

THE THAI THAT BINDS



ISB Network News



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SPECIAL EDITION

**MEMORIES FROM
OUR ALUMNI**

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OUR ISB MEMORIES

To Our ISB Friends,

I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight three of our ISB alumni who shared their memories, accomplishments, and gratitude with me and other ISB friends. We love it when our ISB Family shares their memories and photos with us.

If you have a story to tell and would like for it to be published to our ISB family, please write to director.comms@isbnetwork.com

Thank you,
Kathie/Kate Boslet
Director of Communications



**Pamela Slutz,
ISB Class of 1967,
Retired Ambassador
Excerpts from an Oral History**



PLEASE TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS INTERVIEW WITH RETIRED AMBASSADOR PAMELA SLUTZ

Interviewer: *Tell me about your family, early life, education and how and why you joined the Foreign Service.*

Slutz: Well, you might say that the Foreign Service was in my blood, by virtue of my being the daughter of a Foreign Service Officer. I have been a part of the Foreign Service community ever since I can remember. I was a so-called "diplo-brat." My formative years, so to speak, were spent in Palermo, Sicily (1956-8), Bangkok, Thailand (1958-64), Jakarta, Indonesia (1969-70) – and Rockville, Maryland (1954-56 and 1964-66).

Interviewer: *Growing up overseas must have been interesting. Do you remember much about your time in Thailand?*

Slutz: I remember Bangkok very well and favorably. I spent my "formative years" there, from the age of 8 until 15. I still look back on Bangkok as the happiest, most carefree time of my life. I traveled with my parents all around Thailand, Burma, and Laos. We went twice to Angkor Wat; the first time we drove in our Volkswagen. Both my parents were adventurous, and my mother spoke quite good Thai (she was always good with languages). So, we often traveled – or visited -- with Thai friends. I felt quite at home sleeping under mosquito nets, without air-conditioning, eating Thai and Chinese food. I was also fairly conversant in Thai; they say that children -- under the age of 10 -- if encouraged, often learn to speak and converse in a second language. I spoke Thai frequently with servants and friends. After I left Thailand, I didn't use it for many years -- until I was in graduate school at the East West Center/University of Hawaii and was assigned a roommate from Thailand. I was pleasantly surprised that I could still converse in Thai -- well, "kitchen" Thai.

Interviewer: *What did you do for entertainment, in the days before television and video games, etc.?*

Slutz: I am glad you brought that up. Looking back on my childhood, I am eternally grateful that I grew up without television, video games/movies, the Internet, cellphones, and social media. I never had to deal with all that technology, social pressure, and trivial information overload. I was free to spend my time and energy developing the physical, mental and social skills -- team sports, reading, and exploring the world around me -- that would enable me to succeed at whatever

I chose to do in life. In Bangkok, I spent a lot of time outdoors, riding my bike or playing with neighbor children. As a family, we frequented the Bangkok Sports Club's Olympic-sized swimming pool and tennis courts; I qualified one summer to be a Junior Lifesaver. My parents leased a cottage at Pattaya Beach and every 3-4 weeks, we would spend the weekend there. I spent those days beachcombing, snorkeling, or roaming the dirt roads on my bike. And, at least once every few months, my father would take the family to the Bangkok Zoo. He would hire an elephant to take us around the park, ambling along the pathways and looking down on the other animals from our perch on the elephant's back. It was a magical place and even today, I rarely pass up a zoo when visiting a city for the first time. In my early teens, I became an avid "equestrian;" my extracurricular life -- and circle of friends -- revolved around the Bangkok Riding and Polo Club. I stayed in touch with many of those friends, even today. And I still ride!

And I did a lot of reading. My father loved books and libraries. Weekly we would go to the British lending library (on Patpong Road) and we ordered/purchased U.S.-published books at the U.S. military commissary. To encourage my reading, my father gave the required reading list for the freshmen class at his alma mater (DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana) and would quiz me once in a while.

PAMELA SLUTZ INTERVIEW CONTINUED

Interviewer: What sort of school did you go to?

