

## Next PDAA Lunch Program

Thurs., February 18, 2016

DACOR-Bacon House  
1801 F Street NW,  
Washington, DC

**Mike McCurry on the  
2016 election** (details at  
right)

- Cash bar 12 noon
- Lunch 12:30 pm
- Speaker 1:00 pm

\$35.00 members and  
guests, \$42.00 non-  
members

**Reservation deadline:**  
Friday, February 12, 2016

To reserve please return  
coupon on p. 7, or  
online at  
[www.publicdiplomacy.org](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org)

## More PDAA Events

### Next lunch program:

April 11, 2016.

Panel on climate change  
challenges after Paris

### PDAA Awards

**Brunch:** Sunday, May  
15, 2016

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# PDAA Today

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An association of public diplomacy professionals

## February 18 PDAA Luncheon: Mike McCurry on the 2016 Presidential Election

**P**DAA will kick off 2016 with veteran political strategist and former White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry who will speak on how foreign policy will play in the 2016 presidential elections.

PDAA's luncheon could not more timely, coming just two weeks before Super Tuesday with primaries scheduled in 12 states, including Virginia, and a week after the New Hampshire primary.

Whether the issue is Syrian refugees, response to ISIS or relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the presidential candidates are offering voters very different, and often controversial, proposals to global challenges. And the tone of the campaigns, fueled in part by public frustration with politics as usual, has created an atmosphere not seen in presidential politics for many decades.

McCurry, who served as press secretary to President Bill Clinton from 1995 to 1998 and as spokesman for the Department of State from 1993 to 1995, co-chairs the Commission on Presidential Debates, which sponsors the general election debates between candidates for President and Vice President of the United States. In our session, McCurry will outline plans for the foreign policy debate as well as explore why politics in the United States has become so polarized.

Currently a partner at Public Strategies Washington Inc., where he provides counsel on communications strategies and management to corporate and non-profit clients, McCurry also serves as a professor of public theology at the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.



He was director of communications for the Democratic National Committee from 1988 to 1990 and served as press secretary to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and later to Senator Patrick Moynihan in the late 1970s and early 1980s. McCurry serves on numerous boards or advisory councils including Share Our Strength (a national nonprofit that seeks to end childhood hunger), the Children's Scholarship Fund, the White House Historical Association and the Executive Committee of the Global Health Initiative of the United Methodist Church.

McCurry received his Bachelor of Arts from Princeton University in 1976, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Georgetown University in 1985, and a Master of Arts from Wesley Theological Seminary in 2013.

*Photo: Courtesy, Mike McCurry*

## Remembering Mal Whitfield



**M**al Whitfield — Olympic champion, Tuskegee airman, and US Information Agency sports and youth officer — died on 19 November 2015 at age 91 at a veterans' hospice in Washington, D.C. Colleagues of Mr. Whitfield from USIA offer their memories of this unique and inspiring individual.

**Mal Whitfield encouraged young athletes** all over the world to do their best, often without decent equipment and facilities. His service to sports possibly inspired some of the marathon runners from Africa who have gone on to set records in a long line of marathon races in our country and around the world. He possibly inspired young boys and girls to take up soccer, field hockey, and different track and field disciplines that have helped them escape poverty and rise to national and international prominence. He was the kind of person who put others first and encouraged them to develop their talent. I saw him in action in Somalia and the spirit among those he coached was electric and transformative.

*Photo: Mal Whitfield, no. 136, running in the 1948 Olympics. Courtesy, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Washington, D.C.*

I met Mal Whitfield shortly after joining USIA's Office of African Affairs following my evacuation from Kabul, Afghanistan in 1979. Mal was a powerhouse among USIA's well-traveled sports officers and I ran into him again during temporary duty in Mogadishu, Somalia where he had come to conduct basketball clinics. His experience as an Air Force fighter pilot and an Olympic athlete made him a great goodwill ambassador among thousands of young athletes in Africa and in other parts of the world. He succeeded in winning over people in difficult cultural and political environments through his athletic skills and indomitable optimism. I was proud to have known and worked with him and will miss his wonderful spirit and great sense of humor. He's gone on to higher hurdles and greater victories.

In a time when our Foreign Service officers are relying increasingly on electronic means to reach out to others, Mal's work on the basketball court and the running field remind us that there is nothing stronger in attracting and encouraging youth than face to face experiences. We need more of Mal's kind of diplomacy, especially in communities where the evil propaganda of radical terrorists is trying to lure young people into deadly activities. Mal

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Mal Whitfield Remembered (cont'd).

was a winner and so were those people he coached and inspired. Our government leaders and those of other nations would do well to study Mal Whitfield's contributions to international understanding and good will.

