

## Upcoming Programs

Via Zoom

Nov. 1, 2021  
12:00 pm EDT  
**Global Ties U.S. at 60:  
Building a Domestic  
Constituency for Public  
Diplomacy**

Dr. Katherine Brown,  
President and CEO of  
Global Ties U.S.

Annette Alvarez, Execu-  
tive Director Global Ties  
Miami

RSVP, [click here](#) or con-  
tact [admin@  
publicdiplomacy.org](mailto:admin@publicdiplomacy.org)

Dec. 6, 2021  
12:00 pm EST  
**Afghanistan: Looking  
Back/Looking Forward**  
Details to be announced.

## Fulbright At 75: Future Challenges and Opportunities

Read former PDAA President  
Michael Schneider's introduc-  
tion to the program observing  
the 75th anniversary of the  
Fulbright Program at  
[https://  
pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/](https://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/).

## PDAA membership for 2021

If your mailing label says  
[2020], it is time to renew  
your membership.  
Use the form on page 7 or  
renew [online](#).

One of our most important  
activities is the PDAA Awards  
for Outstanding Achievement  
in Public Diplomacy. [Donate  
online on the PDAA Website](#),  
where a list of past recipients  
can be found.☐

## Update from PDAA President Joel Fischman: Merger with Public Diplomacy Council on Track

I hope you had a restful summer, the Delta variant notwithstanding. Judy and I did spend time at the beach and managed to visit with our seven grandchildren, some of them for the first time in 18 months.

This edition of the newsletter focuses on Afghanistan. Several writers provide a public diplomacy perspective on a difficult chapter in our history. Thank you for your response to our appeal for help with the Crisis Team Support and for urgently needed help, wherever you are, with Afghan refugees.

A September 13 PDAA panel at DACOR celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright program featured five Fulbrighters addressing future challenges and opportunities. This hybrid program combined the traditional DACOR lunch

with a remote Zoom in the First Monday slot. There are more than a few moving parts to such a hybrid program, as we discovered, but our dedicated team pulled it off. We anticipate offering more such hybrid programs and are reviewing the format to make it more useful to those in the Washington area and members everywhere. Thanks to Michael Korff and Michael Schneider for organizing the event. Coverage, including a recording of the event, is on our website [https://  
pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/](https://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/).

Preparations continue for merging PDAA and PDC into the new **Public Diplomacy Council of America** (PDCA). The Joint Oversight Group and Transition Working Group chairs approved a set of structural recommendations and an

action plan timeline on September 29. We will present these to the PDC Board on October 13 and the PDAA Board on October 14. Assuming approval from both boards, we will be on track for a January 1 launch for PDCA. PDC President Sherry Mueller and I will keep you current as we proceed.

A reminder, fully paid-up members of PDAA (and PDC) will automatically be considered members of PDCA. Make sure your membership is current.

In the meantime, feel free to contact me ([fischman@comcast.net](mailto:fischman@comcast.net)) with any questions or concerns you have.

All the very best,

Joel

## Jerry (Luis Ricardo) Chirichigno: An Appreciation

By Robert Chatten

A recent number of the Public Diplomacy Association of America newsletter carried a short "In Memoriam" notice of the death Feb. 3 of retired USIA officer Jerry (Luis Ricardo) Chirichigno, 83, of acute leukemia in Katy, TX. He served in the Agency for 25 years, with overseas assignments including Nigeria, Liberia, India, Turkey, and Venezuela, and post-retirement service

in State's Office of African Public Diplomacy.

I had lost touch with Jerry years ago and was saddened at the loss to everyone who knew this vital, extraordinary Peruvian immigrant. That included the Americans and local staffers who knew him in 1975-76 in USIS Colombia (earlier unmentioned). I got to be the first PAO for this mold-breaking nominee for the Congressional Medal of Honor and holder of

the Army's Distinguished Service Cross. He was technically a "lateral entry" officer, though we ran him through the learning-the-ropes routines of a junior officer trainee (JOT). These "ropes" did not include developing some sort of relationship with the wife (or "significant other") of a drug dealer. She convinced Jerry of a need to distance herself from her criminal companion and led to his

(Continued on page 7)

## Lois Roth Endowment: Honoring a Great Cultural Diplomat

By Anne Barbaro

Some who read this article knew Lois Roth during her USIA career, which began in 1966. Just 20 years later, her career and her life came to a sudden end as she succumbed to breast cancer.