Slutz: The International School Bangkok (ISB). When I arrived, in 1958, the school was housed in buildings on U.S. Government-owned property, behind the residences of the Deputy Chief of Mission and other senior officers, opposite the back side of the Bangkok Sports Club, off Rajadamri Road, I believe. It was a series of wooden buildings on stilts and connected by raised walkways. It was the headquarters of the Japanese Army during its occupation of Thailand in World War II. I remember there were two 4th grade “home rooms” and many of my fellow students were Asian and European. In 1960, ISB moved to a new campus in Bangkok District, on Soi 15 off Sukhumvit Road. It was modern and spacious and had an athletic area, including a track. I spent a lot of time on the track; my specialty was the 100-yard dash/sprint. The student body began to grow dramatically in 1962 – related to the practice of safe-havening in Bangkok the families of military, embassy and USAID officers who were assigned to (unaccompanied) Laos and Vietnam. I think we had four “home rooms” in my 8th grade class, mostly Americans.

Interviewer: When did you decide to join the Foreign Service?

Slutz: I do not recall consciously deciding to join the Foreign Service; it just seemed the natural and right thing to do. I pursued courses of study and work experience to prepare myself. In addition to my four years of study at Hollins University (1966-70), I spent two summers (1967 and 1970) working as an intern at the State Department, in the East Asia Pacific Bureau, and in the Consular Affairs Bureau, which gave me a first-hand taste of what the State Department/Foreign Service did – and my first SECRET Security Clearance. I also spent the summer of 1969 (on student visitation orders) with my parents in Jakarta, Indonesia where my father was assigned to the Embassy. I worked part-time as an English Language Examiner for USAID Jakarta and then spent an additional six weeks in Jakarta during the winter of 1969-1970 (again, on student visitation orders) researching and writing a Senior Honors Thesis on the “UN Conducted Act of Free Choice in Irian Jaya.” All in all, I felt well-prepared for the Foreign Service exam.

But getting into the Foreign Service was not so easy. I took the written exam at the first opportunity -- when I turned 21 in the second semester of my senior year. I passed. But that summer (1970) I took the oral exam – and failed. Ironically, I failed because I could not hold up my end of the conversation when it came to American culture and history.

Luckily, I had a backup plan. Having spent my “formative” years in Southeast Asia, I passionately wanted to become an expert on that part of the world. And, more specifically, I wanted to develop the expertise on Indonesia that would enable me to live and work there. So, I had applied for graduate school. The University of Hawaii accepted me for its master’s degree program in Asian Studies and the East-West Center offered me a full Fellowship and stipend to pay my way. I spent the summer of 1971 (between the two years of the degree program) at the (first) annual Summer Indonesian Studies Institute, held at the University of Wisconsin, where I honed my skills and met many of the future movers and shakers in not only Indonesian studies but also Indonesian society and politics.

Interviewer: Did you find yourself, as a Foreign Service kid, being able to call upon your experiences in class and all?

Slutz: Yes. Quite a bit. I became a champion for the interests of the developing world, the Third World, which had suffered at the hands of their colonial masters and were often dealt a weak hand when ultimately “granted” their independence. I was able to put my experiences into a global context instead of them being random cultural encounters. It began to really make some sense. Beginning at Hollins and continuing through Hawaii, I focused on the theory of what was then called “political development.” American political scientists -- Gabriel Almond, Lucien Pye, Samuel Huntington, etc. -- were attempting to study the political dynamics of the newly emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and to develop a model for how these states should modernize and democratize. Back in the 1960s we believed that countries could be “developed” like children, from infancy to adulthood, and that “emerging” states would go through predictable stages or phases on their way to becoming a “modern” (read: Western) state. So, I was thinking, “Hmm, Thailand and Indonesia, let’s see. Probably in the “young adolescent” phase, still in need of discipline and guidance.”

In fact, I made serving in the Third World my specialty in the Foreign Service, advocating on behalf of the American version of democracy and free-market economics. By the time I retired (in 2012), I had come to realize that this arrogant and misguided policy was not only doing damage to other cultures and societies, many of which are far older and more stable than ours, but also making us enemies around the world: the belief that we Americans somehow have a

PAMELA SLUTZ INTERVIEW CONTINUED*continued:*

monopoly on what is “democratic” and the arrogance to assume that we have the God-given right to dictate to other societies and cultures in the name of “regime change.”