- **Bruce Byers.** Adapted with permission from AFSA Memorial Tributes

**As an aspiring middle-distance runner** in high school, I idolized Mal Whitfield. In the winter of 1954 or '55 I went into New York City to the Millrose Games at Madison Square garden – an exciting annual track and field competition – to see Mal run, especially in the 4×400 relay. He teamed up with Lon Spurrier, Reggie Pearman, and Herb McKenley – three of the fastest runners in the world. The race, several times around a wooden banked track, was perfection: perfect starts, handoffs, running form. It was breathtaking, and, I believe, set an indoor record that endured for many years. Needless to say, I was very awed to run into Mal at USIA one day decades later, when he was in town from an overseas tour. He might have served mainly in Africa, but I believe on occasion was our sports ambassador to other regions. His low-key manner and quiet elegance reflected the way he ran, graceful all the way.

- **Mike Schneider**

**I worked with Mal Whitfield** during my first tour with USIA in Nairobi, Kenya, in the early 1980's. Mal was the regional sports and youth officer for Africa at the time. Mal's responsibilities took him all over Africa, so he was not in Nairobi much of the time. When he was there, he was based at the American Cultural Center. I was the director of the Center at that time.

Although I was the most junior American officer with USIS Nairobi at the time, Mal treated me with respect, as he did all of the American and Locally Employed Staff. He was always friendly and positive. Mal's enthusiasm for sports and youth diplomacy was infectious: I remember at staff meetings, when Mal announced a new initiative, he always said, "This is big; this is really big." Although some of us may have been skeptical at first, his programs always were "big" and very successful. As a result, he was

beloved and admired by the Kenyans and other Africans with whom he worked, as well as by his American colleagues. Mal showed his respect for others by participating actively in other USIS and Embassy programs whenever he was in Nairobi. Mal contributed tremendously to enhancing US relations with Kenya and other African countries and helping the young people and athletes with whom he worked. He exemplified the very best of the United States and the true value of public diplomacy.

- **Amb. Greta N. Morris**

**In 1984, when I was ACAO for exchanges** in Lagos, the already legendary Mal Whitfield came to help promote and organize a pre-Olympic regional boxing camp, hosted at our request by the Nigerian Ministry of Sports and staffed by American coaches and trainers recruited by USIA. The program was part of a drive to blunt the boycott of the Los Angeles Olympic Games organized by the USSR in retaliation for our 1980 international boycott of the Moscow Olympics in protest of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A dozen or so countries sent teams to the camp and, subsequently, the LA Games. The success of the camp owed a great deal to Mal's charm, sense of humor, and refusal to be discouraged by logistical and bureaucratic glitches along the way. He dazzled and won over prickly Nigerian officials, and set the example of American warmth and openness that the American coaches emulated to great effect. It was a pleasure and privilege to work with him.

- **David Monk.** Reprinted with permission from AFSA Open Forum

### Welcome new PDAA Members

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## President's Notes

Dear PDAA Members,

**H**appy New Year! I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday, and that 2016 will be a happy, healthy and rewarding year for you. I also hope it will be a more peaceful year for our world.

PDAA has some exciting programs planned for the first half of 2016. As you have seen from the announcement on page 1 of the newsletter, our Thursday, February 18 luncheon program will feature former State Department and White House spokesman Michael McCurry, speaking on how foreign policy will impact the 2016 Presidential elections. From the conflict in Syria and the refugee crisis to countering violent extremism, foreign policy has been front and center in the political debates and campaign rhetoric. McCurry, a veteran spokesman and political commentator, will undoubtedly have new and important insights into how these issues, and the candidates' proposals for addressing them, will affect the elections.

Our April 11 program will focus on another timely issue: "US Climate Change Challenges—After Paris, What Next?" Our two speakers will be Ambassador Judy Garber, Acting OES Assistant Secretary of State, and Dr. Sarah Ladislaw, a CSIS climate change, energy and national security expert. I urge you to attend both of these important programs.

To close out our program year, PDAA is again planning a brunch (in response to popular demand!) on Sunday, May 15 at the Ft. Myer Officers' Club. This promises to be a delightful new venue offering a delicious food. Please save the date. We are also hoping to schedule one more special program this spring and will share details soon.

I am sure you agree that through our programs, newsletter, web site, and directory, PDAA provides an excellent way to keep in touch with friends and professional colleagues and meet new friends. I believe that PDAA is strengthening public diplomacy as well, by highlighting the critical role the public dimensions of diplomacy play in our foreign relations. One of the key ways in which we do this is through our annual awards, which we have been presenting since

1993. Every year, we have more and more outstanding nominations. I hope all of you will seriously consider making a contribution to the Awards Fund, which enables us to provide meaningful cash awards, in addition to the honor of recognition; see page 6.