There was an immediate outpouring of grief and a desire to preserve the memory and professional legacy of this well-loved and widely-admired woman and her remarkable service to cultural diplomacy. Lois's husband, Dick Arndt, himself a distinguished cultural diplomat,

drew on this energy to create the [LOIS ROTH ENDOWMENT](#), which was registered as a 501(c)3 charity in 1987. ([Read Dick Arndt's story](#) in the special Fulbright issue of the PDAA newsletter.)

2022 will mark 35 years of successful programs carried out in areas of interest to Lois:

**Cultural Diplomacy:** Our suite of Awards for Excellence in Cultural

Diplomacy has expanded from just one, for a Foreign Service Officer, in 1990, to now include awards for Locally-Employed and Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs staff members. (For more about these awards, see my article for the [May issue of American Diplomacy](#).) Award-ees tell us that more than just recognizing outstanding work, these awards make them feel inspired and motivated to undertake even greater engagement and leadership.

**Fulbright Programs:** For selected Fulbright grantees who, once abroad, encounter opportunities to expand their research and international experience, the Endowment grants top-off stipends in concert with partnering Fulbright commissions. In celebration of our 35th anniversary, we will expand this grants program in 2022. The Endowment also co-sponsors an annual Fulbright Legacy Lecture addressing pressing international issues, in collaboration with the US-UK Fulbright Commission and Kings College, Oxford, and Edinburgh universities.

**Literary Translation:** Before joining USIA, Lois was a translator and anticipated the interest in Scandinavian mystery fiction among English-language readers. In the belief that literature communicates deep cultural insights, we keep that legacy alive with several Awards for Literary Translation. Our partnership with the Modern Language Association and other groups enables us to



Lois Roth and Dick Arndt in 1985.

identify the most worthy recipients.

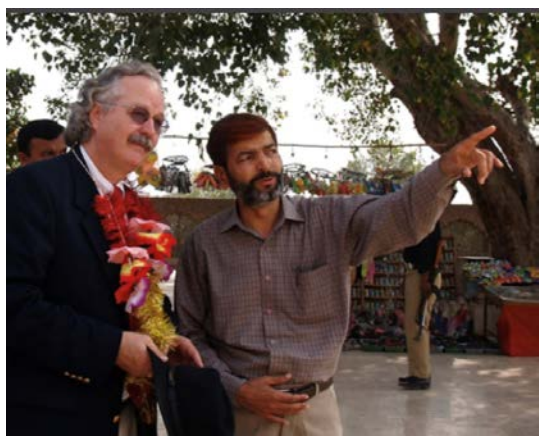
All of the activities of the Endowment thus pay tribute to Lois's dedication to cross-cultural dialogue in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. They support and recognize the work of people who embody her legacy of energy, creativity, and warmth, as well as her constant efforts to encourage and mentor younger people and colleagues in a range of fields.

The Lois Roth Endowment is an all-volunteer organization that depends entirely on individual [donations](#) for its funding. We appreciate any support you can offer. If you would like to join us and contribute some of your time to this effort, please be in touch at [contact@rothendowment.org](mailto:contact@rothendowment.org).

*Anne Barbaro retired in 2007 after 25 years with the U.S. Information Agency and Department of State. She currently serves on the boards of the LOIS ROTH ENDOWMENT and the Public Diplomacy Council and works part time as a pre-publication reviewer at the Department of State.*



Lois Roth receives Superior Honor Award from Hal Schneidman.



Ilichman-Richardson Award recipient Rick Ruth (l) at the Jelal-ud-Din-Surkhposh shrine in Pakistan.

# Afghanistan 1978-79: A Fateful Year in Kabul

By Bruce K. Byers

I was direct-transferred to USIS Kabul when my job as ACAO at USIS Vienna was eliminated in a budget cut. Everything I had heard from colleagues who had served in Kabul was positive, and while I had hoped to return to India, I accepted the IO job. Six weeks before my family and I flew to Kabul, there was a *coup d'état* that ousted Afghan president Mohammad Daud Khan and saw the rise of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan under Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin with Kremlin backing.