Interviewer: *Interesting. But please continue with the story of how you came to join the Foreign Service.*

Slutz: I took the Foreign Service written exam for the second time in 1972 – and failed to pass the written, did not even make it to the orals. Again, I was told that I was not sufficiently versed in American culture and history to represent the American people to other cultures. Frankly, I didn’t really care at this point. Having just spent 2 years immersed in Indonesian studies, I knew I wanted to find a career that would involve living and working in Southeast Asia -- and Indonesia specifically.

Based on my father’s career, I knew that the Foreign Service – with its emphasis on globalism -- couldn’t guarantee that. Even if I were assigned to the embassy in Jakarta, it would be for only 3 years and then I would have to move on. My father managed to spend 15 years in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) but it came at a cost. This “specialization” made him less competitive for promotion. The Foreign Service is a “commissioned” corps – like the military – and also like the commissioned military, it is an “up or out” service. So, my father “was retired” before he was ready. He – and my mother – were very bitter about that.

After a sojourn in Naples, Italy, teaching English to NATO officers at the NATO South Headquarters, I landed in Washington in October 1973 and began my job search in earnest. I sent out dozens of resumes to think tanks and non-profits, all to no avail. So, in need of money to pay my rent, I took the Civil Service typing test – and passed (55 words/minute). I still thank my father for making me take typing in high school! The Treasury Department hired me, and I went to work as a GS-4 clerk/typist with U.S. Customs/Penalties Branch, working for a group of lawyers who adjudicated customs disputes. Reflecting on my brief but memorable time as a GS-4 clerk/typist, it was a humbling and educational experience. Later in my Foreign Service career – when I was in the senior ranks and leading embassy teams – I always made a point of thanking and praising the lower-level employees – the lowly clerks -- for their work and contributions.

I also took the LSAT and enrolled in George Washington University’s Law School with the goal of earning my law degree in five years (of night school) and specializing in international law. I learned a lot, especially critical thinking and argumentation skills. But I couldn’t handle both law school and my job, so I “dropped out” after my second year.

I also took the advice of a young Foreign Service officer whom I had met in Jakarta and applied to the Central Intelligence Agency. I spent 7 years working at the CIA as an intelligence analyst in the National Foreign Assessments Center, focused on Southeast Asia. I love to write and the discipline of writing sharp and succinct briefing papers and analyses honed my “journalistic” skills. The turning point, however, was when I did a rotational assignment in the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Office of East Asia Analysis. I realized then that I really wanted to be closer to the action. It wasn’t enough to be in Washington digesting events second-hand. I wanted to be out in the field talking to people and reporting the events first-hand. I wanted to formulate and advocate US foreign policy, not just analyze how the policy might be received or how the actions of another party might conflict with the policy.

In early 1981, the opportunity presented itself. The Foreign Service Act was revised in 1980, largely as the result of a women’s class action suit (“Alison Palmer et al.”) against the Department of State. In accordance with the 1980 Act, the Department was required to make the Service more “representative of the American people” by recruiting, hiring, and promoting women and minorities. Specifically, in 1981 the Department sought to recruit very quickly about 120 women and minorities. To do this, the State Department invited applicants from among women and minorities already working in the Federal Government. I applied. In my case, the written exam was waived and, instead, I was asked to submit analytical pieces I had written. But I did have to take the oral exam. The “old style” oral exam: me and eight examiners in a room for about four hours! Believe me, I crammed for that oral exam. I read all the Monarch Notes I could find on American culture, politics, history, etc. I was weak when it came to knowledge of my own country! It paid off. When I was called back by the examiners to inform me that I had passed, one noted that “you have an amazing grasp of American history and politics. Not many of your counterparts could answer my question about the AFL-CIO...” I was sworn in and commissioned a Foreign Service Officer in October 1981, as a member of the (post-1980 Act) 6th A-100 Class.

