lunar New Year in February 1978. Several dorm mates accompanied me on a long walk to a Chinese restaurant in Concord (the venue chosen more by price than location) to celebrate the occasion. For a few, it was their first taste of Chinese food. We feasted long and well and .. then had to make our

way home through snowdrifts as the Blizzard of '78 dumped more than six feet of the white stuff on us. It was a cold and memorable walk back – and in the days which followed we had time off classes to snow-ski off the steps of Widener Library as Harvard cancelled classes for the first time since the Civil War!

Increasing mutual understanding among people – well, for me and I think some (now gray-haired) friends of those days, we certainly got to know better a certain (now prominent) fellow Asian (now a politician) and one brilliant but small-sized young American (now an appellate judge) ... after watching them wriggle out of their frozen jeans and compete to see whose pair of icy snow-caked jeans would remain standing longer in the dorm hallway that February night!

Much of the substance of the law which I studied then is no longer relevant today. But the theory and principles behind them – how wise laws serve as restraints to keep men (and women) free – remain important. And the human relationships made then still count today. I still keep in touch with my Class of '78 as we

look forward to our 30th Anniversary next year. And I remain grateful to the Fulbright Program for making it possible.

# EUGENE TAN KHENG BOON

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Stanford University

**Year of programme:** 2003 to 2004

*"I teach at the Singapore Management University.*

*My research interests include the mutual interaction of law and public policy with particular reference to ethnic conflict regulation."*

One of the privileges of being part of the Fulbright Program is the opportunity of meeting and learning from Fulbrighters from other parts of the world. Within Stanford Law School, I got to know Fulbrighters from Ghana, Kenya and South Africa and other countries from within Stanford itself (eg the first Mongolian Fulbrighter). What struck me was how determined these Fulbrighters were, in their own ways, in wanting to make a difference to their societies. And many had impeccable records of being change agents to begin with.

The Fulbright experience provided me with the valuable privilege and opportunity to pursue graduate study in the United States. The exposure to a different intellectual and cultural environment is a critical intangible of education. It also gave me a good grounding and exposure in cutting edge areas of law while interacting with some of the best legal minds from the U.S. and globally.

My time in the U.S. reinforced my view that legal scholarship should not remain within the confines of academia and should reach out and benefit society whenever

# TAN MING JEN

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of California, Los Angeles; and Northwestern University

**Year of programme:** 2004

possible. Being in an august academic institution like Stanford also exposed me to new ideas and intellectual enterprises. I was encouraged to pursue my inclination for multi-disciplinary approach in the study of law as well as to appreciate the intimate interface between the law, public policy and society.

My Fulbright experience was enhanced as my family accompanied me for my studies. Iain, my son, was just four months old when my wife, Yoke Foong, and I left for the United States.

Yoke Foong and I set out to experience and imbibe the best of American culture. We attended basketball, American football, and water-polo matches and joined our American friends in their Independence Day celebrations. Visits to Sunday markets were a must-do as were visits to the railway station (with Iain's budding interest in trains) near our campus home and participating toddler activities within the Palo Alto community.

We travelled quite a bit within California (such as San Diego, Yosemite, Disneyland) and other major cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and New York City.

We were able to compare and contrast the American and Singaporean systems and way of life. We not only appreciated what we have back home but also where we could do better in Singapore. What remain imprinted in our minds is the dynamicism, creativity, and beauty of the United States. It gave us a nuanced understanding of America.

Being in the heart of Silicon Valley also meant that we were afforded a ringside view of the developments of Google, E-Bay, and Paypal. Yoke Foong was intrigued with internet commerce and she participated in it with a fair bit of rigour, with Iain as the ultimate beneficiary of the books, toys, and clothes purchased!

It's been about three years since our American sojourn came to a rapid conclusion but Yoke Foong and I have many fond memories. We struggle to help Iain recall some of his growing milestones in the U.S. such as his taking his first steps, uttering his first words, and the many story time sessions at the Palo Alto children's library.

It has been both a privilege and an honour being a Fulbrighter.

The experience enabled me to have a unique perspective of the operations of two well-run universities, one which is state-funded and the other a private university. I was also able to participate in various academic activities, staff recruitment seminars, meetings of alumni etc. and share their challenges in keeping up in various scholastic rankings.

I was in America during the Democratic Party's primaries and it was instructive to see American politics and policies at work, the multitude of media viewpoints, exchanges, the rigour and intensity of competition, and all that just to get nominated by the party!

Being at two very different large cities, Los Angeles and Chicago also gave me unique insights and experiences. There were also weekends at Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Malibu, Pasadena, Irvine and Anaheim, Hollywood previews, Golden Globe and Oscar nights. Northwestern is located in Evanston, a leafy suburb of Chicago; north of it is the "Orange County of Middle America" an area of

about ten exclusive and picturesque suburbs along Lake Michigan, including Wilmette, Glenview, Winnetka, Glencoe, Highland Park and Lake Forest. Some highlights included a visit (organised by the local Fulbright Association) to the home of Ernest Hemingway's childhood in Oak Park, which is also where numerous Frank Lloyd Wright designed houses are located, and being mesmerised by the architecture geniuses of Rem Koolhaas and Helmut Jahn around the downtown Illinois Institute of Technology campus, and Robie House located within the University of Chicago.

# TAN TARN HOW

University Of Fulbright Affiliation: Boston University

Year Of Programme: 1993

*"I am also a playwright and scriptwriter."*

**M**y most memorable experience in the three months in Boston was talking to the late Jim Thomson and attending his tutorials on journalism. He resigned from the Johnson administration in opposition to the Vietnam War and urged for U.S.-China reconciliation at a time when such views were radical. The occasion reminded me again that it is not just ideas but also the commitment and courage of individuals that change the world.

