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First IDRC Alumni Research Awards Announced

The first awards under the new Alumni Research Award Program were presented to 24 young researchers from developing countries this month. The award program, announced in issue No.11 of this newsletter, is designed to assist doctoral research students from developing countries who are enrolled at Canadian universities.

IDRC President Maureen O'Neil welcomed the announcement of the Awards as "an exciting initiative." In a letter to Alumni Chairman Jim Pfeifer she says: "I hope that these awards will continue to be granted annually as a means to showcase the link to knowledge-led international development and the work of the younger generation of developing-country researchers."

The award program originally envisaged a maximum of 20 awards in any one year. However the number is larger this first year so that we can include all those who are currently eligible — students who are doing or are about to do their field work. In future years the number is expected to be in the 10-to-15 range, subject of course to the availability of funds.

A list of the 2006 award winners appears on page 6.

2006 Reunion — October 27 A Taste of Africa!

The fifth annual reunion and AGM of the IDRC Alumni is coming up fast. The regional theme this year features Africa, and that will be reflected in the decor, food and drink, and the music says Angie Anton, who is the Alumni director responsible for the event. In addition the reunion will again be preceded by a seminar with senior staff from the Centre who will bring interested members of the Alumni up to date on the Centre's activities. There will also be a special tribute to IDRC's first President, Dr David Hopper.

The reunion will be held at IDRC Headquarters, 250 Albert Street, starting at 5 p.m. RSVP invitations will be going out very soon. Please take a moment to respond so that Angie has a better idea of how many to expect. See you there!

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From the Board...

The usual message from our esteemed Chairman seems to have become lost in cyberspace, and the Chairman himself was unreachable at press time. We can look forward to a longer-than-usual message from Jim in the next issue of this Newsletter.

BobS

IDRC Alumni Board of Directors: Jim Pfeifer (Chairman), Gerry Bourrier (Treasurer), Chris Smart (Secretary), Bob Stanley (Newsletter Editor), Angie Anton (Annual Meeting Coordinator), Claude-Paul Boivin (Special Projects), Maria Williams (Membership), Jean-Marc Fleury and Kim Daly (IDRC Staff Representatives).

Donate the United Way

IDRC Alumni members are invited again this year to contribute to the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC) — better known as the United Way — through the IDRC employees' campaign.

You probably remember IDRC's strong participation in the annual fundraising drive for charitable organizations grouped under the United Way banner. This year, if you are planning to contribute to the United Way, you can make your gift in such a way that it can be included as part of the IDRC campaign.

If you are receiving Canada Pension (CPP), you should by now have received an invitation to give to the campaign. Instead of returning it directly to the United Way office, you can send it to: Guy Gascon, IDRC, PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3H9.

If you are not yet receiving your pension, and want to make a donation, you can contact Guy Gascon (613-236-6163, ext. 2335, or email ggascon@idrc.ca) who will send you a Gift Form, which you can return with your donation.

IDRC will forward all donations and forms to GCWCC and will add your donation to the total raised from current IDRC employees, helping the Centre to achieve its campaign objective.



Where Are They Now?



Yue-man Yeung

IDRC 1974-1984

It is now fully 22 years since I left IDRC and returned to Hong Kong to work for The Chinese University of Hong Kong. During this period, I have been in touch with former colleagues in Ottawa, Singapore, Vancouver and elsewhere, but having heard some of their news in this newsletter, I was prompted to provide a personal update.

It was a stroke of luck that I returned to Hong Kong at the most opportune time of my career, and in just in time for the re-emergence of China. In terms of career development, I can possibly say that I have proceeded as far as I could go. At the University I have been, at various times, Department Head of Geography, University Registrar, Head of Shaw College, and Director of two research institutes. I have also continued to be extremely active in regional research networks and contributed to public service in Hong Kong.

A most fulfilling part of my return to academia in Hong Kong is to be able to watch, trace and write about China's economic transformation and social modernization. I have published by now a number of books on these and other subjects. Public service in Hong Kong has also earned me three honorific titles: SBS, OBE and JP.

On the family side, our two children are happily married and are now living in North America. Our son, Tao-ming, a father himself, works for Freescale, a spin-off from Motorola based in Austin, Texas. Our daughter, Sze-mei, also married, has been practising law in Vancouver, having completed her studies at Queen's and UBC. So you can see that our family is very globalized.

I retired from the Chair of Geography in mid-2004 and have since been appointed Emeritus Professor. I continue, however, as Director of two research institutes and shall retire for the second time in mid-2007.