PAMELA SLUTZ INTERVIEW CONTINUED

continued:

Interviewer: *I understand that you are married to a fellow Foreign Service Officer?*

Slutz: Yes. During my time working on Indonesia at the CIA and in INR I developed – or should say cultivated – a wide range of contacts within the U.S. Government, non-governmental organizations, and academia. *Networking*, as it is now termed. I presented papers at regional conferences of the Association for Asian Studies and spoke to Foreign Service officers training at the Foreign Service Institute in preparation for tours of duty in Indonesia. As part of the networking, I co-initiated a regular monthly “Indonesia Lunch Bunch” gathering at local Washington eateries. I recall there was a “hole in the wall” Indonesian buffet (ristaffel) at a little place near the Indonesian Embassy.

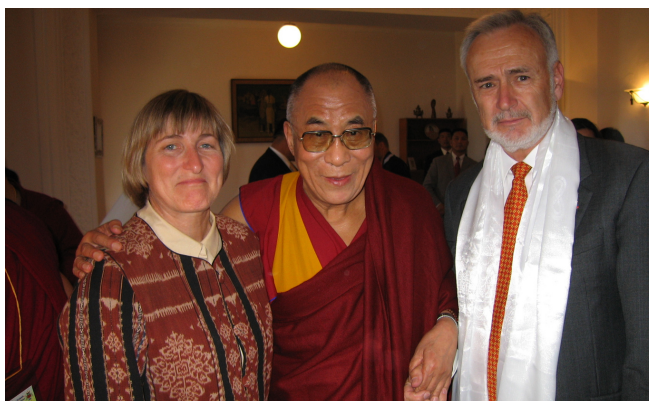
Anyway, I want to highlight this because my co-initiator is now my spouse of 42 years! As I like to tell the story of how we met...In early 1976 when the Indonesian military marched into East Timor and Indonesia subsequently annexed East Timor, I began to receive – for comment and clearance – draft analytical reports on the political-military situation authored by an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) by the name of Capt. (USAF) Ronald Deutch. I recall that I often “corrected” his facts – and sometimes disagreed with his conclusions – doing so formally, in writing as inter-agency clearance procedure required. Finally, I decided I had to meet this person face-to-face. I invited him to join me and other Indonesian-ists for lunch – at the Japanese Steak House in Georgetown. I think that was in June of 1976. We married in April 1979. Ron joined the Foreign Service in 1984 and we were – and still are -- a “tandem FSO” couple. Although we are both retired, we both still work part-time for the Department of State as Inspectors.



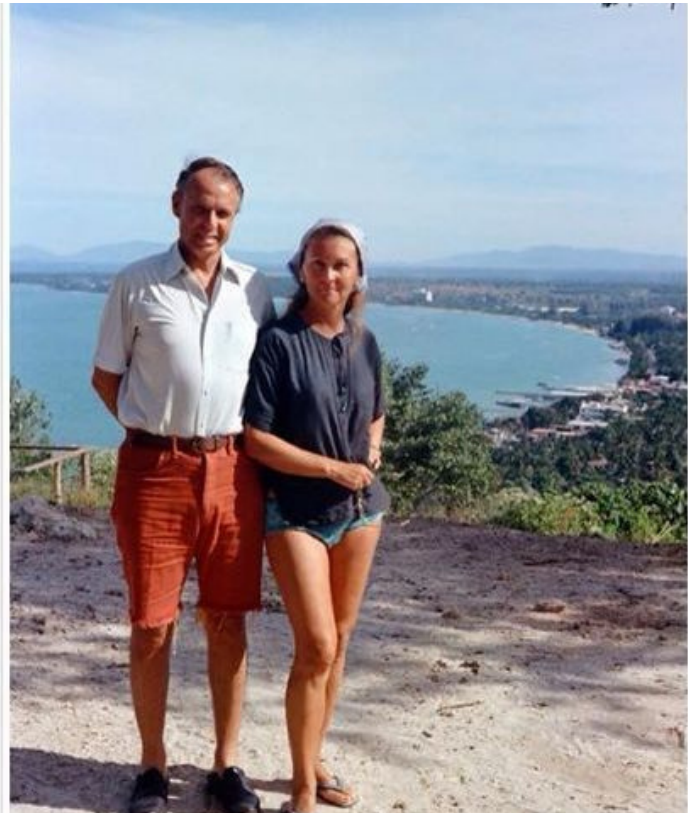
White House Oval Office, 2004
Ambassador to Mongolia



