ICWA LETTERS

The Institute of Current World Affairs
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SUBSAHARAN AFRICA

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The Last Year with Mom

June 1998

By Marc Michaelson

On May 19th, 1997, my mom was diagnosed with lung cancer. Exactly one year later, on May 19th, 1998, we laid her to rest. The twelve months in between were the most wrenching and painful in my life. My family shared times of great sorrow and sadness, but also muted celebrations, chances to remember how lucky we've been.

When it all started, I was on top of the world. I had moved down to Washington, D.C., (a.k.a. little Addis Ababa) to learn Amharic in preparation for my ICWA fellowship. I was living in a cozy little basement apartment, biking my way around town, meeting interesting Ethiophiles, and generally enjoying spring in the nation's capital.

On that warm, sunny Monday, I went through my usual morning routine, sipping coffee at the neighborhood java joint and practicing verb conjugations before meeting my Amharic instructor Professor Hailu. After class, I read the *Post*, perused the internet for Abyssinian history materials, and darted off for an afternoon bike ride through Rock Creek Park. That evening, I had a wonderful first date, a sunset boat ride on the Potomac, the bright lights of the Georgetown Harbor area glimmering off the gently rippling water. Romance was in the air and all was well....until I got home just after midnight and listened to my answering machine messages.

"Hi Marc, it's Julie......." There was a long pause. Just hearing the tone of my sister's voice, my heart sank into my stomach.

".......Mom had a seizure today and is in the hospital. They're doing tests....it doesn't look good. Dad and I are at the hospital; we'll call back soon to give you the details."

A wave of nausea swept over me. My hand trembled as I held the phone, not knowing who to call, what to do. I wasn't alive when J.F.K. was shot, but I remember May 19th, 1997 vividly, just as many Americans do November 22nd, 1963. I know what it feels like when the sky falls and the ground crumbles beneath your feet. That night my world was rocked, my life changed forever.

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I regained my composure, called the airlines and booked a seat on the first flight out of National Airport the next morning. I spoke with my mom at 2:30 am. She knew I'd be awake, worrying, counting the minutes until my flight. She called me—because she wanted to hear my voice, and because her motherly instincts were still working overtime, *even in her darkest hour.* She *wanted to comfort* me.

She sounded tired but otherwise perfectly fine, and her sense of humor was miraculously still sharp. "Marc," she said. "If you hear the phone drop to the floor, don't hang up...I'm just having a seizure and I'll be back in a

A family portrait in happier times: me flanked by my father Paul, mother Marilyn, and sister Julie

minute." I laughed and then we cried together.

* * *

Over the next few days my mom was put through an array of tests: x-rays, ct scans, needle biopsies. Each result presented new shocks and horrors. It was mind-boggling. The day before the seizure, my parents returned home to Connecticut from a 10-day vacation in Savannah and Charleston. Mom had dragged dad around the city squares and old mansions of Savannah like a golden retriever pulling its best friend toward a colony of dancing squirrels.

One day she was healthy and energetic, without a symptom to speak of. The next day she was informed that her body was riddled with cancer. This was not just one or two spots, but Stage IV adenocarcinoma probably originating in the lung with metastases in the brain, adrenal gland, and possibly liver.

The Doctors asked if my mom was a smoker. Yes, she had been, but had quit 23 years prior. We asked one of the doctors if the smoking was related to the cancer. She dodged the question. It was clear that she didn't know.

After all the tests and their crushing findings, the doctors came in to discuss treatment options. They were upbeat, optimistic and full of hope: "We'd like to approach this as aggressively as possible, first with radiation and then chemotherapy. Of course, Marilyn, you and your family will always make the final decision on which treatments to pursue and which to forego."

No one mentioned the word cure, and we all wondered about the prognosis, but dreaded the response. So for quite some time, no one asked. As one close friend of mine said, "death" is like a big elephant sitting in the room. Everyone sees it, but carefully tiptoes around it, and no one dares talk about it.