# TAN TEE HOW

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University

Year of programme: 1989 to 1990

*"I spend my weekends mainly with my family, attending church service, catching up on reading and taking long walks in the nature reserves."*

Back in the 1980s, all I knew about the U.S. and the American people were mainly what I read or heard about as well as from images over the television screen. My one-year Cambridge MA sojourn in 1989-90, while attending the Kennedy School MPA Program on a Fulbright grant, was therefore an eye-opening learning experience for me. It gave me a good first-hand understanding of the U.S., through living, studying and playing with many Americans. One aspect of American culture which left a deep impression on me was the spirit of giving that permeated the different strata of society, as seen from how the average American responded to appeals for funds, whether it was for the homeless, keeping a heritage or animal welfare.

Through my course of study, I was constantly challenged to think about the nature of societies and economies and why certain policies worked in some countries and not in others. I also benefited tremendously from the many conversations I had on the development experience of other countries, with fellow international students, many of whom remain my good friends till today.

# CLARENCE TANG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Year of programme: 2005 to 2006

My one-year Fulbright stint was a great educational experience. The Master of Public Administration programme at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy provided me with new lenses for policy analysis and allowed me to explore unfamiliar but interesting policy areas, such as healthcare, environmental regulation and international relations. I also learnt a lot from my classmates, who were mostly American or Asian and came from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The diversity of perspectives made for many interesting discussions during meals, walks across Central Campus and rides on the Michigan blue bus.

My year in the U.S. allowed me to see a side of the U.S. I had never seen before: as a union of states with unique identities and interests, and how these interacted in the formulation of American policy. The vibrant social and non-profit sector in the U.S. also left a deep impression on me. In Detroit, I visited several non-profit organisations that were in the business of revitalising derelict neighbourhoods, and saw for myself how they transformed the urban landscape by taking over run-down houses street by street, refurbishing them, and then renting or selling them to low-income families. My visit to Philadelphia also

gave me the opportunity to learn about a non-profit programme that got young graffiti writers off the street, put them through a training programme in mural painting and placed them in mural art projects to enliven neighbourhoods. For me, these projects were an inspiring demonstration of a spirit of enterprise in local communities.

Among the fondest memories I have of Ann Arbor are its beautiful fall colours, the cosy Thanksgiving dinner I had with a family from church and my introduction to the game of whirlyball, a combination of basketball and lacrosse played on bumper cars. But perhaps what I will treasure most from my time there are the friendships that were formed, both with American and international students. Many of them are still in contact through e-mail, and have been extended an open invitation to visit Singapore.

# TANG SING HAI

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** State University of New York, Stony Brook

**Year of programme:** 1967 to 1972

*"I was Deputy Head of the Department of Physics, NUS, from 2000 to 2004. I am a keen sculptor and like to spend time on gardening in the weekends."*

It was nearly forty years ago that I was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship to study physics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. It was my first trip to the U.S. and in those days a one-month orientation program at the University of Texas, Austin, was included. It was an intensive program, where activities went beyond the scheduled daily study of various aspects of American cultures. It provided a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow Fulbright scholars from other nations and enabled me to observe and interact with participants all over the world and hear their touching stories. Participants were engaged in stimulating scholarly presentations which mirrored their domestic matters. Such in-depth discussions over lunch breaks, during outings and over many evenings not only fostered lasting friendships but also successful academic collaboration later on.

My study at Stony Brook was a memorable experience that left indelible marks on my scholarly and executive

career. Stony Brook had just recruited Professor C. N. Yang to be its Director of the Institute of Theoretical Physics and was then a center for high energy physics. It was situated near the Brookhaven National Lab, where later on I was attached to for carrying out a part of my interdisciplinary experimental research. Beyond formal physics training, it was certainly a blessing that by chance I attended a sculpture workshop in the evenings, which was a part of Stony Brook extra-curricular activities. Even though it turned out to be only a short interlude, it produced a lasting impression; in my later life I have become an avid amateur sculptor.

My Fulbright scholarship officially ended after my post-doctoral assignment at the Michigan State University (MSU). At MSU I was pleasantly surprised to have met a fellow Fulbright scholar from Texas. She was also doing her post-doctoral study. The encounter was a timely reminder of the great number of people that come under the Fulbright Program. Since then I have returned to visit Stony Brook and MSU on several occasions, and the connections have been uninterrupted until today.

My experience as a recipient of Fulbright Scholarship was very rewarding, providing lasting bonds with colleagues from other nations and gaining research and teaching insights. In the forty years since my time, the program has impressively established successful academic and cultural diplomacy through the world, without which such physical and cultural interactions would not have been possible. I am grateful to the Fulbright Program for the opportunities it has given me.

## SIMON S. C. TAY

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Harvard University

**Year of programme:** 1993 to 1994

*"I am an associate professor with the NUS Faculty of Law and have taught as a visiting professor at Harvard Law School (2003). I am also chairman of the National Environment Agency, a major government statutory board, as well as the non-governmental think tank, the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. I served as a Nominated Member of Parliament from 1997-2001 and chair public consultations on Singapore 21, the Concept Plan and Green Plan."*

### Opportunities for a Start

I would never have won a Singaporean scholarship. In any application to a Singaporean panel, my undistinguished "O" and "A" levels would be an immediate disqualification, no matter what I had done subsequently in university, or in my career, or as a writer of stories and poems. This fact wore heavily on me when I decided to pursue a Masters in the U.S. in the early 1990s.

I was motivated by three factors. First, I had left legal practice to help start the Singapore International Foundation and pioneer its Singapore Volunteers Overseas programme, and the Masters for me (like for so many people) represented an opportunity to both increase my knowledge and reflect on my future directions. Secondly, I wanted to know the U.S. better as the society had emerged



as the dominant power after the end of the Cold War, projecting its model of values and democracy. Lastly, a Minister I respected had said to me that most who did well in Singapore had studied abroad and, while I was proud of my NUS degree, this was a gap in my experience.

If the Americans had not given me a Fulbright scholarship, and taken a chance on me that no Singaporean scholarship would have, I am not sure what else I would have done.

I can only tell you what I did with the opportunities given by the Fulbright scholarship.