White House Blue Room, 2011
Ambassador to Burundi



Pamela Slutz, Dalai Lama, Ron Deutch (Pam's husband)



Musings from David Elder, Director to Thailand Class of 1969

My Pen,

The Elder Family was a Navy Family. We traveled the World! In 1963, our father near the end of his lengthy career was serving on the USS Springfield, flagship of the 6th fleet in the Mediterranean. Home Port was Villefranche, France. We loved it so much! We traveled all the time, visiting many countries around the Med, and North Africa.

Sadly, I never made it to the Pyramids (La-la later)! In 1964, Art had his last tour at the Pentagon and retired. A few months later, he came home and announced, "I have a new job. Pack your gear, we are moving to Bangkok, Thailand." I remember we were all just staring at each other, and then my sister Elaine said: "Where the heck is that?" He said, "Google That"... I mean, "Look it up in the Encyclopedia Britannica," which is a distant ancestor to Google. Next thing I knew the doors of that TWA McDonald Douglas DC10 opened on the runway at Don Muang Airport. I remember the shock and blast of humidity and heat! We settled into the Amarin hotel for 6 months!

Father was busy at the AID/USOM office, and also at the Don Muang airport meeting the various generals of the Thai Border Patrol Police. He also started taking the inspection tours of the Royal Border Patrol Police bases on the border which were very remote and "somewhat" primitive. The Bell 204 Helicopters had to be refueled by hand pumping from 50 Gallon drums of fuel. It was an amazing, wonderful, and transforming time in my life. The visual stimulation, colors, sounds, and smells never stopped. We loved the food right away and rarely ate at home. The food was so delicious and inexpensive. We experienced our first trip to the beaches of Hua Hin, where we quickly heard of "Pattaya"! My mother Lois worked as the Registrar at ISB and was also a substitute teacher. She carried her easel and watercolors everywhere we went. She was delighted at the low prices for framing her beautiful paintings. Soon the summer was ready to give way, and I was excited to start school at ISB.

Two weeks before school started, I left the Amarin Hotel with a new friend and headed over to a bowling alley near the Gaysorn shopping center. Father and I were already on the Amana Air Conditioning club team. Mostly we bowled on the Soi Asoke lanes near Phetchaburi Road. He carried an extremely high average. I have always been competitive and was trying to improve my game. The bowling alley was mostly deserted. After a few games, we noticed a group of young men come in. They all had those beautiful silk bowling shirts on. Maybe one day we will carry them at the "Shack Mercantile". When they saw us, they looked irritated. Then they came up behind us and watched for a while. Suddenly, they all rushed us laughing. They all had pencils in their hands and before we knew it, we were being attacked. I do not think they wanted anything except to humiliate us. They did exactly that. My friend and I were stabbed multiple times with the pencils, mostly in the derriere. We ran out quickly and made our way back to the hotel in shock. My world shifted that afternoon in many ways. I quickly realized that Bangkok was not all as it seemed, and the world no longer seemed safe to me. My friend and I decided not to tell our parents about the bowling alley incident. I knew my father would cancel all my freedoms that I was clearly enjoying.

Director to Thailand, David Elder

Over the course of the following months, it slowly became clear that the massive influx of GIs on leave from the war in Vietnam caused many social problems in Bangkok. They had big money to burn, and the bars and houses of ill repute multiplied on Phetchaburi Road, and elsewhere. Resentments developed. Looking back, I cannot help feeling in some way, these resentments led to the bowling alley incident. In *Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens's wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". When I look back and think of those classmates that died from a drug overdose, motorcycle accidents, and suicides, I know this is true.