In Kabul I dealt with Afghan radio and TV, the *Kabul New Times*, and vetted American journalists seeking interviews with Afghan foreign ministry and other officials and requests for interviews with Ambassador Adolph "Spike" Dubs, newly assigned to our embassy after serving as *Chargé* in Moscow. Dubs was a Soviet expert, spoke Russian, and knew Kremlin politics well. His appointment to Kabul in the wake of the ouster and execution of Daud must have given Kremlin leaders pause.

Richard and Jane Ross welcomed us to Kabul upon arrival and helped us get set up in a large house with a walled-in garden. Richard was CAO. We had first met them on R&R in Sri Lanka several years before. Louise Taylor and PAO Roger Lydon rounded out the USIS team. Louise was in charge of the America Center in the USIS compound, located about three miles from the embassy. Our primary job was outreach to various audiences under trying circumstances. Roger soon departed and Gary Morley arrived as the new PAO.

I made efforts to increase our contact with Afghan TV. We took on a book translation project: Bob Shanks's *The Cool Fire – How to Make It in Television*. USIA Washington obtained the rights and my senior information specialist Mehria Mustamandy and her assistant began translating the text. We had a basic printing

plant and printed several hundred copies of the book in Dari. We made a formal presentation to the head of foreign relations at Afghan TV. Other copies were distributed to Kabul University and to other media contacts.

Meanwhile, our three children were attending the American International School. Our life in Kabul seemed almost normal, save for the nightly curfew at 9:00 p.m. and the Russian-made helicopter gunships that patrolled the night skies.

Louise Taylor, a formally trained dancer, spearheaded a project to produce *Oklahoma!* and invite American and other diplomats and their families as well as UN officials and key Afghan contacts to its premiere. Many of us participated in play readings and other activities in the international diplomatic community. We also enjoyed the "club" and swimming pool on the large USAID compound. It helped to relieve some of the tension with which we lived under the Taraki regime.

In January 1979, the Chinese embassy invited the entire American diplomatic community to a grand entertainment and supper to celebrate the official opening of diplomatic ties between Beijing and Washington. It was a gala affair that Ambassador Dubs and all of us really enjoyed.

Early on February 14 – Valentine's Day – the ambassador was enroute in his armored limo to the embassy when it was stopped by Afghan "police" at an intersection not far from USIS. A uniformed man brandishing a pistol forced the driver to open his door; next, another armed man entered the car and told the driver to proceed to the Kabul Hotel in the center of the city. There, the ambassador was taken at gunpoint to the second floor where he was tied to a chair in room 117. The driver returned to the embassy and alerted security officials. A hostage crisis ensued. This is detailed in Arthur Kent's new book *Murder in Room 117*. Kent interviewed many of us who had served in Kabul at the time. He also interviewed Russian diplomats in Moscow and was

able to see documents there that broadened his analysis of the abduction and killing of Ambassador Dubs.

From that day, everything went downhill. With the agreement of the Country Team, Louise was able to stage *Oklahoma!* as a morale booster for the American and international community a month after Dubs's murder.

My work and that of my colleagues became much more difficult. I was due out on delayed home leave in June, and when the school year ended, we packed our suitcases and departed Kabul. We expected to return by late summer.

As it turned out, my home leave orders were changed to evacuation orders, and I was declared "non-essential" staff. My family and I had difficulties trying to set up house in Virginia. I had to look for a Washington assignment and was given a job in the Office of African Affairs.

We were fortunate to receive our faithful dog via Lufthansa a few months later. We also received our car, almost new, and after nearly six months, our household effects.

Our year in Kabul proved decisive for my career advancement, but going through an evacuation, losing contact with friends and colleagues, and having to start out in a new job were trying experiences.