First, while Fulbright does not guarantee admission into any particular university, it cannot but have helped my admission into Harvard Law School. The Scholarship just about covered school fees, and I did my best to make the most of studies, specialising in international law. At the end of the year, I was awarded the School's Laylin Prize for the best thesis in international law. As the first Singaporean to win a prize at the law school, it spurred me to return to Singapore to teach at our university.

Secondly, the Fulbright gave me the opportunity to be in the U.S. and I did my best to learn about America, in its great complexity and variety. I wrote columns on these experiences in *The Straits Times*, and later reworked the articles into a book, *Alien Asian*. While this book was released in 1996 and many things have since changed, it is a pleasant surprise that some young Singaporeans studying in the U.S. have read the book and still report similar experiences.

In the ten or more years since my Fulbright scholarship ended, I have returned for short working visits to the U.S., as well as longer sojourns, including a semester teaching at my old law school. For me, the Fulbright scholarship gave me opportunities for a new career as a professor, for a book of essays, and to begin a continuing engagement with the U.S. and Americans, a country and a people who so profoundly impact the world and Singapore.

# TEO CHEE HEAN

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Harvard University  
Year of programme: 1986 to 1987

Attending the mid-career Masters in Public Administration Programme (Class of '87) at the Kennedy School of Government in Harvard opened up a new range of perspectives for me. I met classmates from many countries, from all the continents. We discussed the issues and problems faced by our respective countries and regions, and shared our experiences in economic, social and security policy to address them. We learnt together about decision making and negotiations, and good government. I learnt much from my classmates, especially those from countries which I knew little about, such as Somalia, or Ecuador. These were valuable lessons, for the problems we faced had many similarities, though the individual contexts might be different.

The opportunity to watch at close hand the dynamics of U.S. politics and policy making was also a valuable one. All politics are local, and it was educational to understand how local issues in the U.S. affect its foreign and especially its trade policy. The approach that the U.S. takes has a major impact on how the world deals with a whole plethora of issues ranging from a new trade round, to environmental

issues and terrorism, and affects smaller countries like Singapore. No doubt the exchange of views with our U.S. classmates has also contributed to the objective of the Fulbright Program which is to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.”

These experiences, and the friendships made while on the Fulbright Program have left an indelible impression on me. I have found myself drawing on these experiences, both consciously and unconsciously, in my work through the years.

# EDWIN THUMBOO

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Pennsylvania State University

Year of programme: 1979 to 1980

Despite the wide and valuable achievements of American academia, up to the late sixties the University of Singapore’s overseas links in the humanities and social sciences were mainly with UK and other Commonwealth institutions. We started to change this soon after. Stanley Weintraub of the State University of Pennsylvania was our first American external examiner in English. As a follow up, I went as a Fulbright Professor to his institution, the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies. The course I taught paired novels, one by an ‘insider’ and the other by an ‘outsider’. There were eight texts in all, set in Brazil, Nigeria, India and the Philippines. Drawn chiefly from Carey Eckhardt’s Department of Comparative Literature, students had a choice, which meant they took courses which really interested them. They had a strong desire to explore and were driven by a strong inquiring spirit resulting in very positive classes which led me to encourage my colleagues at home to ‘open’ up their courses. Our explorations took us to Brazil, Nigeria, India, and Indonesia. It was a learning experience for both class and instructor, enriching cross-cultural understanding and a realisation that the goodness of man – and woman – is both local as universal, and that right answers depend on right questions and that as circumstances change so do answers and questions.

The American system was notably malleable in contrast to the Commonwealth one in which both approach and content were cast in concrete. The American instructor shaped his course, how it was taught – through lectures, seminars, discussion groups, or a combination thereof – and examined. Moreover, there were hardly any compulsory courses in the large number the department offered.

Colleagues in the Department were friendly and giving. Being a university town, bookshops, especially the second-hand ones, took you in and embraced you. The best of these was run by a Mr. Horner, a Mennonite. We drove around small towns and villages in the area on weekends, visiting country book fairs. I found an eighteenth-century print of Shakespeare, based on the Chandos portrait, which Charlie Mann, a Professor of English with whom I spent a fair amount of time, authenticated. And there was John Balaban, a poet and critic who had strong Vietnamese interests, making the poetry accessible to the English-speaking world through sensitive and powerful translations. The Weintraubs were perfect hosts, having me with them during Pesach Seder and other special occasions. These included a

visit to the Columbus Family Chapel – the European discoverer of the “United States of Columbus” if we must. Through marriage it ended up in Boalsburg, PA a few miles from the Weintraub home.

My stay was cut short. I had been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the National University of Singapore, which started life on the 8 August 1980. There was a new vision; we had to reach new horizons. Lau Teik Soon, then-Member of Parliament and Head, Department of Political Science, Ong Jin Hui, Head, Department of Sociology, himself a Fulbrighter and I took every chance to strengthen and extend contact with American universities through the American Embassy. The USIS (United States Information Service) played a key role. Mr. Jerry Stryker, its Director, was a first-rate diplomat and mover. Opportunities multiplied. An increasing number of staff had the challenge and benefit of the American academic experience. Thanks to Senator Fulbright, they were being prepared for the fundamental changes to come in NUS and other enterprising universities in Asia.

# KIMBERLY TRAGER

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** National University of Singapore  
**Year of programme:** 2005 to 2006

*“Reading is a passion of mine. It is the broad topic of my dissertation. And it is certainly one of my favourite leisure activities.”*

I have so many wonderful memories of my Fulbright experience. It is difficult to choose which ones to share. But I think my interviews with young Singaporean writers (the 3rd generation of Singaporean poets and novelists) inspired me the most. I found their desire and motivation to be heard on “the global stage” moving. And, as a whole, I found their writings to be thoughtful and provoking. Through interviewing (and reading works by) Alvin Pang, Felix Cheong, Hwee Hwee Tan and many others, I felt more connected to Singaporean culture. These writers were also exceptionally gracious and made my stay in Singapore delightful. All in all, I would have to say that the 2005 Writers Festival (“Text in the City”) was the most interesting and enjoyable event that I attended in Singapore. It was thrilling to meet so many great writers who were willing to talk about their work.