* * *

Everyone deals with personal grief and adversity differently, and we never know how we will respond until it happens to us. We all have different coping mechanisms, we all handle our stress, emotions, and grief in different ways.

I tend to think things through, intellectualize, look for solutions and responses. As soon as my mom was diagnosed, I hit the internet with a vengeance, searching all the cancer-related web sites I could find, looking for options, alternative treatments, new drug trials, anything that could help my mom. I spent untold hours and sleepless nights in a frenzied search for hope. I was obsessed and possessed. I had to find something. I couldn't give up. If we can clone sheep, I figured we must be able to save my mom.

My father, from whom I inherited the sort of obsessive behavior that kept me glued for nights on the worldwide web, was in shock. He wanted to make sure my mom had the best doctors and care available. Our oncologist at Hartford Hospital seemed extremely competent and knowledgeable, but surely the good doctors at Sloan-Kettering in New York and Dana-Farber in Boston would have the most cutting-edge treatment protocols available. Ever the salesman, my father managed to finagle our way in to second-opinion consultations with the heads of thoracic oncology at each of these pre-eminent institutions. But the somber reality wouldn't change. Neither of these doctors had any miracles to cure our family's nightmare.

Once I realized there wasn't any miracle cure, I took refuge in the works of Dr. Bernie Siegel, who encourages cancer patients to focus on healing their lives, and their bodies sometimes follow. His anecdotes of spontaneous remissions, mind-body connections and holistic treatments gave me some hope. As did the work of former Institute Fellow Dr. Andrew Weil, who considers the invasive conventional treatments of radiation and chemotherapy as archaic and ineffective, much like the "bleedings" performed in the 19th century. He believes immunotherapy and other treatments that stimulate the body's natural healing responses hold the greatest hope for the future.

I learned a great deal, but not to much consequence. I became frustrated and angry, not so much at the disease, but my mom's response to it. Placing all of her faith in her primary oncologist, she immediately began a series of radiation and chemo treatments. Her doctors were compassionate and competent, but their treatments for stage IV lung cancers haven't proven very successful. The median life expectancy for patients with this condition was six months, the one-year survival rate only 35 percent.

Curing lung cancer with the current methods of chemotherapy is like trying to fix a BMW engine with a sledgehammer. I despised chemotherapy, and wrote a raging poem to vent some of that anger. I wanted mom to pursue alternative treatments: special diets, meditation, etc... She never bought into it — she wanted her oncologist to heal her. She was a passive participant in her treatment. She never researched her disease, looked into anything; she just listened to her oncological deity and awaited deliverance. I became extremely frustrated.

I had bouts of depression, the worst of which immobilized me, lying in bed for 36 hours, exhausted and unable to function. For the first time in my life, I sought counseling with a psychotherapist. We didn't hit it off real well, and I ended up getting most of my support from my sister and my close friends, some of whom had recently lost parents to similar diseases. Ultimately, my anger faded into resignation — it was my mom's disease and she had to deal with it however she could. And, I came to accept my role — to support her and love her unconditionally through her final months just as she had during my first months. I was due to leave for Addis Ababa in August, but decided to delay my ICWA fellowship to be close to home.

* * *

My sister first responded with shock and outbursts of spontaneous emotion. We all had such moments, and they would sneak up on us at random times. As time passed, and the reality of mom's mortality settled in, Julie came into her own. She had always been the baby of the family, but this new reality catapulted her to a new level of maturity. Julie often sat with mom, reading her daily cards with her, holding her hand and comforting her. Julie's own caregiving personality, much of which was nurtured by my mother, truly shined.

Julie has always been a caring person, but it was wonderful to watch her mature and grow so immensely during the past year. She has an inner strength, and a firm personal compass that pulled her (and the rest of us) through some of the rougher moments of my mom's dying process.

