



# LAFF

THE LAFF SOCIETY Promoting Social and Professional Contacts Among Former Staff Members of the Ford Foundation

Spring 2018, No. 90

## LAFFing Parade

For several days and nights in July 1967, violent riots paralyzed Newark, N.J., and left 26 people dead, hundreds injured and the city in ruins. Now, 50 years later, Newark is described as a “city that is rising”.

Its long, agonizing and ultimately hopeful transformation began with an unvarnished, comprehensive study of the conditions that led to the eruption and included recommendations that “challenged the elected leadership...and insisted on profound changes in the city, county and state”.

**Sanford M. Jaffe** was the executive director of the study, and he revisits its work and the changes in Newark since it released its findings a year after the riots in an article published in *The Newark Star-Ledger* on April 8: “50 years after the riots: Confronting Newark’s ills head on have paid off”.

Jaffe is co-director of the Center for Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, based at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. After the Newark study was completed he went to work in the Government and Law program at the Ford Foundation, staying there until 1983.

Clearly, he writes, there are lessons to be learned from the manner in which the Governor’s Select Commission on Civil Disorders carried out its mandate and from the 99 recommendations it produced.

“...the commission left no area of the city—its governance, economy, housing, educational system—untouched by its inquiries,” Jaffe writes, “[s]paring no sacred cows....” The report, he writes, was “the effect of the profoundly moving education the commissioners received as they met daily over three months”.

The commissioners, who included two former governors, a former Supreme Court justice, two bishops and “easily the state’s most prominent African-American attorney”, gradually developed “a compelling sense of outrage as it learned more  
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## MARCIA THOMPSON: “UNSUNG ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS”

**M**arcia Thompson, who had worked at the Ford Foundation for 30 years until she retired in 1983, was extolled at her death March 29 as “an unsung advocate for the arts and humanities”.

She was 94 when she died at her home in New York City.

She worked most effectively at the Foundation as a program officer in the arts and humanities where, as noted in one obituary, in collaboration with the late Ford vice president **W. McNeil Lowry** she “created the framework for unprecedented, nation-wide expansion of professionally and fiscally sound initiatives, notably in the performing arts”.

**Darren Walker**, the Ford Foundation president, encapsulated her style and legacy when he said, “With little credit or fanfare, she played a central role in promoting the arts and humanities in America.”

“We see Marcia’s legacy every time the curtain rises at New York City Ballet or Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She left an indelible mark on America’s regional theaters and symphony orchestras and promoted the idea of cultural diplomacy, sharing the very best of American culture with the rest of the world.”

A statement from the Sherman Foundation, on whose board she served for 38 years until just recently, noted that she always displayed “well-researched and strong opinions” in a “green eyeshade approach that was illuminated by a passion, and even delight, in the arts.”

“Often she asked to see a grantee’s financials and audits, helping us to assess their strengths and weaknesses.”

This approach, begun at Ford and emphasizing the fiscal as well as artistic health of grantees, led not only to a nationwide  
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## Marcia Thompson

*Continued from page 1*

expansion of the number of individual arts organizations but to the creation of the National Arts Stabilization Fund, a consortium of private and corporate philanthropies that she helped found in 1983 and led as its president for nearly a decade.

Her obituary in the Times noted that, through Ford, she enlisted the help of the Mellon and Rockefeller foundations and other benefactors “to rescue cultural organizations that in many cases had grown too fast as they sought to accommodate booming populations, leaving them undercapitalized. Some groups had barely survived for years while sustaining chronic losses”.

It was also noted that the work she and Mr. Lowry fostered at Ford “helped shape the climate” that led to creation of the federal National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.

Her influence in shaping the national arts scene was summed up by a former Ford president, **Franklin Thomas**, who oversaw her work in its most crucial period. “We want to assist arts organizations,” he said, “to become better able to manage their business affairs, so as to free creative talent to do what creative talent should be doing.”

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### The LAFF Society

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She explained her approach in an article in The Washington Post in 1983, noting matter-of-factly that “Most arts organizations are founded with talent and energy but no capital. In the first months of their fiscal year, they have to put out money for tickets, rehearsals, theater rent and public relations before they can get any money from ticket sales.