I also have fond memories of various individuals whom I met in book clubs and writing clubs in Singapore. Initially, I had planned to be an observer of these clubs, not an actual participant. But that soon proved not to be the case. One club meeting that really stands out for me was when I was asked to read my fiction aloud in front of all the other members of my writing club. Since I don’t consider myself a fiction writer, I was very nervous to do so. But I found the experience liberating and exciting. That incident definitely encouraged me to submit one of my stories to a literary journal – I would never have done this on my own.

# WANG ALLEN

University of Fulbright Affiliation: John Hopkins University

Year of programme: 2004 to 2005

*"I love reading, sketching and make pretty good kimchi fried rice."*

My Fulbright experience showed me a wonderful side of America that I was not able to appreciate on my previous short visits there. Besides experiencing first hand the wonderful fall colors in Vermont, cherry blossoms in Washington D.C., the flat fields in Kansas, I also managed to alpine ski in Colorado and Vermont. Eating Ben & Jerry's ice cream at their Vermont factory during winter was simply unforgettable.

At the Bloomberg School of Public Health, I made many wonderful friends from various parts of the world and had the privilege to imbibe a small bit of their culture, and in turn share Singapore with them. I also got to interact with several luminaries in the field of public health and draw inspiration from their fiery passion to "change lives, millions at a time".

Baltimore, Maryland held many surprises ranging from the cozy, romantic Fells Point to the majestic Inner Harbor. My church family made every weekend a time to look forward to, with several families opening their homes to me during Thanksgiving, Christmas and many other occasions. All

these wonderful gifts of hospitality helped me feel at home, even though I was thousands of miles away from Singapore. The friendship extended to me by various families there inspired me to reach out to several international students by volunteering my time to help arriving international students adjust to a new environment. The various weekend hiking trips and excursions allowed us to form strong bonds of friendship and in turn generate ongoing communities of support so that this important work could continue for subsequent student cohorts.

The memories spent with fellow Fulbrighters roaming the French quarter in New Orleans having café-au-lait and beignets took on greater significance for me after Hurricane Katrina struck many months later. The picture of devastation, pain and sorrow left by Katrina sparked off tremendous positive energy in the form of many individuals working together to help the victims. Seeing the American people step up to the plate to help their fellow citizens rebuild their lives left an indelible impression on me as a testament to the power of the human spirit. The Fulbright experience has

allowed me to appreciate and share the vision of Senator J. William Fulbright to make the world a better place by "increasing mutual understanding" among the people of various nations.

# HENRY YEUNG

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** University of Washington

**Year of programme:** 2002 to 2003

*"I love badminton and have been playing for NUS since undergraduate days. Since Fulbright days during 2002-2003, I have picked up a new exciting hobby – being a good father to our two young children!"*

My family and I arrived in Seattle on 16 December 2002 and were well greeted by the sunny but cool weather – a treat indeed if you know what Seattle is normally like during that time of the year. We quickly settled into a temporary stay with a married couple who were both faculty members at the host Department of Geography, University of Washington. Our Fulbright journey had started!

Throughout the six months of stay in the U.S., we certainly experienced much increased mutual understanding with our colleagues and friends in America. We visited many places, some as far as the Midwest (Chicago and Madison) and the South (New Orleans). But the most memorable event must be our 21-day drive in late May from Seattle all the way down to Los Angeles, cruising along the famous Highway 101 that passes through the incredible coastlines of Washington, Oregon, and California states. The return trip went through inland states such as Nevada (Las Vegas), Arizona (Grand and Bryce Canyons), Utah (Zion National

Park and Sake Lake City), and Idaho. It was indeed the greatest "geographical treat" we ever had. We even drove by the headquarters of a leading American semiconductor firm in Singapore in which my sister-in-law works – Micron Technology in Boise, Idaho. The trip clocked 21,000 miles and our used car didn't collapse. Thank God!

Meanwhile, I forged incredible friendships and collegial relationships during my many academic visits at Cornell University, Ohio State University, University of Wisconsin, Madison, University of California, Los Angeles and Davis, and University of Washington, Tacoma. I gained much deeper understanding of the everyday life of friends (old and new), colleagues, and students in these institutions. It was indeed an eye-opener for me to appreciate the diverse realities of life in these places; this is the most fascinating part of American geography to me.

Of course, it would be difficult for us to forget one of the defining moments of history in the new millennium during our stay – the 19 March War on Terror in Iraq. The Iraq War, as it is commonly known, has fundamentally

changed our perspective on (in) security and peace in today's globalising world economy. Living through the entire period of major combats in Iraq (March to May), we simply could not ignore the massive media images and embedded videos of military operations and confrontations. Being in the U.S. at that moment did teach us a great deal about how Americans view peace and security and how we, Singaporeans, should be more concerned with international affairs – even though they might appear to be far and remote from our everyday life. The War has also taught us an important lesson of appreciating our relative peace and stability back at home. Coincidentally, we gave SARS in Singapore a miss by taking "refuge" in the United States!

# YIP

WING KONG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Indiana University

Year of programme: 1969 to 1971

*“My interest is in organising international dental education programmes, especially in developing countries of the Asia Pacific region. My other interests are reading, photography and computers.”*

At a time when it was relatively uncommon for Singaporeans to pursue post-graduate education in the United States, especially in the fields of medicine and dentistry, I was fortunate that the Fulbright Program opened doors for me. It not only enabled me to gain entry into a very prestigious program at Indiana University but also gave me the opportunity to work with the latest and most advanced dental equipment and techniques and to study under some of the most renowned dental clinicians and scientists of that time. I remembered not being selected for the electron microscopy course, which in those days was a very exclusive course, because the Professor of Anatomy thought we didn't have an electron microscope in Singapore. Indeed, he was right. We really didn't have an electron microscope in Singapore in the early sixties. Fortunately I managed to get in ultimately. I'm not sure whether it's because I worked with a famous professor or because I was a Fulbrighter, or both. To our younger colleagues, my advice is not to underestimate the Fulbright advantage.