Talking with Prod Laquian several months ago, I learned that there might be a reunion of former colleagues from IDRC in Asia, in addition to the annual reunion in Ottawa. I certainly hope that this will become reality. Meanwhile, my best wishes and fond regards to friends and colleagues I used to work with in Singapore and Ottawa. My email address for anyone who might like to contact me is: ymyeung@cuhk.edu.hk.

Photo: Yue-man with his wife Ameda during a visit to Zhongshan in the Pearl River Delta earlier this year.

Marianne Vespry

IDRC 1971-1975

Marianne was a founding member of the IDRC Library staff and first head of Technical Services. Staff members from the '70s may remember her as Marianne Forsyth. She writes:

I was part of the team that developed one of the early automated library ordering, indexing and retrieval systems, which brought a certain jealous regard among our library colleagues, and a steady stream of visitors.

In 1975 my husband accepted a transfer to Singapore, to become the first Information Sciences Programme Officer in ASRO. In order to go with him I had to resign; this was before employers gave any thought to the impact of relocation on spouses' (read: women's) careers. As I remember, 1975 was International Women's Year.

You asked for news of what Alumni have been doing. My daughter and I published a book earlier this year — perhaps not serious enough for IDRC alums to notice, but fun nevertheless:

Happy, Ever & After, Barristers and Solicitors - The Sleeping Beauty Caper

by M. Anne Vespry and Marianne Forsyth Vespry
ISBN: 0-9739847-0-8

Family traditions are sacrosanct among dragon-kind, but Tobermory After has a problem. The Afters are great jurists, who over generations have developed and interpreted the basic laws of the multiverse. Her mother's family has an even more distinguished lineage. Her maternal Grandmamma is the Venerable Kami of the Tides Unstoppable; she mediates the intersection of the fourth element, water, and the fourth dimension, time. Wonderful traditions on both sides... unfortunately they are incompatible.

What's a young dragon to do? Toby opts to become a lawyer. It's a more dangerous profession than she expected. Trial by combat is still the way to go on some worlds; it can be nasty!

Where are YOU now?

We always like to hear from IDRC Alumni with news of what they have been doing since leaving the Centre. You can reach us by email or snail mail (see front page for co-ordinates) with news, and a photo is always appreciated.

Memories of Africa

by Tom Torrance

Tom Torrance was a manager in the Human Resources Division at IDRC from 1983 to 1985. After that he was a consultant for a number of other organizations. Since his retirement, Tom has worked as a volunteer and advocate at local and provincial levels, particularly in relation to issues of mental health and kidney disease. Tom also finds time to write – reminiscing about his experiences in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere. He offers this vignette from his time with CUSO in Africa.

March 7, 1963 — As Jack's ancient Peugeot navigated the puddles and potholes on the Kilwa Road in Dar es Salaam, we glimpsed through the swishing wiper blades two soldiers on a double quick march oblivious to the tropical downpour. Jack brought the car to a shuddering halt and the two men jumped in. They introduced themselves as Das and Ramesh of the third Ghurkas of the Indian Army returning from a stint in the Congo where they had served as United Nations peacekeepers. When we reached their encampment, Ramesh suggested we join them for supper "Ghurka style".

A canopy sagging from tropical rain protected a clutch of collapsible tables complete with tablecloths, tin plates and mugs. Introductions were extended. Beer was thrust into our hands. We learned that Das was part of a family tradition of soldiering. His grandfather had been killed at Gallipoli. He and his father both fought on the Burma Road. He said he had been lucky so far avoiding bullets, bombs and shells. All the soldiers had circumspect views of their work in the Congo as United Nations peacekeepers. They were proud of their history and were irked by the outside world's view of them as ruthless mercenaries.

Before long we were ushered to our places at the table. In front of me was a big dish of rice, with goat meat and the strong aroma of curry assaulting the nostrils. We listened to all sorts of stories – mountain climbing, school, farming in the Himalayas, with Jack and I caught up in the adventure, hospitality and camaraderie. After farewells we lurched out of the encampment past a makeshift clothes line where a row of belts made of tough cotton webbing complete with hooks designed for water bottles or grenades were dangling like work socks.

Back at Mgulani that evening I lay on my solitary cot unable to sleep. The meeting with those soldiers conjured up images of my father in his army-issue khaki shorts sweating as he hoed in his garden under a scorching sun while humming a melody from an Italian opera. As a war baby I hardly knew my father for five years, and in later years he never talked about his work as a battle surgeon with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps.

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In a damp corner of the basement, his wicker army trunk was a treasure trove where I rummaged with my brother on rainy days. One familiar item was a belt with brass fittings identical to the one on the Ghurkas' line.