**“[Marcia Thompson] left an indelible mark on America’s regional theaters and symphony orchestras and promoted the idea of cultural diplomacy, sharing the very best of American culture with the rest of the world.”**

“So often they’ve had to borrow money from banks. Our strategy is to help them become their own lenders.”

She elaborated on this approach in a quote in The New York Times in 1985, soon after she left Ford. “Arts groups have been getting a negative message,” she said. “If they don’t run up a deficit they won’t get any money. That attitude consigns them to a crisis-management mentality, and it erodes them artistically.”

She added, bluntly, “We’re not interested in stabilizing mediocrity.”

Stanley N. Katz, director of the Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, succinctly described her role as “mostly beneath the surface, a sort of godmother to the emergence of the modern nonprofit arts structure”.

Ms. Thompson was born in 1923 in China, where her father was an executive with the Standard Oil Company. Her family moved

back to this country when she was a young girl, settling in New Jersey. She attended a Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School and in 1946 was hired as an assistant to the editor of The New York Times magazine, Lester Markel.

She met her husband, Robert Thompson, while working at the Times. He had been a book critic and columnist for the paper and became secretary of the Book of the Month Club. He died in 1979.

It was also while with the Times that she first met Mr. Lowry. Lester Markel sent her to Zürich to help with the development of the newly formed International Press Institute, a global network of journalists, editors and executives dedicated to media freedom and the free flow of news. Mr. Lowry was at the Institute at the time.

Shortly after she went to work for Ford, first with **William W. McPeak**, a vice president, and then with Mr. Lowry. Together they helped Ford become the country’s largest nongovernmental arts patron and the first to support dance.

The first grants went to the American Repertory Theater, the New England Conservatory and the Handel and Haydn Society. The criteria they set forth was, simply, that the grantee demonstrate a commitment to eliminating its deficit and developing artistic excellence.

A celebratory event on May 31, honoring another of her passions, was held in the Tudor City Greens South Park in the Tudor City complex on the east side of mid-town Manhattan. She had long been involved in the management of Tudor City Greens, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of two landmarked parks in the complex. ■

## The Newsletter Is Being Indexed

An index of the LAFF newsletter is being developed, using the names of members that have appeared in each story of each issue.

A partial index has already been placed on The LAFF Society website and will be added to over the next few months until all issues, dating from the first in 1991, have been indexed. Each new issue will be included when it is published.

The index has been placed on the website ([laffsociety.org](http://laffsociety.org)) on the left side of the page as the last item under “Newsletter”. Clicking on it brings up the index page with a box marked “select”. The names are listed alphabetically. Clicking on a name brings up the issues in which that person is mentioned, with the appropriate page numbers.

A few months ago **Nellie Toma**, LAFF’s secretary-treasurer and assistant editor of the LAFF newsletter, had the idea to create an index for all the issues. She undertook the arduous task of finding the issues, compiling names from each one and then preparing them in a digital format. The number of entries is in the thousands.

Because of the immensity of the undertaking, there could be some errors or omissions. We want the index to be as accurate as possible, so please let Nellie know at [treasurer@laffsociety.org](mailto:treasurer@laffsociety.org) of any discrepancies. Also, let Nellie know if any name is listed incorrectly.

The searchable online index has been implemented by **Peter Ford**, who oversees development, management and support for LAFF’s website, with help from **Susan Huyser**, graphic designer of the newsletter and website.

# REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: A PATH TO BETTER OUTCOMES

By Jan Jaffe

**W**hen you think about talented people at the Ford Foundation or elsewhere who were able to advance new ideas, scale up innovation or come to the rescue when challenging work got stuck, who have you admired? Were they the ones with terrific technical skills and knowledge?

My hunch is you'd say yes, but that is not what you admired the most. What was it that they were able to do when confronted with the myriad non-technical challenges that come with our work, and what have you done when challenged in this way?

For the last 18 months, through a project called Reflective Practices, I've been asking questions like these of philanthropy practitioners across the U.S. and sharing them at [www.reflectivepractices.org](http://www.reflectivepractices.org). Most likely, you will recognize their challenges as among the hardy perennials that inevitably pop up during philanthropic work, including:

How do you create space for authentic proposals to develop?

How do you help a board do generative work around a divisive topic?

How do you make racial equity real inside a foundation or across a field?