# JEAN WAN HONG

# YONG

University of Fulbright Affiliation: Brown University

Year of programme: 2003 to 2004

*“I love plants and travelling.”*

[Written in the third person narrative]

Jean Yong, assistant professor of natural sciences at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, made a contribution towards the development of environmental policy (climate change) during his three-month Fulbright sojourn. An environmental sciences grantee to the United States, Jean did his fellowship at the Watson Institute of International Studies, Brown University. He held many collaborative discussions with his colleagues from Brown University, Harvard University, World Resource Institute, Smithsonian Museum, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), California State University (San Bernardino) and others, to help develop an environmental policy for Singapore and her neighbouring South East Asian countries.

Besides devoting his time to research projects and lecturing schedules, Jean also found time to participate in Fulbright activities and enrichment programs (Occasional Lecture Program, and OLP [minority initiative]) and field-site visits. These included the Florida Everglades National Park, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Teikyo Post University, California State University (San Bernardino) and Los Angeles Valley College.

Given Singapore's experience in handling delicate multi-racial and religious issues, Jean often provided an inter-racial and/or inter-religious perspectives in most of his non-scientific talks to emphasise the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and real action in the increasingly globalised world. For example, many Americans were surprised that in Singapore, many fast-food restaurants (MacDonald, Burger King, and KFC) have adopted the use of "halal" meat (meats prepared according to the Islamic dietary requirements) in their standard menu. This allows the majority of Singaporeans (Buddhists, Taoists, Christians, Hindus, and free-thinkers) to have a meal with their Muslim counterparts, without the complication of dietary restrictions. Such sensitivity shown by the majority of non-muslim Singaporeans to their fellow Muslim countrymen contributes to the building and maintenance of racial and religious cohesion of contemporary Singaporean society.

At the present time when the world is so endangered by the lack of mutual understanding, the Fulbright Scholar Program is a beacon of hope. In the spirit of J. William Fulbright, Jean has indeed given the United States a

"bridge" to improve Muslim and non-Muslim relationship by using Singapore as a model.

Perhaps, this is one lesson the United States could learn from "tiny" Singapore.

# ZALMAN PUTRA AHMAD ALI

**University of Fulbright Affiliation:** Hartford Seminary

**Year of programme:** 2006 to 2008

*"I have always enjoyed engaging with youth. Outside my work, I volunteered actively in youth development programs particularly within the Muslim community."*

Harvard professor, Diana L. Eck described the U.S. as the "World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation". This is indeed what I have discovered in the course of my Fulbright experience. Based in New England, I have come to appreciate the ever changing religious landscape from the early years when Puritans landed in Massachusetts to present day richly diverse America. Living in a "blue state", I am mainly in the company of New York Times-reading and Democrat-voting liberals but that did not stop me from being in conversation with a plethora of religious types. I have encountered people from various denominations within the Abrahamic faiths, Muslims of various nationalities as well as unique ones like a Non-realist Eco-Christian Humanist, a Gay Panentheistic Unitarian Universalist Mystic with Buddhist inclinations, a Reconstructionist Jewish Feminist, an Arabic-speaking neo-Marxist Roman Catholic Dominican priest, an African American Pentecostal Evangelical and many others. Such rare experience of diversity and the open intellectual environment provided very fertile ground for the free exchange of ideas. I cherish the space which allowed me to explore what the contemporary French Muslim thinker, Mohammed Arkoun called the "Unthought" within my religious worldview.

# PAGES FROM THE **PAST**

## **In Appreciation of Senator Fulbright**

In honor of Senator J. William Fulbright's receipt of the Presidential Medal of Freedom on May 5, 1993, and of the Fulbright Association's establishment of the J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding, the Fulbright Association (U.S.) published the following collection of quotations, compiled by Executive Director Jane L. Anderson, in the Spring 1993 issue of the Association's newsletter.

### **Peace**

Many people have assumed that because the House of Representatives, the Senate and the President have declared for collective security, the job is done. But the establishing of order and the making of peace does not consist merely of a solemn declaration or a well drafted constitution. The making of peace is a continuing process that must go on from day to day, from year to year, so long as our civilization shall last. Our participation in this process is not just the signing of a charter with a big red seal. It is a daily task, a positive participation in all the details and decisions which together constitute a living and growing policy. [From a Senate address, March 28, 1945]

Peace is not a negative, static concept. It is not a tranquil state of felicity and blessedness. It is a positive method of adjusting the endless conflicts inherent in the nature



of restless and energetic men. The institution of law based on justice and adaptable to the ever changing life of man has been such a method in the history of mankind. [From a Senate address, July 23, 1945]

The shipment of arms to any nation not practiced in the art of democratic self-government promotes maintenance of the status quo. Military aid to non-representative governments means the use of that equipment to maintain non-representative government. That aid has a tendency to pit the United States against the rising tide of self determination and fertilizes foreign soil for the Communists to till. [From a Senate address, June 20, 1958]

When it has been a question of spending on anti-Communist propaganda through the blatant information program, the tens of millions of dollars have poured out, willingly and without much critical judgement. But when it has been a question of exchanging students, of interchanging the best of cultural achievements between nations, there has been much rending of hair over economy and a parsimonious doling-out of the shekels. For this particular policy, the Congress must bear a large part of the responsibility.

