

It's hard to believe that it has been twenty-five years since I was part of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. When I graduated in 1980 with a bachelor's degree in international relations, I knew that I still had two more years of school ahead of me, as I had been accepted to the Marriott School's MPA program. My career aspiration was to be a Foreign Service Officer, and I felt that the combination of an undergraduate degree in international relations and an MPA would be the right fit. My biggest concern was how well my degrees from BYU would serve me in the selection process for the Canadian Foreign Service.

However, I did not immediately join the Foreign Service after graduation, as they were going through a major reorganization and a hiring freeze was in effect. Instead, I joined the immigration service.

In 1984, I took the Foreign Service exam for Canada. To my surprise, I found that my undergraduate training was ideal for the exam. The Canadian Exam focused on bilateral and multilateral relations, Canadian policy on trade, development, and immigration, and international organizations. All the papers I had written for Dr. Stan Taylor from a "Canadian" perspective had paid off. Of four thousand applicants, I was one of forty who were hired. Another two years of medical and security requirements, then I actually became a Foreign Service officer. Upon arrival in Ottawa in 1986, recruits that joined with me were graduates from prestigious Canadian Universities, but I found the core programs within the Kennedy Center were comparable to programs at other schools.

One aspect of the Canadian Foreign Service that differs from the services of other countries is that Canada has essentially three Foreign Services, operated by three different departments. Although all three departments use a common recruitment process and conduct joint selection interviews, recruits are hired for a specific function within one of the three departments. Industry and Trade hires trade officers, Foreign Affairs hires political officers, and Citizenship and Immigration hires immigration officers for overseas deployment. I joined the Immigration Foreign Service (IFS) and was soon off on my first overseas assignment to New Delhi, India, as a newly minted third secretary.

A nice feature within the immigration stream, is that you can spend a large portion of your time outside of Canada. I had three postings in Latin America—Colombia, Argentina, and Guatemala—after I left India. By then, my posting officer determined it was time for me to return to Canada after being abroad for twelve years. So I returned to Ottawa in 1998.

I spent the next two years as executive assistant and senior policy advisor to the Director General of International Region, who is responsible for all overseas

immigration operations. One interesting aspect of my job was writing briefing notes for the Director General in preparation for his appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Labour and Immigration.

My next assignment was one of the best positions within IFS, as head of the intelligence and interdiction unit in London, the world's first overseas network created in 1989 as a means to stem the flow of illegal migrants. Since then, the model has been copied by the Dutch, British, Australians, and most recently Americans.

Our unit was responsible for intelligence and enforcement activities through the British Isles, the Nordic countries, including Finland and Iceland, and the three Baltic Republics. My work as counselor took me to these countries on a regular basis. Our closest contacts were the British, given that 25 percent of all international air passengers worldwide pass through Heathrow Airport. Part of my job was to develop and maintain close liaison contacts with British immigration, police, and intelligence services on immigration enforcement matters. Our office operations were examined closely by a team from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2004 for the implementation of their program.

London also provided opportunities to work on multilateral issues at the International Maritime Organization. I represented Canada on various subcommittees of this UN body during negotiations on issues such as the treatment of stowaways and persons rescued at sea. Looking back, my class on international organizations served me well. It helped me to identify which countries were "key players," which were "like minded," and which had opposing agendas.

In the summer of 2004, I became consul to the Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong. The move from London was not only across the world but a complete change of responsibilities. While in London, I was out of the office regularly meeting contacts, in Hong Kong, my role is more like a forensic auditor as we study the source of funds in the complex financial documents submitted by business migrants.

Throughout my career in the Foreign Service I have found my time at the Kennedy Centre has been of great value. In Dr. Ray Hillam's class on international relations we played the board game Diplomacy. While it was great fun, it also provided valuable experience in strategy, forging alliances, and negotiation, all vital skills for my future assignments.

Earl Fry also had an important impact on my career development. During my interview for the Foreign Service, one interviewer found it interesting that a Canadian would take Canadian political science classes at an American university. I explained the need to understand how the U.S. viewed Canada in order to develop better policy for our

bilateral relationship.

Perhaps Stan Taylor had the greatest impact on me. His classes on international organizations, intelligence, and international relations were all relevant to my future work in the Foreign Service. Twenty-five years later I still draw on the things I learned in those classes.

My work has allowed me to live in six foreign countries and has taken me to over fifty countries. I believe that the key to success in the Foreign Service is a foundation that includes solid writing and analytical skills. These were developed and honed at the Kennedy Center.

No Events