* * *

My mom had it the worst. After all, it was her disease, and the harsh realities of mortality pressed upon her most urgently. She immediately began to mourn and grieve, sinking into an initial depression that took her some months to overcome. Every day she received a large stack of cards from friends, family and colleagues — encouraging her to fight, begging her to win her battle with cancer.

Mom had worked on senior-citizen programs for more than 15 years, and many of the people she had touched responded in kind. So much of the love, caring and compassion my mom had showered on all of us was being sent back to her. Friends sent over meals, flowers and chocolate. My mom was a hopeless chocoholic, and I prescribed daily Ghirardelli intakes to accompany the plethora of medications. Friends came to visit, they called on the phone, they prayed for her recovery in local synagogues and distant midwest churches.

For all of her adult life my mom had been a caregiver, as a mother, teacher, senior citizen worker and commu-

The Wall of Cards: Julie taped some of mom's cards on the living room wall, to serve as a reminder of all the love and good wishes coming her way.

nity activist. Her energy and love was always directed outward. She gave gave gave. Now, her body had rebelled. It was time to receive; for the last year of her life, all of us would care for her.

* * *

The year that our family lived with cancer was the roughest of our lives, but it wasn't without its gifts and silver linings. Life is always too short, but a gradual terminal illness is a double-edged-sword wake-up call. The endgame is unavoidable, death will come. But knowing that in advance gave us the time to share some final good-quality times together, tie up some loose ends, and say what needed to be said. And it gave us the chance to find some meaning in our sadness.

The prospect of losing the anchor of our household brought the rest of our family together. It showed me sides of my sister and father I never knew existed. The depth of my father's love, and his determination to care for my mother, were remarkable. Being semi-retired, he devoted all of his time and energy to mom. Julie and I encouraged him to get out of the house, and focus on other activities every now and then — but he just wasn't interested. He wanted to spend every moment with my mom, savoring and holding on to the love of his life for as long as possible.

Recently, I've come to realize how well I knew my mom and how little I knew my dad. Growing up, mom was always at home, while dad was working hard, building his business to provide for the family. Mom was also the more social, outgoing and expressive half of their duo. As an adult, when I called home or visited, the vast majority of my communication was with mom. Her passing has forced dad, Julie and me to strengthen our own relationships. I'm learning about my father — he's begun to open up and share more of himself with me; I'm trying to do the same.

My sister Julie and I have also grown closer, sharing our pain and frustrations. No one else could understand exactly what we were going through. We talked often, and bonded in new ways. Some of this emanated from our new roles as caregivers. Bad news from the doctors understandably threw our parents into an emotional tailspin; Julie and I often had to remain strong, listen to the doctors, and guide medical decisions. We tried to be positive, to try to lift them out of these emotional ruts. I felt a great deal of pressure on me, like barbells resting on my head. My body often ached with stress and tension...and it often still does.

Julie and I sometimes went out for a drink — to vent to each other, talk about what's been happening, and enjoy the relaxing qualities of the alcohol. It was important to both of us that we "be there" with and for my parents, but it was also extremely tough to be there. Living full-time with mom, even when she still had all of her capacities, was physically and emotionally exhausting. It was like living outside, under the stars, fully exposed to the elements. I never knew if tomorrow would be sunny or if lightning would strike. Every day we woke up with uncertainty. It was an extremely unsettling, vulnerable feeling.

* * *

My mom was the greatest.

Sounds like a cliché, I know. I might have last written such simple praise as a starry-eyed 3rd grader.

Parental greatness is now largely devoid of meaning, made trite and commercialized on Mother's Day cards, coffee cups and t-shirts. It's easy to buy a mass-produced cutesie little plaque, made in China of course, for a "#1 mom." Or to skip over the lime-green ties and get dad some Father's-Day golf balls engraved for the "Greatest Dad in the World." So simple. So meaningless.