Ever since the end of the Marshall Plan, when it has been a question

of meeting the desperate needs of people elsewhere for economic and social programs, we have been pinch-penny in our approach. But when it has been a question of aid for the military establishments of other countries, the hand has gone deep and unhesitatingly into the pocket of the American people. We have on a grandiose scale provided peoples of the underdeveloped nations with the weapons of destructive warfare, and have been miserly in providing them weapons to wage war on their own poverty, economic ills, and internal weaknesses. [From a Senate address, August 6, 1958]

Professors have an influence that is hard to identify or to measure. But I think it's there, and eventually their students, or in some cases the professors themselves, are in positions to influence government policy, which is the final pay-off. They influence the policy to find a way of conciliation and compromise rather than warfare. That's the ultimate objective....I think (the Fulbright program) is a very specific, concrete way to approach it – to DO something, as people say, about peace. [From a Voice of America interview on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Fulbright Program, 1986]

It is altogether unrealistic – and probably undesirable as well – to aspire

toward a single, universal community of humankind with common values and common institutions....

The rapprochement of people is only possible when differences of culture and outlook are respected and appreciated rather than feared or condemned, when the common bond of human dignity is recognized as the essential bond for a peaceful world. [From remarks upon receiving the Athinai International Prize awarded by the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation, Athens, April 1989]

When all is said and done, when the subtleties and abstractions of strategy and power have all been explained, we remain confronted with the most fundamental questions about war and peace, and why we contest the issues we do, and why we even care about them. Why, after all, is it that so much of the energy and intelligence of nations is used to make life painful and difficult for other peoples and nations, rather than to make life better for all? Why are we willing to fight and die over ideological questions and sacrifice so much for abstractions so remote from personal satisfactions that bring fulfillment to our lives? [From *The Price of Empire*]

## International Educational and Cultural Exchange

International educational exchange is the most significant current project designed to continue the process of humanizing mankind to the point, we would hope, that men can learn to live in peace – eventually even to cooperate in constructive activities rather than compete in a mindless contest of mutual destruction....We must try to expand the boundaries of human wisdom, empathy and perception, and there is no way of doing that except through education. [From remarks on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Fulbright Program, 1976]

To continue to build more weapons, especially more exotic and unpredictable machines of war, will not build trust and confidence. The most sensible way to do that is to engage the parties in joint ventures for mutually constructive and beneficial purposes, such as trade, medical research, and development of cheaper energy sources. To formulate and negotiate agreements of this kind requires well-educated people leading or advising our government. To this purpose the Fulbright Program is dedicated. [Remarks on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Fulbright Program, 1986]

Our future is not in the stars but in our own minds and hearts. Creative leadership and liberal education, which in fact go together, are the first requirements for a hopeful future for humankind. Fostering these – leadership, learning, and empathy between cultures – was and remains the purpose of the international scholarship program that I was privileged to sponsor in the U.S. Senate over forty years ago. It is a modest program with an immodest aim – the achievement in international affairs of a regime more civilized, rational and humane than the empty system of power of the past. I believed in that possibility when I began. I still do. [From *The Price of Empire*]

Of all the joint ventures in which we might engage, the most productive, in my view, is educational exchange. I have always had great difficulty – since the initiation of the Fulbright scholarships in 1946 – in trying to find the words that would persuasively explain that educational exchange is not merely one of those nice but marginal activities in which we engage in international affairs, but rather, from the standpoint of future world peace and order, probably the most important and potentially rewarding of our foreign policy activities. [From *The Price of Empire*]

I have thought of everything I can think of, and the one thing that gives me some hope is the ethos that underlies the educational exchange program. That ethos, in sum, is the belief that international relations can be improved, and the danger of war significantly reduced, by producing generations of leaders, especially in the big countries, who through the experience of educational exchange, will have acquired some feeling and understanding of other peoples' cultures – why they operate as they do, why they think as they do, why they react as they do – and of the differences among these cultures. It is possible – not very probable, but possible – that people can find in themselves, through intercultural education, the ways and means of living together in peace. [From *The Price of Empire*]

### Foreign Policy

It may be that the time has come to reappraise some of our basic assumptions. Throughout much of this century many Americans assumed – wrongly – that the transgressions and affronts to world order committed by aggressive forces were none of our business. With the collapse of that assumption, a good many of us have swung in the other direction and to the opposite conclusion that we can – and

should – impose our design for living on the uncertain but aspirant societies of the world. This assumption is also illogical. However admirable our design may be, it cannot be imposed. [From a Senate address, June 29, 1961]

It is not our affluence or our plumbing or our clogged freeways that grip the imagination of others. Rather, it is the values upon which our system is built. These values imply our adherence not only to liberty and individual freedom but also to international peace, law and order, and constructive social purpose. When we depart from these values, we do so at our peril. The world, as we have come to realize, also recognizes the double standard and demands from the United States a higher order of conduct than is expected from others....If we are faithful to our own values, while following an intelligent, courageous, and consistent line of policy, we are likely to find a high measure of the support we seek abroad. But if we fail our own values and ideals, ultimately we shall have failed ourselves. [From a Senate address, June 29, 1961]

There are limitations to foreign policy. We are neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and we cannot aspire to make the world over in our image. Our proper objective is a continuing effort to limit the world struggle for power and to bring it under civilized

rules. Such a program lacks the drama and romance of a global crusade. Its virtue is that it represents a realistic accommodation between our highest purposes and the limitations of human capacity. Its ultimate objective is indeed total victory, not alone for our arms in a nuclear war or for the goal of a world forcibly recast in our image, but rather for a process – a process of civilizing international relations and of bringing them gradually under a worldwide regime of law and order and peaceful procedures for the redress of legitimate grievances. [From a Senate address, July 24, 1961]

If ever [a universal victory for democratic values] comes within reach, it will come, I believe, not through acts of foreign policy, and certainly not of military policy, but rather through the magnetism of freedom itself. The prospects for freedom depend ultimately on how it is practiced in free societies. [From *Prospects for the West*]

We make policy apart from the image of what our world would be like after a war – or, as in the case of Vietnam or Nicaragua, apart from any awareness of the piles of decomposing bodies, the mutilated children the cemeteries, and the broken lives that are always the tangible human results of any war. [From *The Price of Empire*]