How do you help your board and staff explore the role of financial assets at foundations?

Despite their positions, the size of their foundations, their racial identity or age, everyone I interviewed had one thing in common: In challenging situations, they try to get curious instead of frustrated. They take a step back to observe themselves and others.

They have equipped themselves so that they can safely dive "under the waterline" of difficult transactions to help everyone see the barriers hidden at a deeper level. And they have a "test and learn" mindset that allows them to make adjustments in behavior, both theirs and others', to try

new ways to get to better outcomes.

In other words, they use reflective practices at work.

I have always been as interested in "the how" of our work as "the what" of it. Early in my career at the Foundation, I enlisted Don Schon from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to advise us on how to create a learning environment that would expand thinking about philanthropic financial assets to include Program Related Investments. That led to a series of workshops at MIT that enabled foundations to explore closely held practices that didn't align with their desire for greater impact. His research and application of reflective practices to help people shift their beliefs and approaches inspired me.

Years later I wrote a GrantCraft guide with Bill Ryan called *Personal Strategy* about what it takes to manage and mobilize oneself to shift approaches in challenging environments.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**I** write after watching back-to-back news reports of the wrecked G-7 summit in Canada and the apparent calm and purpose of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting that took place simultaneously in China. Taken together, it is obvious that a seismic shift is taking place in the world order, accelerated in no small part by President Trump's erratic behavior.

The international order, built on the ashes of World War II, anchored in a liberal democratic vision of interdependency and given life in the United Nations system, has been fraying for some time with decisional weight passing to diverse alliances of geo-politically interested states, including the G-7, the expanded G-20, the BRICS and such regional groupings as ASEAN, NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance.

These arrangements have served as important arbiters of open trade and climate change, among other global issues, while others have concerned themselves with regional integration and security. All, however, have been tested by overriding national interests and great power rivalries, now apparently overtaken by a possibly far more destabilizing divide between weakened representative democracies and emboldened authoritarian regimes, in either case fueled by the failing economic fortunes of the greater mass of humanity across the globe.

With this in mind, I perused again the landmark Gaither report, presented to the Foundation's Board of

Trustees in November 1949 and enacted, along with the Foundation's international programming, in the 1950s. I cannot help but think how on point it was and so remains.

The report laid out an argument for developing better understanding of where the "gravest threat to democracy and human welfare lies", and recommended programs on "the establishment of peace, the strengthening of democracy, the strengthening of the economy, the improvement of education and the better understanding of man". In the nearly 70 years since, the Foundation has detailed and consistently updated a set of programs largely consistent with these findings and recommendations, to which the LAFF membership has contributed.

Over 18 years, I had the privilege of directing three such programs, in Human Rights and Social Justice, Governance and Public Policy and International Affairs. In great measure we oriented the programs around the twin pillars of human welfare and democracy with an increasing emphasis, especially post-Cold War, on the contributions a well-founded multilateralism could make globally. It is remarkable to me, then, that the relative order maintained over the past 70 years and on which we placed great hope, could so quickly falter.

I do not worry that the era of multilateralism has ended or that a jingoistic America First policy will lead to self-isolation as much as I fear a United States isolated

by traditional allies in reaction to the administration's menacing hostility to the G-7 and NATO. Trump's hustling off to Singapore, notwithstanding the importance of the Korean nuclear question, and his scuttling of the western alliance, stands in sharp contrast to the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia", counterbalanced with a deep understanding of the need to maintain the trust and support of time-honored allies.

We are witness to a fractioning and realigning international "order", the directions and parameters of which are unknown and unsettling. It may well be time for a new Gaither report that examines a changing relationship between democracy and human welfare in an uncharted world. Domestic politics, everywhere, are now as vulnerable to nefarious transnational influences as are the economic welfare, climate change and public health vectors that have until now defined globalization.

In this age of partisan disinformation and deliberate efforts to undermine democratic processes and alliances, we need to reaffirm the essential relationship between human welfare and democracy and develop aggressive strategies to communicate it to electors worldwide.

I'd love to begin a conversation among our LAFF colleagues on these and other topics. The comment section on our website would be a good starting place for a continuing interchange.