Finally, I want to urge all of you to renew your membership, if you have not done so. (page 7) Annual membership is an incredibly reasonable \$35, but better yet, you can become a lifetime member for \$400 and never have to think about it again! If you know of others who should be PDAA members—current or retired PD officers, journalists, academics or anyone with an interest in public diplomacy, please urge them to join as well. We would like to reach an active membership total of 400 in 2016.

I look forward to seeing you on February 18.

Best wishes,

Greta N. Morris  
PDAA President

### Does Your Mailing Label Say [2015]?

**C**heck the mailing label on your newsletter. If the label says **[2015]** after your name, then your membership in PDAA is due for 2016. Without your renewal, you will miss out on future copies of the *PDAA Today* newsletter and the quarterly membership directories, nor will your name appear in future directories. The cost: a low \$35.00 per year.

Renewing your membership is easy. You can renew online with a credit card at [www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership) or you can fill out the brief form on page 7 of the newsletter and send it with a check to PDAA's treasurer.

## In Memoriam

- ◆ Pamela Bigart, 67, wife of retired FSO in USIA Jim Bigart, died January 6 at her home in McLean, Virginia. She had a 35-year career as a contracting officer and procurement expert. While accompanying her husband overseas, she worked with various UN organizations, USAID and OECD. After returning to Washington area, Ms. Bigart worked at the World Bank until she retired in 2010.
- ◆ Ross Chomiak, retired deputy chief of the branch which produced the African Wireless File, died December 7, 2015. He worked for VOA (1972 to 1974), before joining the African branch of the press service. Mr. Chomiak retired in 1994. Born in Ukraine, Ross and his parents came as refugees after World War II to Canada in 1949. He moved to the U.S. in 1963.
- ◆ Gerry Gert, 95, a retired FSO in USIA, died on November 3, 2015 in Napa, California. He was born in the Free City of Danzig, now the Polish city of Gdansk. He served in the U.S. Army 1942 to 1946, and then was a civilian officer in the military government of Germany where he participated in the relicensing of German newspapers. Mr. Gert became an FSO in State, later USIA, in 1949. He served in Berlin, Vienna, Belgrade, Vientiane, and Saigon. His last overseas posting was as director of RIAS in Berlin.
- ◆ Thea Jackson, 86, wife of retired USIA executive officer Kenneth Jackson, died October 9, 2015 in Harlingen, Texas, following several years of declining health. She and Ken met and married in Bangkok, and accompanied him to New Delhi and Rome. Ms. Jackson was fluent in Thai, German, French and Italian.
- ◆ Evelyn Lieberman, 71, State's first under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs, from 1999 to 2001, died December 12, 2015. She had pancreatic cancer. Under President Clinton, she was the first woman to serve as deputy chief of staff to a president. President Clinton said at her swearing in at the Voice of America in late 1996, that Ms. Lieberman "has a special talent for cutting to the chase and getting to truth."
- ◆ Frank Rosa, a retired Air Force officer who worked in State's IIP bureau, died October 5, 2015, after a short illness. He was 66. A civil servant, he was a policy officer for the Western Hemisphere region during most of his work with IIP. He joined State in 2008. Before joining State, Mr. Rosa had taught at the Air Force Academy.
- ◆ Bart Stephens, 93, a retired FSO in USIA who had served in Greece, Germany, Poland and Thailand, died October 5, 2015 in Lynchburg, Virginia. A Navy communications officer in World War II, he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. As an FSO, 1949 to 1982, he specialized in cultural affairs.
- ◆ Gladys Pollock, 80, a USIA foreign service secretary, died in an automobile accident on December 28, 2015. She lived in Arlington, Virginia. Her assignments included London, Rome, Paris, Beirut, New Delhi, Tehran, Belgrade and Mexico City. In retirement, Ms. Pollock, an artist, created works in ceramics and paper mache.
- ◆ Ernesto Uribe, 78, a retired FSO in USIA who wrote books of fiction in retirement, died November 21, 2015. He lived in Falls Church, Virginia. He joined USIA in 1962 and served for 33 years with postings in seven Latin American countries. After retiring, Ernesto published three historical fiction novels and his memoirs, "My Way". He grew up on horse-back in South Texas, where his family had raised cattle since 1755.
- ◆ Chris Ward, a retired FSO in USIA, 60, died October 19, 2015 in Washington, DC. He had a heart attack. He worked at a Madison, Wisconsin radio station before joining USIA in 1985. He served in Japan, Peru, Costa Rica, South Africa and Haiti. Mr. Ward was probably best known as a successful five-time winner on the TV game show "Jeopardy!" where he won \$63,000 and two Chevy Camaros.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Support the PDAA Awards Program

**Elizabeth Thornhill**

**T**he annual PDAA Awards for Achievement in Public Diplomacy recognize the outstanding work conducted over the past year by members of the Foreign Service, Civil Service, Locally Employed Staff (LES), employees of binational centers and American Corners, and EducationUSA advisers. Since 1993, PDAA has presented 41 individual and group awards which draw valuable recognition to innovative public diplomacy successes around the globe. For a full list of award-ees visit: [www.publicdiplomacy.org/awards](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/awards)

These cash awards are supported in part by membership dues, but additional contributions by members enable us to maintain and possibly increase the size of awards (generally \$1,000).