The first week at ISB included an exciting festival on campus, "International Day". There were demonstrations by groups of students showcasing their various countries of origin. I loved the bamboo dance of the Philippines, African Dance, Vietnamese Dance, and many more. Later, the crowd got quiet. Slowly the ISB Tae Kwon Do Club walked on stage. First, Kim Myung Soo, their Korean Teacher entered the stage. He radiated power in a way I could not fathom. Then, the Black Belts followed by the Brown Belts and down through the ranks. First, they performed synchronized patterns, called Katas and "Free Sparring" which are short three-minute sessions of combat demonstrations between two students. It looked lethal to me, and I was totally enthralled. This was followed by a "board and brick breaking session." I remember John Soderberg, an easy 6' 2" tall rise high in the air and breaking a board with a high-flying front kick. I could not believe my eyes. More breaking of stacked bricks followed. The crowd of students wildly cheered. Then, "Mr. Kim" as he was called came up to the podium. He introduced HIS Master, who was in town for black Belt exams at the YMCA. Mr. Kim had a wry smiling look on his face. He was about to demonstrate something I had never seen. He said his Master was powerful, though old. He said he would invite athletes up to the podium to see a demonstration of his power. He picked out about six of the largest boys in the crowd and invited them up to the stage. He asked them to try to push his Master off the spot where he was standing. They all look eager to try. He lined them up in front of his Master. He said he would count to three, and they should try to push him off his stance. Like "Piece of cake". He counted nueng! Song! Sam! they all grunted and pushed, and nothing happened at all. The crowd, which was energized and laughing, fell silent. The boys looked totally confused and were staring at each other. Mr. Kim smiled and in his accented English said, "Oh, perhaps you were not ready." You may try again. And so they did! Again, nothing happened. They were totally perplexed. Then Mr. Kim said, "Don't you think it fair if you, my Master, should also be given the chance to try?" The crowd roared in anticipation. Now the tables were reversed. The counting began again. At "Sam" (3) all I really remember was what seemed like a tiny billow of the master's belly and a powerful breath. The six boys went flying backwards, tumbling down, tousled, and shocked. Not harmed but certainly they felt something! The boys returned to their seats, staring at each other.

Director to Thailand, David Elder

This period was also the time when there was campaigning for different club leadership positions. The only female in the club was senior Peggy Crowley, who had already achieved her Black Belt. She was tiny but radiated power. She was running for the position of her class treasurer. She gave a short speech on why she wanted the position. Then, she said, "And to show you I am prepared to take care of our class treasury," she bent down, pulled off a cloth cover on the ground concealing six bricks. She kneeled, took a breath, concentrated, and let a hand chop come down from extremely high up. She yelled a "Kiya," and the bricks all smashed. The crowd roared. Like PT Barnum, right after that, Peggy and two other "Karateka" walked around with sign up clipboards for the Tae Kwon Do Club. Many students signed up. Best enrollment technique I ever saw! I quickly put my name on that clipboard. This was a pivotal day in my life, as it started a lifelong association with Martial Arts, Yoga, Tai Chi, and the Healing Arts. I came to understand the principles of "Chi" or "Life Force". How it is gathered and stored, how it is dissipated. It was powerful "Chi" and its use that allowed his Master to effortlessly fling those young men across the stage. I committed myself to the training.

I was a small young man. In the beginning, it was defense for me. Eventually, when that evolved and got stronger, I found the other side. Offense. I never made any of the traditional sport teams. At the Teen Club, Ping Pong and Pool became my passions. That, and the hamburgers and fries by the pool! Slowly, with months of steady daily after school practice, my confidence and power started to grow. I loved that feeling. Two years later, I was awarded my Black Belt. The exam was brutal. Everyone fails the first exam out of sheer historical ritual. I had to wait another 6 months for the next exam! It was the first and only Class/Exam my mother and father attended! They were both proud and horrified by what all of us went through in that exam. Martial Arts gave me a solid foundation for all I did in Thailand and informed my principles and decisions the rest of my life. It curtailed how much partying I might have done at ISB, as Mr. Kim would often go around the class and "Sniff" our clothes or our breath. If there was alcohol or cigarettes or "Cannabis Breath", we got our ass kicked. I watched Dave Giel come to class one time. He had had an early beer and a smoke. Bang! Biff! Pow! I won't forget that! As the years rolled by, there have been many times when conflict, uninvited aggression or chaos seemed imminent. I know my early training in Martial Arts kept the fear at bay, let me stand grounded and peaceful avoiding conflict. Whenever effervescent thoughts "Of My Sweet Thaillana" arise in my heart, as they often do, I remind myself, as Dickens said, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Mostly, as the years fly by, I remember the good times. With respect to Martial Artists, we like to say, "You are never as good as you once were, but just once, you are as good as you ever were!"