All good wishes, **Shep**



Charles Bailey

## AGENT ORANGE: “MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE”

By Charles R. Bailey

*This article appeared originally on the website of The Hill on February 24.*

I first went to Vietnam in 1997, three decades after I graduated from college, volunteered for the Peace Corps and was assigned to teach high school in a remote village in Nepal.

One day the students asked me why we Americans were destroying the forests in Vietnam. I couldn't answer them. But when I arrived in Vietnam as the head of the Ford Foundation office there, I found their assertion to be distressingly true.

Moreover, the herbicides, collectively called Agent Orange, had been contaminated with dioxin, a chemical that is extremely toxic to humans in small amounts. Severe disabilities associated with Agent Orange/dioxin were occurring in generation after generation in Vietnamese families.

Until recent years, though, officials in both the Vietnamese and U.S. governments were unable to talk about Agent Orange in a way the other side saw as constructive. They were deadlocked over what to do about it. For NGOs there, this terrible war legacy was the third rail in the subway—you touch it, you're dead.

Agent Orange continues to impact the Vietnamese today. The U.S. and Vietnam are now cooperating to address this legacy of the Vietnam War. We are halfway done.

Sometimes such sensitive topics are ideal places for philanthropy to try to help. Over

time I was able to use resources to get a wider array of people in the two governments and the NGO community working on solutions that focused on the needs, not on the causes.

At the same time, Vietnam was quietly allocating more and more resources to help persons they regarded as victims of Agent Orange and, following the Agent Orange Act in 1991, the United States began making payments to disabled U.S. veterans who had been exposed to dioxin in Vietnam.

By 2003, a Ford Foundation-funded study had identified three former U.S. air bases, at

Phu Cat, Danang and Bien Hoa, as the places where residual dioxin was most concentrated and likely to cause continuing harm.

The finding that dioxin was a point-source problem that could be addressed with existing technology provided the key opening when President George W. Bush came to Vietnam for APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) in 2006. He and Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet agreed that something should be done—in partnership.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, pushed appropriations through Congress to support the clean-up, as he has done each year since then, insisting that a portion be used to help Agent Orange victims.

In 2009, another Ford-funded study found that Agent Orange victims were a fraction of Vietnam's disabled population and their disabilities severely limited their mobility and mental functioning.

Since 2007, Congress has appropriated \$200 million to address Agent Orange in Vietnam—to clean up the dioxin at the Danang Airport and to assist Vietnamese with disabilities.

The Danang Airport is now free of dioxin and the dioxin residues at Phu Cat, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assistance, have been placed in a secure landfill. Most important, the two governments now have a practical partnership. The extreme sensitivity of this subject is a thing of the past.

Much remains to be done. Phu Cat and Danang are estimated to hold only 15 percent of the soil requiring remediation. The remaining 85 percent—some 600,000 cubic yards—is at the Bien Hoa air base, 20 miles upstream of Ho Chi Minh City's 8.5 million people.



Pham Thi Thuy, 60, holds her 8-year old grandson, Dinh Dai Son, at Ninh Binh, home to more than 200 former women soldiers of Trung Son who were exposed to Agent Orange. Behind her is Le Minh Dat, 10.

USAID estimates that remediation there will cost at least \$395 million and take a decade. And several hundred thousand young Vietnamese still await help in coping with disabilities linked to dioxin exposure of a parent or grandparent (or even a great-grandparent).

The tragic legacy of Agent Orange could end if the two countries' leaders chose to do it. Constructive engagement would require Vietnam to say that cooperatively addressing this legacy is among its highest priorities in the bilateral relationship and spell out its goals. The United States would need to outline the size and scope of assistance it can provide.

At the same time, annual congressional appropriations must continue. President Trump should include it in his annual budget requests for USAID and the Department of Defense.

Clean-up assistance should focus on Bien Hoa. Disability assistance should focus on the most heavily sprayed areas and the most severely affected people, aiming for permanent improvements both in their lives and the capacities of local governments and NGOs to provide services.

The state department and USAID should also encourage other countries and companies doing business in Vietnam to support health and disability projects.

Such a diplomatic and financial initiative would be in the interests of both countries. It would respond to an acute humanitarian need, and it would strengthen relations between former enemies in a region of increasing strategic importance to the United States.