As we look forward to the announcement of 2016 award winners at our next annual event, please consider a contribution to strengthen the PDAA awards program and honor excellence in public diplomacy.

Donations can be made by check made out to PDAA Awards Fund and mailed to PDAA treasurer: **James L. Bullock, 319 E Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.** You can also contribute online with a credit card at [www.publicdiplomacy.org/donate](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/donate).

## Member Update

**Sherman Ross and his wife, Elinor**, celebrated their Sapphire Jubilee on January 22. In Earth years, it is their 70th wedding anniversary. For those who want to send congratulations, their contact information is: Sherman Ross, P.O.Box 898, Shepherdstown, WV 25443 or at [sross@frontiernet.net](mailto:sross@frontiernet.net).

## Back Issues of PDAA Today Now Online

If you missed an issue of our **PDAA Today** newsletter, you can now find back copies of the publication on the PublicDiplomacy.org Web site. All but the most recent two issues, going back to 2013 are found at <http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?p=1078>.

## Value of Exchanges Examined at Global Ties US Meeting

**G**lobal Ties US and Alliance for International Exchange are holding a discussion of the role international exchange programs play in advancing peace and security, at a meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The event, known as Exchanges Matter, runs from 1:00 pm to 7:30 pm on 27 January 2016 at the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center, on First Street NE.

The event includes discussions of balancing the long-term goal of building mutual understanding with the short-term role exchanges play supporting foreign policy priorities. Discussions also expect to cover harnessing the power and potential of the private sector to advance America's public engagement objectives, and the impact of exchanges on American communities across the country.

Speakers include members of Congress, congressional staff, administration officials, foreign policy experts, and private sector leaders. A reception follows the discussions. The event is free but advance registration is required. See <http://www.globaltiesus.org/>

## In Memoriam (cont'd)

(Continued from page 5)

- ♦ **Mal Whitfield**, for many years State and USIA's goodwill ambassador for promoting athletics abroad, died November 19, 2015 in Washington, DC. Mr. Whitfield, 91, won three Olympic gold medals, and served in World War II with the Tuskegee Airmen. In 1954 he became the first African-American to receive the coveted Sullivan Award as the nation's outstanding amateur athlete. Mr. Whitfield spent some 50 years promoting sport overseas through State, USIA and his own foundation. His work as a goodwill ambassador began in 1955, and continued for more than 30 years as a youth and sports affairs officer in USIA, visiting some 130 countries. He also held sports and physical education advisory posts in the Liberian and Nigerian governments. In 1989, Mr. Whitfield established the Washington-based Whitfield Foundation to continue promoting athletics around the world with scholarships, training programs, and equipment donations. See pages 2-3 for appreciations of his work.

## PDAA membership for 2016 ... Check your mailing label for renewal status

If your mailing label says **[2015]** it is time to renew your membership for 2016.

- The annual membership fee for the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association is \$US35.00 and \$400.00 for a one-time lifetime membership.
- Renewals are usually collected annually in the first few months of the year, but renewals made through the end of 2015 will earn the entire calendar year of 2016. Please complete the form below (indicate if any items are changed from before) and mail the completed form with your check to:

**James L. Bullock, PDAA Treasurer**

**319 E Street SE**

\_\_\_ No change in contact info; fill in name and date only

**Washington, DC 20003**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership type, please check one: \_\_\_ New \$35.00 \_\_\_ Renewal \$35.00 \_\_\_ Lifetime \$400.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or you can renew online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership>

## PDAA February 2016 Luncheon Program

February 18, 2016 - DACOR-Bacon House.

1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Deadline for reservations: **February 12, 2016**. See page 1 for program details.

Please complete the form below and mail with your check for **\$US35.00** for members and guests, and **\$42.00** for non-members to:

**James L. Bullock, PDAA Treasurer**

**319 E Street SE**

**Washington, DC 20003**

Please send payments for this event only. If there is no change in your contact information, you need only fill in names and date.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

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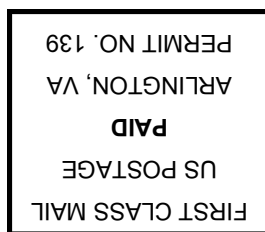
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Number of members/guests \_\_\_\_\_ x \$US 35.00    Number of non-members \_\_\_\_\_ x \$42.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or you can reserve online at [www.publicdiplomacy.org/](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/)



**PDAA Today**  
**Public Diplomacy Alumni Association**  
**4521 N. 41st Street**  
**Arlington VA 22207-2936**

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