To this day, I remember the hours of the hostage crisis and efforts by our embassy officers to secure the release of Ambassador Dubs. And I remember the terrible news of his death and the depressing weeks and months that followed.▣

*Bruce Byers is a retired Foreign Service Officer; he previously served on the Board of Directors of the Public Diplomacy Association. A letter he wrote home about the assassination of Ambassador Dubs is included on the [PDA website](http://pdaa.PublicDiplomacy.org).*

## Afghanistan: Looking Back at the “Year of Decision” in Kabul

By Donald M. Bishop

Before I left Washington for Kabul, Richard Holbrooke told me that 2009-10 must be the “year of decision,” so Public Diplomacy would receive \$72 million for FY-10 and more than \$100 million in FY-11. This money surge was staggering, but a surge of people was promised too. Within a few months, David Ensor arrived as “Uber.” He was an excellent choice.

Very junior PDO’s worked crushing hours to send more and more Afghan Fulbrighters, IVs, and other exchange program participants to the U.S. Two successive English language fellows spun up a huge program. More Lincoln Learning Centers in key cities and universities were established. Cultural heritage programs grew. ECA well supported these traditional PD programs.

PAS funded a Government Media Information Center (GMIC) as a media venue for Afghan government principals. Ministers learned how dealing with

the media is part of governance. GMIC trained spokespersons and journalists.

The information unit worked on steroids: statements, clearances, events, ceremonies, week-long tours for European media, translations – the works. So great were the demands of the American, international,

and local media, however, that a unit twice as large could not have met their insatiable demands. At the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), we needed full spectrum BPAOs, but

what commanders wanted were full-time press officers.

The Public Affairs Section also launched a wide variety of what we called “strategic” public diplomacy initiatives, ranging from *Paywast*, a social media forum in Dari and Pashto that became—for a time—far larger than Facebook or Twitter in Afghanistan, to bringing *Sesame Street* to Afghan TV—teaching basic alphabet and numbers to small children, and many of their par-

ents, too. We funded a reality TV show about the Afghan army that increased recruiting—and a highly popular fictional cops show set in Kabul that showed what

A program working with the Afghan Ministry of Hajj and Endowments took scores of young Afghan mulahs and mayors on mind-broadening trips to im-



A young women who received an English Access Microscholarship.



Ambassador Eikenberry, the Minister of Hajj and Endowments, and the Minister of Culture cut the ribbon at the re-opening of the Goldasta Mosque.

justice **could** be. The magnificent Kabul national museum—ransacked under the Taliban's first rule—was giv-

portant centers of moderate Islamic learning such as Cairo and Jakarta. Other strategic programs helped

provide new possibilities for women in the media, higher education, and the arts.

There were frictions. We were initially given “complete discretion”



AIO Wendy Kolls organizes journalists to interview Rashad Hussain, Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

en stout new external security walls, funds to train young curators, and a funded exchange relationship for scholarship in antiquities with a major U.S. university.

to approve \$5000 grants, but anything more needed Washington approval from the Office of the Special Representative for Afghani-

(Continued on page 5)

stan and Pakistan (SRAP) or SCA/PD. May I be undiplomatic? This was crazy. Our 20 Americans running the largest PD program in the world were allocated \$4000 in representation funds – another absurdity. Months



Ambassador Tony Wayne and two ministers meet the press at the Government-Media Information Center (GMIC), funded by PAS.

went by before the promised millions and the promised people with large grant warrants arrived. More time was lost writing a soon forgotten “Afghanistan Communications Plan.” And bright people in Washington had pet ideas; most were energy sponges.

I confess, then, to mixed emotions about PD in Afghanistan in that “year of decision.” Everyone in Kabul worked exhausting hours. SCA/PD jumped high hurdles for us in Washington. We opened new futures for many

Afghans. By their nature, however, traditional PD programs help strengthen and change a society over the long term. They “shape.” But other developments in Afghanistan cut the time short.

That I could help guide our PD Americans and local employees to achieve so much was very gratifying. That all the work has turned to ashes will pain the rest of my years.☐



PAO Don Bishop in Bamiyan, at the location where the Taliban destroyed the Buddhist statues.

Former PAO in Kabul Donald M. Bishop, now retired from the Foreign Service, is currently Krulak Center Distinguished Fellow at Marine Corps University in Quantico.