A war legacy that for decades was a source of resentment and recrimination can be a compelling example of how we build a better future. ■

**Charles R. Bailey** has a doctorate from Cornell University in natural resource economics. He was the Ford Foundation Representative in Vietnam from 1997 to 2007 and then led programs on Agent Orange at the Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute. Bailey is the co-author of the book, *From Enemies to Partners—Vietnam, the U.S. and Agent Orange*.

### NOTICE TO LAFF MEMBERS

Members who are in arrears with their dues should have received a notice with details on what is owed, and how to make a payment. It would be greatly appreciated if those members could send in payment as soon as possible.

Also, it would be helpful if members would continue to update their profiles when they change positions or locations.



**Costumer Barbara Karinska, George Balanchine, and Jerome Robbins in New York City Ballet rehearsal room during costume parade for *Firebird*, 1970. Photo: Martha Swope.**

## A BEAUTIFUL TIME FOR DANCERS

**G**eorge Gelles has published a book on dance in America that is available free online by searching the title, *A Beautiful Time for Dancers*.

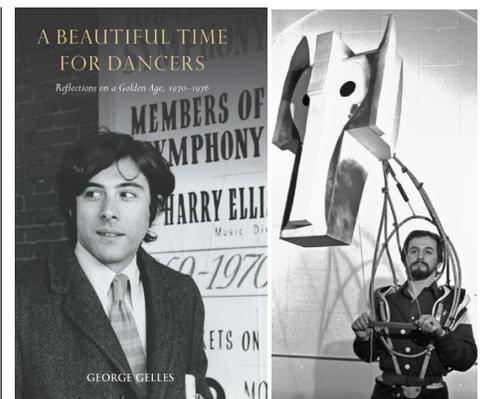
The book is a compilation of reviews, interviews and critical assessments he wrote during the 1970s, aptly described in the book's subtitle as *Reflections on a Golden Age*, while working for The Washington Star.

Two of the pieces will be included this fall in a volume devoted to dance in this country that will be published as part of the Library of America series, an ongoing project to publish works by American writers and about American values, started in part 35 years ago with Ford Foundation support.

Here are three excerpts from the book, which Gelles selected for the newsletter. The first is a review of a work by the choreographer Twyla Tharp and featuring the dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. In the second, he delineates with telling precision the artistry of Judith Jamison, who was a principal dancer with Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater and vividly interpreted many of his works. The third is an appreciation of the singular work of Jerome Robbins.

"*Push Comes to Shove*...is a classy, flashy piece of dance....Tharp is a brilliant stylist, and here she combines her modern dance dialect with classical slapstick. She opens the piece with a teasing trio danced by Mikhail Baryshnikov, Marianna Tcherkassky and Martine van Hamel.... The introductory rag presents Tharp at her prime. Her vocabulary by now is familiar; it consists of shrugs, twitches and shuffles...squiggles of motion that are motivated by jazz dance and jitterbug..."

"Judith Jamison is the essence of sensuality,



**George Gelles, left, and Robert Joffrey testing a costume designed by Pablo Picasso for Leonid Massine's *Parade*, 1973. Photo: Jack Mitchell.**

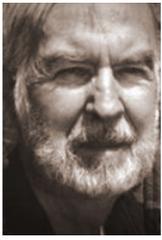
an artist of deep spiritual resources and high temperament. No dancer has an impact more visceral...her presence is a singular mixture of joyfulness, personal dignity and an unbuttoned voluptuousity."

"To simply say that Jerome Robbins' *Goldberg Variations* is a masterpiece, the most impressive ballet since Balanchine's *Agon*, is sadly insufficient, if perfectly true. *Goldberg*... is a work of transcendent importance. Though it deeply affects both the mind and the heart, its significance is greater than either the stimulation it offers or the sheer joy it affords.

"Robbins has re-invented the language, and with this supple new choreographic speech he has brilliantly summarized the story of dance..." ■

**George Gelles** worked at the Ford Foundation from 1977 to 1981 in the Office of the Arts.

## IN MEMORIAM



**Richard Charles (Chuck) Robarts**, who worked at Ford for 19 years in various assignments relating to its work in the Middle East, died March 25 at the age of 85 in Stamford (Conn.) Hospital of complications from Parkinson's Disease.

Chuck, who graduated magna cum laude from Bowdoin College in Maine and earned master's degrees from Yale and Columbia universities, went to work at Ford in 1963 as an assistant to the director of administration.