The qualities of great parenting are treasures, often sought but rarely found. Today, economic realities have made great parenting ever more difficult, as both parents are often forced to work full-time to provide the perceived necessities of middle-class life. Children are bounced around like those unstable little red superballs we used to play with: each bounce launches the child in a different direction, to daycare, an after-school program, grandma's house, or home alone as a "latchkey kid."

When parents do get home, they are often too exhausted to help with the homework or sit and talk about the day at school. So many parents are chained to this economic treadmill, constantly struggling to make ends meet. They may love their children dearly, but the amount of energy and time they have to spend on their kids is painfully small.

What other factors preclude parental greatness? There are scores of parents out there with their own personal problems, and these often interfere with their own parenting. There are parents who were themselves abused or mistreated as children, with deep emotional scars and needs of their own. There are parents from broken homes, who, despite the best intentions, haven't the capacities for exceptional childcare. Many parents are themselves trapped in bad marriages, often remaining in lousy relationships "for the sake of the kids."

And then there is the all-American scourge of divorce. Approximately half of all marriages in this country end in divorce. Fractured families have become about as American as baseball, our troubled national pastime. Commuter children spend weekdays with mom and weekends with dad. The city park, once a place for kids to play and feed pigeons has become a neutral ground for handing them off from one parent to another.

There are parents who control their children for a variety of reasons. They may have failed to accomplish a certain stature or position in life, and they want to live vicariously through their children. Or maybe they are filled with self-love and personal pride, and want their children to grow up to be just like them. They push, prod, steer, and manipulate — to make sure their kid goes to that prestigious ivy-coated college, affixes the proper initials behind his name (preferably J.D., M.D., or M.B.A.), and pursues that high-status career with the corresponding hefty salary (not to mention the luxury sedan and house on the hill). Such parents want the very best for their kids, and leaving nothing to chance, they've decided what is best and will do everything in their power to make sure their kids get it.

* * *

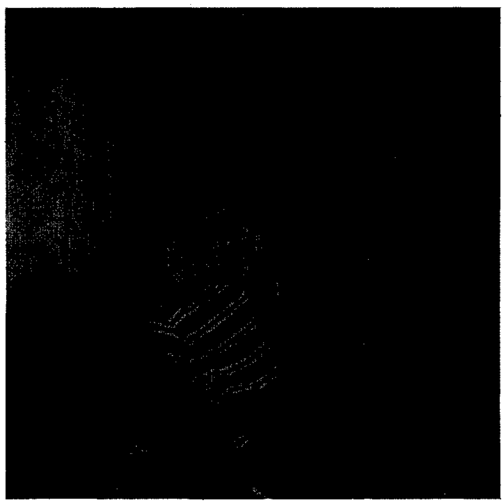
No one has touched me, influenced me, inspired me, supported me, and loved me as wholly as my mom.

At the time of my birth, she was a bright, young elementary school teacher and she put her career on the backburner to be there. She packed Julie and I off to school and was there waiting for us when we came home. Mothering was a full-time job with no salary, but as she saw it, invaluable benefits. She took pride in raising us, and spent much of her time and energy nurturing our young minds and bodies. We grew up with a mother we could always rely on — she made sacrifices, but never made us feel that way. She loved us and gave selflesslessly.

My intention here is not to exaggerate or idealize my mother or my childhood. There were certainly tough times and family conflicts, the worst of which directly involved me. My father was ruthlessly competitive with me as a boy, and our relationship was severely strained for many years. And I was the perpetrator in a hurtful relationship with my sister, in which I tormented her terribly as a child. All was certainly not perfect in our household, and we are still working on rebuilding and healing some of the fractured past.

However, through it all, my mother was the glue that held us all together. Her relationships with each of us gave us feelings of self-worth. She tried, often unsuccessfully, to heal these household rifts. But through her own love and caring, she made each of us feel special.

Mom gave Julie and me many gifts: she taught us compassion and she raised us with a strong sense of right and wrong. She and dad had an excellent marriage, with a love that grew and deepened through the years. And she was a wonderful friend to me as an adult — I've always looked up to her and viewed her life as an example.