By Patricia McArdle

America's longest war is now officially over, but efforts to extract Afghans who worked for the U.S. continue. My former interpreter, Farhad, was recruited by the U.S. Army in 2003. He continued

working for American and NATO forces until 2009, when he was hired by our Embassy as LLC Mazar director – a position he held until he and his family fled before the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

When the evacuations from

Kabul airport began, I sought help from the State Department to get Farhad and his family out of Afghanistan. Although my efforts failed, this story has a happy ending.

In September, they were successfully transported across

the border into Pakistan where they are awaiting permission to settle in the UK. This extraction was due entirely to the efforts of one

British Army officer for whom Farhad worked the year before I arrived in Afghanistan.

With only three months of Dari language training, I could-

n't have done my job without Farhad's language skills and his understanding of northern Afghanistan's Byzantine politics. Although I received a Superior Honor award for my reporting and negotiating, my cash award went to Farhad, since without his guidance, I would have accomplished very little.

I was not assigned to Afghanistan as a PD officer, but was asked by the embassy to establish a Lincoln Learning Center in Mazar. With Farhad's help, the project was completed before I went home.

Farhad also helped me organize the visit of Rumi expert, Coleman Barks, America's first cultural visitor to Afghanistan since our embassy closed in

1989. I'll never forget the day we took Mr. Barks to see the ruins of Rumi's madrasa in

Balk. We sat in the sun eating oranges while Barks recited in English and Farhad translated Rumi's poems for a group of students.

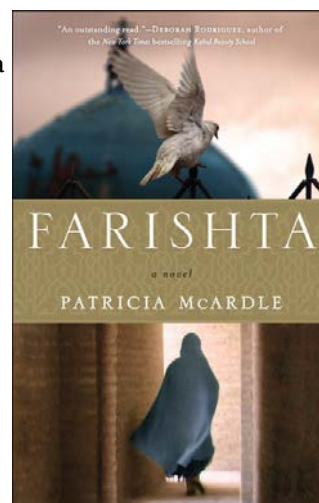
I returned from Afghanistan in December 2005 with a case of PTSD. I had survivor's guilt after a group of young ISAF soldiers, ahead of

me in a convoy, were killed by an IED explosion, but my vehicle was untouched by the explosion. Writing my novel *Farishta* (published by Penguin-Riverhead in 2011) has helped me deal with that trauma.☐

Patricia McArdle is a retired Foreign Service Officer.



With Farhad the day I bought a burkha in Mazar-e-Sharif's central market.



## In Memoriam

**John Clyde Farris**, a former VOA broadcaster, died August 17 at age 84 due to complication from cancer. Born in Lamont, PA, he graduated from Washington-Lee High school and studied English at Oberlin College in Ohio. After graduation, Farris served in the U.S. Navy, retiring with the rank of Commander. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in the 1970's, working as an editor at the Voice of America for 35 years.

**Robert Ray Gibbons** died March 19, 2020. Born on the Cinco de Mayo in 1935 and raised in Uruguay for 20 years, he had a life-long passion for the Hispanic language, people, and culture. In 1966 Gibbons received an appointment as a Foreign Service Officer with USIA. Over the next 28 years, he worked in five Latin American countries, as well as out-of-area postings to Iraq, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Retirement in 1994 was short-lived, as he and his wife Yvonne answered missionary assignments for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) at the Family History Centers in Mesa, AZ, and in Colombia. Gibbons later served in a new LDS temple in Villahermosa, Mexico. Beginning in 2002 he served in the Mesa LDS temple for nearly 20 years before his death due to pancreatic cancer.

**Robert Owen Jones** died peacefully July 11 at age 96. Born in Boston, Jones enlisted in the Army at age 17 and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. In 1964, Jones joined the Foreign Service, moving with his wife Rosemary and their five children to Lahore, Pakistan, where he worked as Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Consulate. Over the next 30 years, he served in Asia and Africa. After retirement, Jones devoted his time to his community, volunteering at soup kitchens, working with immigrants, teaching English as a second language, and coaching youth basketball.