He was assigned to the office in Beirut as assistant to the representative, and subsequently worked in Cairo as deputy representative. Between these assignments he worked as a program officer in New York.

He left Ford in 1982 to become executive director and later president of the Near East Foundation (NEF), founded in 1919 as Near East Relief, this country's first international development organization. He oversaw the organization's existing programs and expanded work in Egypt, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, Lesotho, Swaziland and the Sudan.

LAFF learned recently of the death on April 6 last year of **John Cole Cool**, who spent 12 years in various overseas assignments for Ford in a long and varied career in government and private development work. He had suffered from multiple myeloma for two years until he died at the age of 90.



John began at Ford in 1970 in the New Delhi office, working on population programs. He became the deputy representative there in 1973 and then moved on to posts in Islamabad and Manila before becoming a program officer in New York. He retired from Ford in 1982.

A family biography of John, written at the time of his death, summed up his long career, including with the U.S. Navy during World War II and, after the war, in various posts throughout the Pacific islands and Asia with the Department of the Interior, the State Department, the Agricultural Development Council, Winrock International and Ford.

"He was unwavering in his devotion to the service of humanity," it says, "and to addressing systemic social problems, including the establishment of participatory rural and community development, local self-government,

management of human population growth, reforming archaic agricultural and land tenure systems, management of natural resource systems (especially watershed management, sustainable agriculture and the environment), advocating the need to educate and mentor visionary leadership in countries where he served and addressing problems arising from ethnicity and access to resources."

Among the tributes from LAFF members who worked with him, **Mary Racelis** said that, when she became Ford's representative in Manila, "the participatory development programs he established remained central to Philippine progress. To have an anthropologist with widespread Asian experience initiating people-oriented capacity building programs for community groups, NGOs and government set the standards toward goals we continue to pursue."



**Natalia Nikova**, a native of Russia who worked at Ford for 16 years, died March 8 in New York City of cancer. She was 79 years old.

Natalia began work at the Foundation in 1989 as a senior programmer and analyst and was a project leader in grants management when she retired in 2005.

At a memorial celebration April 19 in Manhattan, her husband, David Stimpson, provided a booklet she had written chronicling the wrenching and harrowing journey she took to emigrate to America.

"I remember," he said, "tears came to her eyes as she recalled all the troubles she and her mother and daughter had gone through to decide whether or not to migrate, then to prepare for their journey from Leningrad to New York, which eventually took place in the first quarter of 1980."

Natalia wrote that "...for me, the thought of leaving Russia was filled with horror. I was overwhelmed by fear of an unknown future, and an inability to survive the ordeal."

But she chose the ordeal because, a few years earlier, "The political weather quickly began to freeze....By the end of the 1960s, our country was again plunged into a darkness of restrictions and arrests."

In simple and powerful prose, and a sense of the surreal, she describes the preparations for the journey into the unknown.

"...we traveled with only the luggage that we were allowed to take on the airplane, which included 100 pounds of our belong-

ings, one golden ring for each member of the family and 90 U.S. dollars per person," she wrote.

"My mother was feverishly selling the rest of our household, and sewing a big duffel bag from strong fabric. Everything that we were taking with us was packed into a duffel bag and a huge fiberglass suitcase, a reminder of World War II..."

To protect friends they were leaving, they destroyed their address books and wrote names "on the elastic in the panties that my mother and I would wear on our trip," she wrote. "...panties played a big role in our preparations. My mother worried so much about money that she sewed a small pocket in her panties between her legs and hid 300 rubles there."

Then, at the airport as they finally were leaving, "an agent took my mother and me to a separate room and demanded that we undress completely so they could use a sensor to search our bodies for diamonds or gold in our entrails.

"Now this is the real end," I thought. "The 300 rubles will be detected in my mother's panties."

But somehow the rubles were not found and they boarded the plane, "numb from utter fatigue and shock" and on their way to America.

**Mary Ruth (Mitzi) Gary**, who worked in Building Services for 26 years until her retirement in 1994, died in March.

Mitzi started at Ford in 1968 as a receptionist in Building Services and became a senior staff assistant in 1971. She was named coordinator of meeting services in 1992, a position she held until she retired.