Mom gives me a big hug, April 1972

Me, Julie, and mom poolside in Florida, 1974

But the greatest gift my mom gave me was her pure, unfettered, no-strings-attached love.

When I joined the Peace Corps and headed for Africa, many of our friends and relatives were quick to question and criticize. But that was not how my mom reacted. She was more than a little nervous about her baby going off to Africa, but she supported me anyway. She had confidence in me — she let me make my own decisions, even when she wasn't 100 percent comfortable with them. She let me become my own person and gave me encouragement all the way. She was proud of me — no matter what I was doing.

My mom's unconditional love and support enabled me to grow, mature and pursue my own passions. She didn't push me to study at this college or pursue that career or do anything else because it was what she wanted. She loved me for who I am. That's the greatest gift a mother can give a child. And for that, I'm eternally grateful.

* * *

The end was wrenching, as I think it usually is. In March, mom's condition took a turn for the worse. She complained of terrible leg and back pain, and further tests showed cancer in the spinal column. I had begun my fellowship in Ethiopia in January, and had been talking to my folks on the phone at least once a week. The prognosis was still uncertain, but the oncologist began to talk about hospice. It was time to come home.

When I arrived, I was positively surprised. My mom was thrilled to have me home; she looked great, and seemed to have more energy and greater determination to live as fully as possible for as long as possible. The

Mom and dad dancing during a drumming ceremony in Kandonku village, my Peace Corps home in The Gambia, December 1990.

triage of pain medications had greatly helped, but also knocked her out. They didn't, however, stop her from going to New York for the Big East basketball tournament to root for her beloved UCONN Huskies. Nor did they stop her from lunching with her friends, or going out to the movies and classical concerts.

During the last two months, we had some very good quality-time together. We had the chance to reminisce about fun and funny times and to talk about serious family issues. We discussed our feelings and fears and sometimes we just sat together silently, holding hands. We enjoyed sushi together, sat in Elizabeth Park (her favorite local outdoor spot), and intermittently dozed and ridiculed a local production of Porgy and Bess. Mom was getting weaker, especially her legs, but her zest for life remained strong.

But those last two months were also very difficult. I began to feel more distant, and had trouble talking with mom at times. This may have been a self-protection mechanism; I was separating and preparing for her passing. Working with the hospice social worker, we tried to broach some difficult family issues, with mixed success. We all had the chance to express our thoughts and emotions, but some feelings were hurt along the way.

One of the greatest losses I feel is that my future spouse and children (should I have them, and I hope I do) will never get to know my mother, nor will she know them. When I look into the future, and life without mom, the absence of my unconceived children's grandma is the most painful. Julie and I asked mom if we could do a video interview, so that our future mates could get to know her in some small ways. She agreed to try, but it was very hard for her to do. We were able only to get through the first three questions (of ten); despite her fragility and reluctance, her warmth and sense of humor still shined through.

* * *

At the beginning of May, the bottom fell out, and mom's health crashed. She began to zone out occasionally, gazing glassy-eyed into the distance. It appeared that she was beginning her transition, crossing for brief periods to another place. She talked about her deceased father as if she'd just seen him, and said she didn't live here, she had to go home. She was clearly experiencing another world, and she had a peaceful smile on her face during the times she was awake but not fully present. She gradually stopped drinking and eating (except small amounts of ice cream and ginger ale).

In less than two weeks she went from fully alert and functional into a semi-coma. She had summoned all of her energy for a few final events, the bris (circumcision celebration) of a friend's baby boy and the wedding of a family friend. After that, she began to lose her capacities in rapid succession. With the help of visiting hospice nurses and aids, we cared for mom at home. When she could no longer take her oral pain medications, we brought her to a special unit of the hospital.

