

Pt 3, 30 Spotlights for 30 Years



Photograph by Bradley H. Slade

GORDON FLAKE

Founding CEO > Perth Usasia Centre, University of Western Australia

From DC to the Antipodes

After returning from his mission to Korea, Gordon Flake was told that his dream career in Asian studies was a long shot. “If you want to work in Korea, get a skill,” he and other Korean-speaking returned missionaries at BYU were told. “You would be lucky if 1 percent of you got jobs as Korean specialists.”

Flake was that 1 percent. Previously running programs with Asia as the head of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, Flake topped 20 years in the nonprofit think tank sector in DC with an appointment as the first CEO of the Perth USAsia Centre at the University of Western Australia in January 2014. “Ultimately, the field of international relations is all about relationships and forging trust so that you can have real understanding and communication,” he says. “The opportunity to do that across the Pacific is tremendous.”

Over his career Flake, who grew up on the Navajo Nation, has “earned and burned” four million frequent-flyer miles, following a family motto: “The world is a book. If you don’t travel, you’re only reading one page.”

No Events