**Irwin Seymour Kern**, 85, died February 15 in Albuquerque, NM. Kern worked as executive director of the Association of International Relations Clubs before a stint in the U.S. Army from 1959 to 1961. In 1962, he was part of a U.S. exchange delegation to the USSR. The following year he joined the U.S. Information Agency. During his career, he served at posts in Seoul, Kwangju, Daegu, Washington, Osaka, Tokyo, and Mexico City. Kern also served in a detail assignment at the Pentagon and graduated from the National War College in

1980. After retiring in 1987 he worked as a foreign visitor escort for the Department of State's International Visitor program for many years.

**Lloyd W. Neighbors, Jr.**, 75, died June 27 in Arlington, VA. Neighbors spent most of his Foreign Service career dedicated to public diplomacy work in greater China (Taiwan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Beijing). He also had assignments in Zagreb and Brasilia. After 30 years with the U.S. Information Agency and State Department, Neighbors retired from the Senior Foreign Service in 2005. Post-retirement, he did short-term assignments in Rangoon, Hanoi, Wellington, Sydney, Riyadh, Tunis, Amman, Guangzhou, Beijing, Ottawa, and Hong Kong. Neighbors was an avid baseball fan, enjoyed golf, and traveled worldwide with his family.

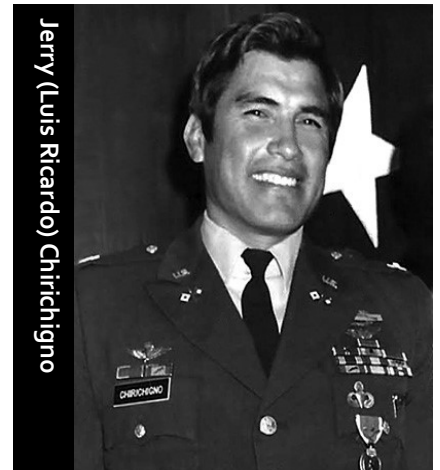
**Gunther Karl Rosinus** died at his home in Potomac, MD, July 10 at age 93. Joining USIA in 1954, Rosinus worked in post-war Japan from 1954 to 1959, bringing an unfamiliar culture to rural Niigata as director of the U.S. Cultural Center there. He later was director of the America House in Koblenz, Germany, and then Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn. In 1968, Rosinus attended the National War College. From 1968 to 1973, he was Cultural Affairs Officer and Deputy Country PAO at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. At a time of intense anti-Americanism among Filipino youth, Rosinus tempered emotion with reason and influenced a generation of leaders who eventually rose in opposition to the martial law of the Marcos regime. He was awarded the Leonard Marks Foundation Award for his work in the Philippines. From 1973 to 1984, Rosinus served in Germany, first as PAO at the U.S. Mission in West Berlin, and later as Deputy Chief of Mission in East Berlin.

**Charlene K. Scherr**, 86, a retired and honored audiologist at Walter Reed Medical Hospital, died July 22 while in hospice care for a lung condition. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Ed Scherr of Potomac, MD, a former USIA Wireless File diplomatic correspondent and former editor of the PDAA Newsletter's obituary section. For many years, Charlene ran an aural rehabilitation program for new wearers of hearing aids. Occasionally one of her VIP students would sometimes call her for advice or information, leading to a receptionist interrupting her class lecture to announce that U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was on the phone for Mrs. Scherr. At retirement, Charlene got Army commander coins

from the hospital and the Army Medical Command for the excellence of her work. She was also elected a fellow of the Military Audiology Association. In retirement, she drove for worthwhile causes, taking Holocaust survivors to their medical appointments and, together with Ed, delivering kosher Meals-on-Wheels. To quote Ed, "She did the driving, and he did the schlepping." Charlene was also known for her whimsical poems composed for all occasions.

**Sydney Lee Tyson**, 73, died May 3 in El Cerrito, CA. From 1977 to 1984, she served as a Foreign Service Officer in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Belgrade. She also accompanied her Foreign Service Officer husband Donald to Moscow, Sydney, and Managua, where she served as a co-community liaison officer. Tyson was an education and youth officer within the Family Liaison Office in Washington. A self-declared English major and an avid reader, she coached students in writing at local schools in California.