Arthur Grant Elder



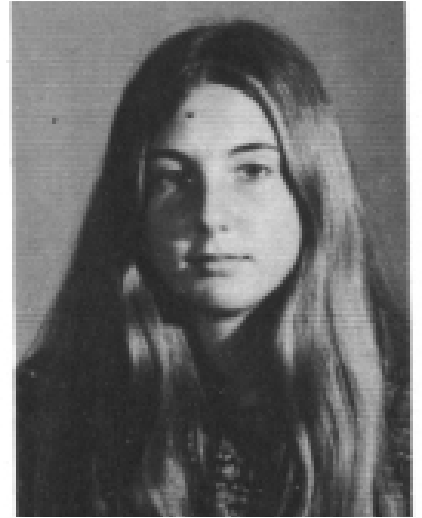
David Elder making his way to Tucson



Marion Ashley

Thank you letter

This letter was written by Marion Ashley (class of 1987) to Linda Desnoyers Mandel (class of 1973) who “paid it forward” offering Marion the opportunity to attend the 2021 Reunion.



Linda Desnoyers Mandel

Dearest Linda,

I graciously accept your pay it forward gift of ISB Reunion paid fees.

And what a gift it is for me. While there is the monetary aspect that truly helps there is also ISB kindness which continues to flow in all directions and over all of time.

As we will not be spending time together this summer, I would like to share a little about myself.

I was born in Harlem Hospital many moons ago. In my early childhood, I lived in New York City, Memphis, and Nashville. Then because mom took a job at the US State Department as a Regional Psychiatrist, we moved to Bangkok summer of 1983.

I started ISB in 9th grade and fortunately, we stayed for four years so I also finished high school at ISB. During my time there, I was quite active. I went on my own getaway and was a facilitator for three other getaways. I played basketball for three years, I ran track for four years (short distances, relays, and hurdles, and during my senior year I played soccer/football. Besides my interest in sports, I was also in student government for all four years and was the senior class president.

I was an okay student. Teachers frequently remarked, ‘she has potential.’ I found my peak academic stride in college where I studied psychology, graduating from Spelman in 1991. History and Latin were my most challenging classes, plus typing was tough too as my fingers got caught between the keys ...ASDF ... those manual typewriters!! Success was for those students with superior skills. They were rewarded advancement to the electric typewriters in the back of the room. I did love the English classes as well as my IB Math and IB Computer classes.

For the love of my perceived awkward teenaged self, I had some friends and at the time just did not feel I fit into any cliques, so I floated around. As for teenaged hormones I had a crush on everyone!! I did not do drugs nor drink save two Mekong & Coca-Colas. I probably abstained because my mom came to the school to talk about drugs & alcohol ... how to save my social and personal need for connection? Dancing!! That I did do and would go out to a variety of nightclubs (I still have the music of the 80s coursing through my veins). During my awkward, hormonal, developmental high school years, my one good adult person was Jon Dingle (and his super-wife Pauline). A compassionate Canadian couple who were PE teachers and he was my soccer coach as he finally convinced me to play my senior year and I loved it!! He had an amazing belief in me (which I did not have) and they supported me with endless kindness from the two of them. I did not fully understand at the time this generous outpouring of care, and it still humbles me today.