**Christel Staedt Carlson**, wife of **Bruce Carlson**, died December 4 at their home in Bethesda, Md. She was 80 years old.

A native of Germany, she and Bruce were married in 1961 and spent most of their years together in assignments as varied as South America, Asia and Africa as Bruce, a public health professional, pursued a career in population and family planning.

He went to work at Ford first in Ghana in 1971 and, over the next 11 years, in Thailand, Peru, Chile and Colombia. He joined the World Bank in 1985 and worked for it in Venezuela for five years. ■

## LAFfing Parade

Continued from page 1



about what took place and what lay below it: inattention to the needs and aspirations of the black community and the absence of opportunities across the board”.

Today, he writes, as a result of the community’s shifting attitudes and “commitment to change”, Newark is “a major hub for business, education and entertainment. High school graduation rates have improved dramatically. And it’s even one of the nation’s 20 finalists in bidding to land Amazon’s second North American headquarters that’s promising to provide up to 50,000 jobs”.

**Michael Lipsky** is a member of the governing council of the new Native American Budget and Policy Institute, based at the University of New Mexico, whose stated goal is that by “synthesizing indigenous wisdom with hard-won knowledge of how American institutions work it can become a powerful advocate and resource for New Mexico’s Native American population”.

The institute, founded in February, is designed to help native peoples “become architects of policy, the architects of laws where they are necessary, all toward improving the lives of Native American children and their communities”.



Its executive director, Cheryl Fairbanks, set forth the challenges facing the new organization. “New

Mexico’s Native American children,” she said, “graduate high school at lower rates than other racial or ethnic groups and are at a greater risk for having no health insurance and for suicide. They are more likely to live in high-poverty areas than children from other populations, too.”

The 11-member governing council includes eight Native Americans affiliated with the state’s seven tribes. “We gathered together people with expertise,” said Fairbanks, “...with indigenous knowledge to help us work on policies and funding.

“We haven’t always had a place at the table,” she said. “Now it’s our turn. We’re not the Indian problem, we’re the Indian solution.”

Lipsky, a distinguished senior fellow at the think tank Demos, worked in the Governance and Civil Society Unit at Ford from 1991 to 2003. While there he helped create the program Honoring Nations, which celebrates the achievements of Native American nations in

promoting excellence in government through innovative programs.

Of the new institute, he said, “It’s important work, to make clear what the government is doing on behalf of Native Americans. It’s an experiment to see whether the resources can be focused enough so that we can make an impact, and we’re going to try.”

**Greg Farrell**, founding president and CEO of EL Education, was honored at the organization’s 25th anniversary celebration in New York City on March 18 “for his life-long commitment to make schools more engaging, effective and joyous”.

The nonprofit organization initially was called Expeditionary Learning when it was formed by a group of educators from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Outward Bound USA who had won the New American Schools national competition for a “break the mold” school design.



Farrell led the organization until 2008, and remains on its Board of Directors.

The organization works with hundreds of schools in 35 states, reaching more than a million students and “helping them to succeed as engaged students and active students” through programs that emphasize “mastery of knowledge and skills, character and high-quality student work”.

Farrell helped guide the creation of the organization with concepts he devised when he led an initiative to bring Outward Bound’s “educational and developmental insights, practices and programs to bear more on the problems of cities and schools”.

Those insights came out of his work from 1970 to 1990 as executive director of the Fund for the City of New York, a private foundation and public charity established by Ford to help improve the quality of life and government in New York City.



**Elizabeth Alexander**, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and former director of creativity and free expression at Ford, received an honorary degree from Yale University at its commencement on May 21.

A poet, playwright, essayist and teacher, she helped design the Foundation’s Art for Justice Fund and developed programs for artists who engage with social justice and community-building.

She is author or co-author of 14 books, was chancellor of the Academy of American

Poets in 2015 and serves on the Pulitzer Prize Board. President Barack Obama chose her to read an original poem, “Praise Song for the Day”, at his 2009 inauguration.



**Douglas Wood**, senior fellow on justice and equity at the Aspen Institute and a former program officer at Ford for global grants, is the 2018 recipient of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education’s Alumni Council Award for Outstanding Contribution to Education.