**Note from the Editors.** In our last newsletter, we mentioned the passing of Jerry (Luis Ricardo) Chirichigno from acute leukemia. Born in Perú, Jerry became a U.S. citizen in 1963. He served in USIA for 25 years with posts in Nigeria, Liberia, India, Turkey, Colombia, and Venezuela. What we did not mention, for lack of space, was the extraordinary courage Jerry showed during the Vietnam War, including more than two years as a POW in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton." For his valor, he received the Army's Distinguished Service Cross and was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor. We invite you to read the moving appreciation written by our colleague Bob Chatten, who had the chance to know him during his assignment to Colombia. Bob's appreciation can be found on page one.



Jerry (Luis Ricardo) Chirichigno

(Continued from page 1)

unauthorized use of an office vehicle to take her hundreds of miles north to the border city of Cucuta, where she fled into Venezuela. Our DEA office may have known of this, but I doubt they told the Ambassador. I didn't.

Jerry was born in the Northern Peruvian coastal city of Piura, but the far-flung network of recruiters for the University of Alabama's legendary football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant somehow spotted the natural athlete. On athletic scholarship, Jerry was a kicker on two national championship teams, swam for the Crimson Tide in the off-season, and worshiped Bryant.

After Tuscaloosa, Jerry became a U.S. citizen in 1963 and joined the Army. Lieutenant Chirichigno was wounded in Viet Nam, and, after protracted recuperation, rejoined his unit but was assigned to flight training stateside to learn to fly Cobra helicopter gunships before returning to the war zone.

A variety of references to Jerry's POW story appear on-line but the most complete appeared in the *Port Charlotte Sun* in April 2007, after he had retired to Florida.

By November 1969, now-Captain Chirichigno was flying with observation helicopters, whose job was to spot enemy activity and call in the gunships. One of the smaller choppers was shot down, and Jerry was flying cover over the crash site, keeping the surrounding Viet Cong at bay, when he too was shot down and injured. Along with those he had been trying to protect, they tried overnight to walk to a Special Forces encampment but were captured and marched, roped together at the neck, to Cambodia and confined in bamboo cages. Jerry's dangling finger from his crash injuries was amputated, and the POWs began a month's trek toward Hanoi. After being turned over to the North Vietnamese Army, he and the other men began two years-plus of confinement in the infamous Hanoi Hilton, a prison left over from French colonial times, whose occupants previously had included mainly political prisoners. Despite its reputation as a torture site and U.S. bombing of Hanoi, Jerry told me in Colombia that his transfer from VC custody to the prison probably saved his life.

The prisoners were released in batches after the Paris Peace Accords

were signed on January 27, 1973, with Jerry in the last group released, two months later. Each was assigned an officer escort en route back to U.S. medical evaluation/treatment and, from his, Jerry learned that he had been nominated for the Congressional Medal. He had also been listed as killed in action, the reason his wife wasn't in Hawaii to welcome the POWs at the stopover, as some other spouses were.

The recent POWs were honored at a State Department banquet and reception hosted by Secretary Henry Kissinger and attended by President Nixon. Kissinger asked Jerry to get back in touch about what he would like to do next after what turned out to be the two years he spent in recovery. Based on accounts about USIA he heard from a former VOA transmitter supervisor while they were imprisoned together in Hanoi, Jerry said he'd like to try the Information Agency.

Which brought him full circle to Bogotá, our all-too-short friendship, and more than two ensuing decades of his telling America's story to the world, and living it. □

*Robert Chatten is a former President of the Public Diplomacy Association of America.*

## PDAA membership for 2021: Check your mailing label for renewal status

If your mailing label says [2020], it is time to renew your membership.

Membership type, please check one:

- DC-MD-VA local membership (\$50 annually): \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal
- Other membership (\$35 annually): \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Please complete the form below and mail your check, payable to PDAA, or pay online at [pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org](http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org).

### Contribution to Public Diplomacy Awards Fund (optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send form to: **Mary Jeffers, PDAA Treasurer**  
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**PDAA Today**

Editor: Michael Korff

Member News Editor: Claude Porsella

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