Her final days were spent at the Palliative Care Unit at Hartford Hospital, a lovely, peaceful caring place where the terminally ill and their families can spend final moments together. The physical dying process is scary and deeply unsettling, but the wonderful nurses on this unit helped us all through it. They treated my mom with the dignity she deserved, and they cared for her survivors with equal compassion.

We sat by mom's bed, held her hand, and spoke to her. At first, she would turn to us when we talked to her — he could hear us, but it wasn't clear if she could understand what we were saying. Toward the end, she was generally unresponsive, and yet I know she sensed our presence.

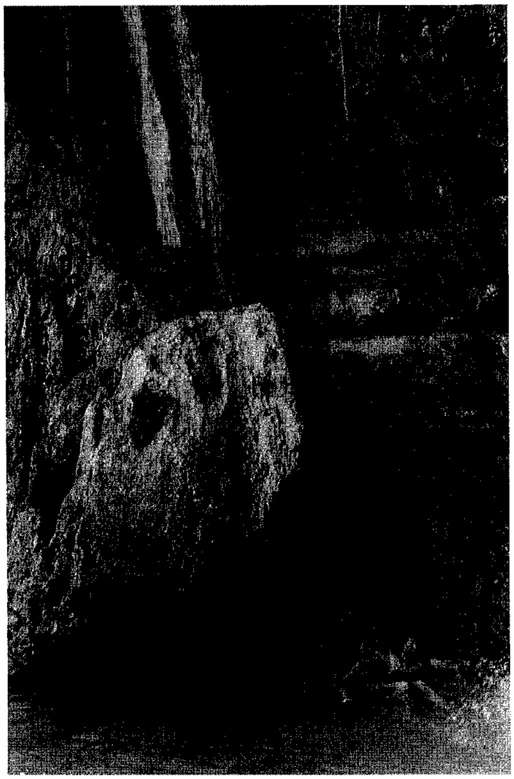
* * *

During that final week, the three of us took turns sleeping on the couch in her room. My night was Tuesday, and I hardly slept a wink. Mom slept peacefully, her

Mom holding Brad, the son of a close friend, on the day of his bris *(circumcision), April 24, 1998* breathing soft. But when I looked over at her, I didn't see my mom; death had disfigured her body, she looked 100 years old. Her body was shutting down, and I believe her soul had already moved on.

The next night, depressed and disturbed at the sight of my mom as a shadow of the person she had been, I left the hospital, went home and rummaged through a shelf packed with photo albums. I was transported back to Israel where we climbed and waded in Ein Gedi together 18 years ago, and to Sri Lanka in late '96. And in between, all of the holidays, trips, telephone conversations and day-to-day experiences and deep friendship we shared.

I also walked around the house we'd lived in for all of my 30 years, remembering special times in different rooms—dinner conversations at the kitchen table, parties on the patio in the back, reading the comics in mom and dad's bed on a Sunday morning.



I, Mom and Julie wading under the falls at Ein Gedi, Israel, 1980

As I looked at my mom in these pictures and these memories, her smiling face, her warmth, her compassion and her fundamental goodness all returned. I smiled and then cried like a baby. All of the blessings of having a truly great mom and the pain of her loss hit me like a tidal wave.

* * *

Some have tried to console me on the "tragedy" of my mom's loss.

My mom's life ended early, but this story is no tragedy. Tragedy is an opportunity missed, a life unlived. Tragedy doesn't fit for my mom; she never missed an opportunity. She spread more love, accomplished more in the community, and touched more people in her 55 years than most people could in 105 years. She had fun; she lived life fully.

My mom was a great woman. She was extremely caring, and focused all of her love, energy and talent outwards, showering it on all of us who were blessed to know her. I had only 30 years with my mom, but I wouldn't trade that for 60 years with another.