He was selected for his “tireless work to ensure that low-income, first-generation college students receive high-quality post-secondary education, including his continued efforts in improving high school and college completion rates”.

In his career in education, beginning as a public school teacher, he has worked as executive director and chief education officer of the Tennessee State Board of Education; chair of the group that oversees Tennessee’s \$3.2 billion K-12 budget; principal investigator of the National Academy for Excellent Teaching based at Columbia University, and dean of administration and planning at the Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School.

He has been working most recently on criminal justice reform, emphasizing high-quality educational opportunities and equity for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, in particular “women in prison and girls of color who are being criminalized in greater numbers in America’s schools”.



**Sally Kohn** has published a book exploring “an epidemic of incivility and hate”, seeking to “discover why we hate and how we can inoculate ourselves”.

Research for *The Opposite of Hate: A Field Guide to Repairing Our Humanity* took Kohn to Africa and the Middle East and throughout this country, “introducing us to former terrorists, former white supremacists and even some of her own reformed Twitter trolls, drawing surprising lessons from some of the most dramatic examples of leaving hate behind”.

Kohn, described by her publisher, Algonquin Books, as “one of the leading progressive voices in America”, was a program associate in the Governance and Civil Society Unit at Ford from 2002 to 2004. She is a senior campaign strategist for the Center for Community Change, a CNN political commentator and a columnist for *The Daily Beast*. ■

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## Reflective Practices

*Continued from page 3*

The underlying premise was that, if organizations have strategy, shouldn't individuals have strategy too? That question has led me to my hunch that reflective practices are key to good personal and organizational strategy.

After I left the Foundation in 2011, I joined The Giving Practice, the national consulting arm of Philanthropy Northwest, a nationwide network of some 200 family, private, community and corporate funders. Our focus is on helping practitioners in philanthropy build what they already bring to their work. We believe a lot of hidden knowledge in the experience of people and organizations can be tapped through reflective practices that illuminate strategy, grant-making approaches and the inevitable dilemmas that come with any good work.

Reflective Practices takes a deeper dive into what helps people at work face and navigate problems that don't have technical solutions. I recently released a guide based on interviews with philanthropy practitioners across the country. You can see every interview on our website, and can download the guide.

You'll find four common reflective prac-

es in the guide: discovering roles, practicing presence, putting something other than exposition in the middle of a conversation and enlisting peers to consult on, rather than solve, a dilemma.

Please contact me if you'd like a hard copy and/or want to have a conversation about how to use the guide in your own work. I'm looking for teams in organizations and collaboratives (philanthropic, NGOs or NPOs, or B corporations) that embed reflective practices of any kind into their meetings, feedback loops or strategy work. The next step in this project is to interview them, share their experiences on our website and connect them to each other for learning purposes.

Reflective practices are easy to learn. They immediately change power dynamics. Because there are myriad tools and skills, they invite you on a life-long learning journey. If we believe that philanthropy is not designed to be an ATM for social change, then why not invest in all its non-financial resources, including people and organizational structure, for the greatest return?

And of course, even if you are no longer working in philanthropy, why not develop your reflective practices to get to better outcomes in whatever you are doing now?

*Jan Jaffe was part of the PRI team at the Foundation starting in 1981 and the first learning director for the program division. She was a senior director and founder of GrantCraft, peer-informed guides to "the how" of philanthropy that can be found at [www.grantcraft.org](http://www.grantcraft.org), and continues as a project of the Foundation Center. She is a Senior Partner at The Giving Practice and can be reached at [jjaffe@philanthropy.org](mailto:jjaffe@philanthropy.org)*

### WE COULD USE IDEAS AND ARTICLES

The newsletter is always looking for ideas and articles from members, anything that helps illuminate the Foundation's work and the experiences of our members.

There is a good array of examples in each issue, from news accounts to opinion pieces. We like to hear what members are doing: new positions, new ventures, what they are writing and saying.

Reflections and recollections are especially of interest, for they tell the general story of the Foundation and the particular stories of individuals who contributed to the Foundation's history and have been making history of their own.

The newsletter and LAFF's website provide an opportunity for members to share insights drawn from what they have done, and their experiences with what they are doing now.

Ideas and articles can be sent to John LaHoud, editor of the newsletter, at [jlahoud25@hotmail.com](mailto:jlahoud25@hotmail.com)