## Ethics & Morality

Much of the evil of the world is beyond the reach of the law. The law cannot prevent gossip. It cannot restrain men from avarice and gluttony. It cannot restrain a man from betraying his friends. In short, it cannot prevent much of the evil to which men are, unfortunately, too prone. The law being inadequate, men long ago supplemented the law courts with courts of equity, where the spirit of the law, rather than its letter, is paramount. Underlying the law are the codes of ethics promulgated by the great religions and recognized by all civilized men as being essential to a humane and enlightened existence. [From a Senate address, March 27, 1951]

One of the most disturbing aspects of this problem of moral conduct is the revelation that, among so many influential people, morality has become identical with legality. We are certainly in a tragic plight if the accepted standard by which we measure the integrity of a man in public life is that he keeps within the letter of the law. [From a Senate address, March 27, 1951]

And finally what of the writer? You have a unique responsibility to the political community of which you are a part. That responsibility arises from your talent, from your capacity to

enlighten, to civilize those citizens to whose hands is entrusted the ultimate power in our society. The writer is the natural teacher of the people.

In this hurried mechanical age, the artist and intellectual are among the few who have the serenity and sense of perspective which may help us to find a way out of the fevered confusion which presently afflicts us.

Through you, the political community needs to be taught how and what to laugh at, how and what to scorn or to pity; needs to be taught continuously that honor is not the same as fame or notoriety, that physical bravery is not the only form of courage. It needs to be taught the proper objects of anger of love. It needs to be taught the nature of justice. And above all, the political community needs to be taught that the capacity of the human mind has yet to be explored, that there can be new possibilities for men themselves. [From the National Book Award Luncheon Address, New York City, January 25, 1955]

Our capacity for decent behavior seems to vary directly with our perception of others as individual humans with human motives and feelings, whereas man's capacity of barbaric acts seems to increase with the perception of adversaries in abstract terms. [From *The Price of Empire*]

## Leadership

I return to the thought with which I began that the leadership of the President, of any President, is not enough in the democratic, pluralistic society which we have created on this continent. His leadership can be effective only if he is able to bring about, with the help of all of us, a consensus among our people. Since we are not an authoritarian society, this can be accomplished only by an unparalleled effort on the part of everyone, to understand and to work as never before, for the restoration of an appreciation of quality, of beauty, of intelligence and integrity in our national sense of values. [From the Penrose Lecture, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, April 20, 1961]

Today our elected representatives, and the "communications" experts they employ, study and analyze public attitudes by sophisticated new polling techniques. But their purpose has little to do with leadership, still less with education in any area of our national life. Their purpose seems to consist largely in discovering what people want and feel and dislike, and then in associating themselves with those feelings. They seek to discover which issues can be safely emphasized and which are more prudently avoided. This is the opposite of leadership; it

is followership, elevated to a science, for the purpose of self-advancement. [From *The Price of Empire*]

We must dare to think "unthinkable" thoughts. We must learn to explore all the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and rapidly changing world. We must learn to welcome and not to fear the voices of dissent. We must dare to think about "unthinkable things" because when things become unthinkable, thinking stops and action becomes mindless." [From a Senate address, March 27, 1964]

*Courtesy of Fulbright Association (U.S.)*

# 50th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program

Saturday, December 7, 1996,  
Singapore Art Museum

## Welcome speech by Professor Koh Tai Ann

We are gathered here not only to commemorate a significant milestone, but also to celebrate the goodwill, international understanding and mutual transfer of knowledge made possible by the Fulbright Program. Just imagine the multiplier effect of the Program on the U.S. and other societies it has touched through the lives and influence of thousands of Fulbrighters cumulatively over half a century! The Fulbright Program is a shining instance of what an individual of far-sighted vision can achieve with the support of like-minded leaders and the people of his country, in a spirit of enlightened self-interest. It has, moreover, inspired by example, the support of participating countries all over the world, including for the past 46 years, Singapore.

Through this generous and visionary Program, I was able to transport myself gratefully to what the locals of Ithaca call “the gilded Siberia” of Cornell University. There, in 1987, I spent a hot summer and fruitful spell labouring in the basement of the University Library where was housed the wonderful Wason-Echols collection of Asian and Southeast Asian literature, itself the product of another American visionary whose collection helped to make Cornell’s Southeast Asian Programme a leader in its field.

In a way, my Fulbright experience illustrates the complex direct and indirect benefits of the Program to both individuals and the larger life of their societies. On the one hand, I was given time and means to access a rare, unique collection of mostly out-of-print textual material in a U. S.

library which helped me in my research into and study of the literature and history of my own region. At the same time, being at Cornell helped me widen my academic network of those working in my field, both at Cornell (such as the distinguished Benedict Anderson, Director of the Southeast Asian Studies Program and author of the much-cited book, *Imagined Communities*, and the famed Southeast Asia historian, O.W. Wolters) and through my participation in seminars and conferences at other U.S. universities. Moreover, apart from my academic activities, simply by living among the people and traveling around the U.S. I also became acquainted with American society and with Americans from all walks of life. As I am sure it has done for other Fulbrighters, the experience banished forever any lingering preconceptions of American academe and socio-cultural life that I may have harboured ... preconceptions that for instance, had led me earlier in my salad days, not to take up an offer of a scholarship to Brandeis University. At the time, Cambridge, U.K. (a legacy of our British colonial education) loomed larger in our ambitions for further education than say, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

On behalf of the 180 Singaporean Fulbrighters – among whom I count many friends and also former students such as our current Ambassador

to the UN, Bilahari Kausikan; my former university tutor, now Singapore’s Ambassador to the U.S., Professor Chan; and the then junior Law Lecturer, whom we all hero-worshipped as students, now Ambassador Tommy Koh – I should like to express our collective gratitude to the begetter and the sponsors of this visionary Program.