Mom, I love you. I will miss you terribly, but you will be with me always. ❑

With our tour guide in tea country, near Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka, December 1996

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Institute Fellows and their Activities

Adam Smith Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Christopher P. Ball. An economist, Chris Ball holds a B.A. from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and attended the 1992 International Summer School at the London School of Economics. He studied Hungarian for two years in Budapest while serving as Project Director for the Hungarian Atlantic Council. As an Institute Fellow, he is studying and writing about Hungarian minorities in the former Soviet-bloc nations of East and Central Europe. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Shelly Renae Browning. A surgeon specializing in ears and hearing, Dr. Browning is studying the approaches of traditional healers among the Aborigines of Australia and the indigenous peoples of Vanuatu to hearing loss and ear problems. She won her B.S. in Chemistry at the University of the South, studied physician/patient relationships in China and Australia on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and won her M.D. at Emory University in Atlanta. Before her ICWA fellowship, she was a Fellow in Skull-Base Surgery in Montreal at McGill University's Department of Otolaryngology. [SOUTH ASIA]

Chenoa Egawa. An enrolled member of the Lummi Indian Nation, Chenoa is spending two years living among mesoAmerican Indians, studying successful and not-so-successful cooperative organizations designed to help the Indians market their manufactures, agricultural products and crafts without relying on middlemen. A former trade specialist for the American Indian Trade and Development Council of the Pacific Northwest, Chenoa's B.A. is in International Business and Spanish from the University of Washington in Seattle. [THE AMERICAS]

Paige Evans. A playwright and former Literary Manager of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Paige is looking at Cuba through the lens of its performing arts. With a History/Literature B.A. from Harvard, she has served as counselor at the Buckhorn Children's Center in Buckhorn, Kentucky (1983-84), as Arts Editor of the International Courier in Rome, Italy (1985-86), and as an adjunct professor teaching a course in Contemporary American Playwrights at New York University. She joined the Manhattan Theatre Club in 1990. [THE AMERICAS]

Whitney Mason. A freelance print and television journalist, Whit began his career by founding a newspaper called The *Siberian Review* in Novosibirsk in 1991, then worked as an editor of the *Vladivostok News* and wrote for Asiaweek magazine in Hong Kong. In 1995 he switched to radio- and video-journalism, working in Bosnia and Korea for CBS. As an ICWA Fellow, he is studying and writing about Turkey's role as nexus between East and West, and between traditional and secular Islam.

Marc Michaelson. A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-building in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research." [sub-SAHARA]

Jean Benoît Nadeau. A French-Canadian journalist and playwright, Jean Benoît studied drama at the National Theater School in Montreal, then received a B.A. from McGill University in Political Science and History. The holder of several Canadian magazine and investigative-journalism awards, he is spending his ICWA-fellowship years in France studying "the resistance of the French to the trend of economic and cultural globalization."

Susan Sterner. A staff photographer for the Associated Press in Los Angeles, Susan received her B.A. in International Studies and Cultural Anthropology at Emory University and a Master's in Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt. AP gave her a wide-ranging beat, with assignments in Haiti, Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexican border; in 1998 she was a co-nominee for a Pulitzer Prize for a series on child labor. Her fellowship topic: the lives and status of Brazilian women.

Tyrone Turner. A photojournalist (Black Star) whose work has appeared in many U.S. newspapers and magazines, Tyrone holds a Master's degree in Government and Latin American politics from Georgetown University and has produced international photo-essays on such topics as Rwandan genocide and mining in Indonesia (the latter nominated for a Pulitzer). As an ICWA Fellow he is writing and photographing Brazilian youth and their lives in rural and urban settings.

Daniel B. Wright. A sinologist with a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, Dan's fellowship immerses him in southwest China's Guizhou Province, where he, his journalist-wife Shou Guowei, and their two children (Margaret and Jon) will base themselves for two years in the city of Duyun. Previously a specialist on Asian and Chinese affairs for the Washington consulting firm of Andreae, Vick & Associates, Dan also studied Chinese literature at Beijing University and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena, California. [EAST ASIA]

Chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise, Institute Fellows are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

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