The webbed belt triggered another memory — the summer of 1960. I had joined the Canadian Officer Training Corps for the summer because I needed a job to help defray next year's university costs. More importantly, and maybe subconsciously, I wanted to prove to my father that I could take the military life. Surviving the ritual humiliation, physical regime and mind-numbing routine of a summer's basic infantry training at Camp Borden would prove it. That summer, while I acknowledged that I learned a lot about myself, I came to hate the army and many of its values. I stayed only long enough to earn Her Majesty's commission as a second lieutenant.

Back in my cot at Mgulani, I reflected on how the evening's chance had triggered steamy brew of feelings for my father, his values, the linkages of history and culture and the reinforcement of a determination to try to do something useful with my life.

Recipients of the IDRC Alumni Research Award 2006

Recipient	Country	University	Topic
Clarence Batan	Philippines	Dalhousie	Preparing for the Future: Life Course and Intergenerational Analysis of Youth Transitions in the Philippines.
Deborah Lopreite	Argentina	Carleton	The Creation of Quasi Markets in the Argentinean Health Sector: Consumer Choice and Democratic Accountability in the Era of Fiscal Austerity.
William Rutakumwa	Uganda	Alberta	Uganda's Poverty Alleviation Strategies: A Policy Analysis
Elisa King	Philippines	Alberta	Knowledge Structure, Global Systems of Innovation, and the Political Economy of Development: The Case of Philippines ICT-Related Electronics Industry
Grace Bandoh	Ghana	Waterloo	Conservation and Natural Resource Management in the Ankasa Resource Reserve, Ghana
Boubacar Oumarou	Niger	Laval	Dynamique des pasteurs nomades face à l'État nigérien: cas des peuls de Say
Maria Cecilia Roa-Garcia	Colombia	UBC	Multi-scale methods for a comprehensive water balance. A case study in the headwaters of the Rio Barbas in Colombia
Anil Mathew Varughese	India	Toronto	Democracy and Politics of Social Citizenship: A comparative study of states in India
Maria Dolores Figueroa Romero	Mexico	York	Comparative Analysis of Indigenous Women's Participation in Local Politics and Community Development: The Experience of Women Leaders of ECUARUNARI (Ecuador) and YATAMA(Atlantic Coast Nicaragua)
Asya El-Meehy	Egypt	Toronto	Informalizing Public Welfare: The Role of Egypt's Social Fund for Development

June Thaddeus Fokwang	Cameroon	Toronto	Politicized Youth and Citizenship in Cameroon
Aurélie Takam Taguemne	Cameroon	Montréal	Évaluation langagière normalisée des enfants Camerounais de 4 à 5 ans et prérequis pour l'éducation de base en cas de retards de langage
Miguel Gonzalez	Nicaragua	York	Governing Multi-ethnic Societies in Latin America: Regional Autonomy, Democracy, and the State in Nicaragua
Francis Djibo	Burkina Faso	Laval	Éfficacité de la formation continue des enseignants du primaire au Burkina Fasso
Shaaban Ali Mwachireya	Kenya	Simon Fraser	Effects of River Sediments on Coral Diversity and Bioerosion in Kenyan Coral Reefs
Sarah Wamui Macharia	Kenya	York	The Urban 'Informal Economy' in the Global South: A Feminist Postempiricist Study of Policy Discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa with a Special Focus on Kenya
Habiba Dayib Mohamud	Kenya	Alberta	Famine, Displacement and Destitution of Pastoral Communities in North-eastern Kenya: Vulnerability and Livelihood Analysis
Ravi Hegde	India	UBC	Pricing Environmental Services and Rural Household Behaviour: The case of carbon in Mozambique's Agroforests.
Jonathan Nzuma	Kenya	Guelph	An Economic Analysis of the Impacts of Trade Liberalization on the Kenyan Maize Sector
Thi Thanh HuongTa	Viet Nam	Manitoba	Pagpanikay-sikay Lang and the Logic of Survival: Gender, Mothers and the Urban Poor in Barangay Hipodromo, Cebu City, Philippines
Ashok Kumbamu	India	Alberta	Technological Paradigm Shift and Agricultural Sustainability: the Case for Genetically Modified Cotton in Warangal District
Chandar Kamal Shadi	India	Toronto	An Evolutionary Game Theory Approach to Joint Forest Management
Germain Fonga	Burkina Faso	Saint Paul (Ottawa)	Analyse éthique de l'aide internationale au développement: réflexion à partir du cas Burkina Faso en s'appuyant sur la notion de développement chez Amartya Sen et Paul VI
Ou Ou Lamah	Guinea	Montréal	Pesticides et propagation de la Schistosomiase en zone d'aménagement agro-industriel de Diécké en Guinée