Finally, as I am not likely to ever find again together in one room, so many Fulbrighters both from Singapore and the U.S., may I also take the opportunity, to urge those of you who have not as yet done so, to join the Fulbright Association, an independent, self-funding alumni body with worldwide membership. Based in Washington, its founding Honorary Chairman was no less than the late Senator Fulbright himself.

Or, we could form a local chapter to support and further his aim of fostering mutual understanding between the peoples of this world thereby ensuring that support for the Fulbright Program continues and spreads. But that is subject for another occasion.

And now, may I invite Dr. Mike Anderson, Director of the U.S. Information Service to tell us something about the history of the Fulbright Program in Singapore.

**Remarks by USIS Director Dr. Michael H. Anderson**

Professor Koh Tai Ann, Ambassador Bloch, Ambassador Koh, Ambassador Chorba, and Fulbright alumni and friends:

On behalf of the U.S. Information Service (USIS), which administers the Fulbright Program in Singapore, let me welcome all of you to today's observance of the 50th anniversary of the Fulbright Program internationally and the 46th anniversary of the Program in Singapore.

Today we are all surrounded by good friends of the Fulbright Program. Each of this afternoon's speakers and everyone else in this room are supporters of the Fulbright vision. We all share the belief that leadership, learning and empathy between cultures can be fostered through the international exchange of people.

Our emcee and our three other speakers are all Fulbright alumni, and each, through their respective distinguished careers, has supported the Fulbright Program and projected its humanizing values. Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has exchanged nearly a quarter of a million people – more than 90,000 Americans who have studied, taught or engaged in research abroad and more than 120,000

people from other countries who have done the same in the United States.

Included in those impressive figures are Singaporean Fulbrighters. The first Fulbright awards here were granted in 1951 when study and research opportunities were quite limited and few Singaporeans even dreamed of venturing all the way over the U.S. to obtain an American higher education. Those early Fulbrighters were pioneers. Today the flow of people coming and going between the U.S. and Singapore is a torrent which serves to constantly reinforce the importance of our dynamic bilateral relationship.

Singapore's Fulbright Program still remains small, but it is dynamic. Our alumni total about 180 Singaporeans and an equal number of Americans. In recent years, about five Fulbright grants annually have been awarded to Singaporean academics and professionals. About the same number of awards have been given to Americans who come to Singapore to study, lecture or conduct research.

Despite its modest size, the Singapore Program is, – and always has been – prestigious. Fulbright awards have always been highly competitive and eagerly sought after by some of Singapore's best and brightest. Hardly a week seems to go by that I don't get inquiries about Fulbright or read in *The*

*Straits Times* or some other publication about yet another Singaporean ex-Fulbrighter who has a new important job, been honored by his or her community or profession, written a new book or a play or floated some interesting idea.

Unlike larger programs in countries like Japan and Germany, the Singapore Program historically has been essentially a U.S. Government-funded and -run Program, but a number of Singaporean institutions have shown their strong commitment to Fulbright by some cost-sharing.

Contributions from these Singapore partners have been greatly appreciated and have stretched our resources at a time of tight budgets. I want personally to thank the Singaporean educational and other institutions which have opened their doors to American Fulbrighters or encouraged Singaporeans to compete for a Fulbright award. The hospitality and the cooperation have been great.

In closing, let me thank Ambassador Chorba for his strong support of Fulbright and other USIS exchange programs. Let me also thank three other very busy, productive people – Professor Koh, Ambassador Koh and Ambassador Bloch. Thanks to all of you for making time to grace this occasion.

Thank you all for coming.

## Genesis of a Fulbright Association in Singapore (1996-1998)

Tracy K. Thiele, Branch Chief

American Institute in Taiwan, Kaohsiung Branch Office

In 1996, Gloria Chandy and Celin Leung, both former cultural affairs colleagues at the U.S. Embassy, spent long hours culling the United States Information Agency's exchange visitors files of Singapore's Fulbright program, which stretched back to 1969. An amazing array of names appeared, almost all with impressive lifelong achievements in Singapore's fields of education and public administration, art and theatre, journalism and television, as well as diplomacy.

It happened that year that the U.S. Embassy in Singapore sponsored an exhibit of photographs by New York photographer Arthur Tress. We decided to have that exhibit as part and parcel of the worldwide 50th anniversary of the Fulbright Program. Kicking off the opening of the exhibit, a private reception was held for all Singapore Fulbrighters, including past and present students, scholars, and researchers. The afternoon of the exhibit opening we were all so excited to have a chance to celebrate together the 50th anniversary as well as to renew acquaintances with so many good friends.

During that reception it became apparent to all associated with the Fulbright Program that it was high time for Singapore to join the list of countries that proudly sponsored Fulbright Alumni associations. Separate meetings of USIS officers and former and current Embassy staff with a variety of Singapore Fulbrighters generated enthusiasm for the idea, which resulted in the very first meeting of parties interested in seeing such an organisation take shape. As with any start-up organisation,

I remember that everyone at the initial meeting had to weigh his/her current professional commitments against the needs of starting a new high profile organisation. Yet, gladly people stepped up to the plate and the new Association began. Although I left soon after the initiation of the Fulbright Association, I understand from former colleagues that the Association has had a good first decade and is looking forward to even greater progress in the coming years.

Being present to share discussions about all the high ideals surrounding exchanges to foster mutual understanding that accompanied the formation of the Fulbright Association (Singapore) was a satisfying moment. I'm proud that even from its early beginnings the Fulbright Association has kept up the spirit and ideals that Senator Fulbright set out so long ago. As such, the Fulbright Association of Singapore honors not only Senator Fulbright, but honors its own nation. It stands as living proof that Singapore shares an international commitment to and actively participates in the dynamic world of public and private educational exchange that binds the U.S. people and the Singapore people so closely together.

Thanks to all of you for keeping alive the spirit of Fulbright exchanges in Singapore and throughout the world.

Best wishes for the future!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[www.fulbright.org.sg](http://www.fulbright.org.sg)

*“The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship”*

Senator J. William Fulbright