Thank you letter, continued

Special guest memories at ISB, Leo Buscaglia, Gregory Hines, Robin Williams. The former appealed to my love of words, poetry, and love. The latter two were both filming movies (we all remember Good Morning Vietnam) and they along with their crew members used our ISB field to play a friendly softball game. I remember the day vividly as it was the day after my braces were removed having worn them for four years. No one really noticed because Gregory Hines and Robin Williams were playing softball on our field!! Still and so my smile began and continues today :)

I have so many, many more great memories of my years in Thailand probably similar to many ISBers and beings!! The people, the culture, the beaches, the FOOD are all ingrained commonalities and happy connections amongst us all.

From college, I lived in Paris in my twenties and fell in love with a Dubliner I met in an Irish Bar. After a little time, we moved to the States got married twice (eloped and a Catholic Church wedding a year later) and had two phenomenally amazing babies who have grown into phenomenally amazing young adults. 16 years ago, we moved to Waterford, Ireland, when our kiddos were babes of 4 and 2 years of age so they could start their schooling. Of the various roles in my life being a mother has been everything for me and I love my kiddos fully and fiercely!!

Since living in Waterford, I have worked as a special needs assistant in a primary/elementary school; I completed my master's in counseling/psychotherapy and worked as a counselor for a short amount of time; and currently, I work with adults with autism / ASD. I do my best to share kindness and compassion throughout my community. An example of my attempt to create these ripples of care was an initiative I called You, Me, and a Cup of Tea where I would give away tea and coffee from Starbucks. The Irish love their tea and enjoying a cuppa has many empowering results and comforting meanings. For me, I continue to discover that living and giving from my heart [rather than my ego] is the place for me.

Facebook and the Art of Reuniting Friendships

In 1987, during my graduation speech as president of the senior class, I spoke with track metaphors (hurdles of life, my cheesy tie-in) and quotes from Khalil Gibran. I remember looking at the audience of my fantastic diverse classmates and thought we shall all blow into the four corners of the world. Unknown when or if we would ever meet again.

Facebook changed that and I am thankful for this. Slowly we friended each other and caught up on the years passed. Sharing our voices and describing our life choices. And then, I do distinctly remember someone posted videos of our ISB campus and these videos even had some faces that I knew. My memories melted with the images as I watched through tears. I was so moved and happy and I had to communicate, connect with the one who had captured the love of ISB in my heart. I am grateful David Wilkerson was so very kind to me in my reaching out and ever so considerate with my desire to share his work. "I found him, I friended him" was my message in my re-posting of his videos!! Look and remember these places and faces of ISB!! Thank You My ISB Brother!!

And now I am coming to the reunion this year... well there was a few events, and like dominoes, a chat and swim with a friend, a talk with my dad, an email with more annual leave given... good premonitions became plans, plans became plane tickets ... then a little panic with renewing my ISB membership and paying for the reunion... for which and for what amounts?? I am willing to pay so I can participate... what is the final amount?? Help, please!! With unbelievably bad timing and lots of pestering, I reached out to David while he was in the hospital for heart surgery.

Again, with the kindness and calm graciousness of my ISB Brother, David responded to me that someone gifted the expense of a reunion ticket for someone deserving. Instead of questioning my worth, I paid the difference and now my countdown begins.

Thank you letter, continued

On July 21, I leave from Dublin airport at 9ish am local time to travel through four more airports and well over 4000 miles, and then at 11ish pm local time I will arrive in Phoenix. The following day with the kind thoughtfulness of Tony Diefert, an ISB upperclassman who will already be in Tucson setting up the 80s suite, his wife, the caring and sensational Cynthia will drive us to Tucson.

On that Thursday, July 22nd, I will enjoy in person with a heart-full sigh, a WAI, and many smiles and hugs like none other from David, my ISB brother!!

Again Linda, thank you for your altruistic gift which has added to the possibility of this dream opportunity!! May your kindness be returned in multifold!!

May our paths cross one day!!

My ISB spirit will be bursting with love and light for all... all weekend!!

Spending time in the presence of other ISBers will be a great present and loads of fun!!

Sending the very best of wishes
Sharing an abundance of love with you

Your ISB sister 🖤 🟡
Marion 🟢

Go Panthers!!

