The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

BONNIE MILLER

Interviewed by: Mark Tauber
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is August 20, 2020. We're beginning our first interview with Bonnie Miller. And Bonnie, where and when were you born?

MILLER: In Chicago on September 9, 1948.

Q: And how large was your family? Brothers and sisters.

MILLER: I was born a little over a year after my twenty-two-year-old parents got married. I was the first of five children. My brother Mark was born in January 1951, Craig in February 1952, Joy in May 1955, and Scott in March 1962.

Q: How did your parents meet?

MILLER: They met on a blind date in high school and were fixed up by mutual friends. They lived in different cities, so it was a long-distance relationship. And then my mother went to college. My father enlisted in the military toward the end of WWII. He got hepatitis from a dirty needle at the military medical facility, so he was only briefly in the military. And they continued to date while living in different cities – my father in Chicago and my mother in Milwaukee and Ann Arbor. My mother graduated from the University of Michigan in three years, and then they got married in May1947, shortly after she graduated.

Q: A lot of people have done ancestry research. Have you looked back at your forebears where your mother's and father's side came from?

MILLER: I have researched it. One summer, I was on Ancestry.com trying to do my genealogy. But I hit a wall, and the wall was the Atlantic Ocean. On my father's side, my

great grandparents seem to have come to the U.S. in the late 1880s or early 1890s from what was called Russia—Eastern Europe, but at other times, it was Lithuania. My maternal great grandparents, on her mother's side, had the same origin and immigration year. But I had one grandfather whom I knew very well growing up, who himself immigrated in the very early 20th century. So, it was his generation, not my great grandparents'. But unfortunately, I never talked to him about it. He passed away when I was in my early twenties, and I should have. The myth is that he stowed away on a ship to America, because I cannot find him at Ellis Island; his name is very unusual.

It's Schudson. The story was that he came from Liepaja/Libau, Latvia in 1906 to escape Russian military conscription, which was on and off for Jews. He arrived at Ellis Island, and there, they changed his first name from Solomon to Charles, and henceforth, he was Charles. I've heard from my cousins that originally the name was Shudzan. I can't find that either. He immigrated to Milwaukee and started very small because he had no family and no connections in the U.S. and no money. But he eventually opened six large men's and boys' clothing stores. I remember going to his stores; my brothers were always outfitted from those stores as kids. The six stores were mostly in German- and Polish-speaking neighborhoods, and my Grandpa Charles spoke those languages as well as English, Russian, Latvian and Yiddish. He was very cool but very modest. He met my grandmother, who was from a prominent Milwaukee family, and they married when he was twenty-eight and she was twenty-one. They were advised not to say anything about the discrepancy in their ages because my grandfather was so old and my grandmother much younger. They had three kids. My two older uncles and my red-headed mother, who everybody thought was adopted.

Q: Yes. Just as an aside, my father had red hair as a child. We did his 23andMe: 97 percent Eastern European Jew, and 3 percent Irish.

MILLER: I'm 100 percent Ashkenazi. So no question about that.

Q: Alright. So, you grow up in Chicago, but it's a large place. I imagine it was a part of Chicago.

MILLER: Right. I lived on the North Side of Chicago in Rogers Park until March of my kindergarten year. My parents married when they were 21 and had me when they were 22. By the time they were 28 in 1954, they had three kids. One more was born a year later. And the last child was kind of a caboose in 1962. My father built a house on the North Shore of Chicago in a suburb called Glencoe. In March of 1954, we moved to that house, and I entered kindergarten at Central School, a four-block walk from my home. My parents lived there all those years and finally sold that house in 2017.

Q: So it was the family house for quite a while.

MILLER: It was our family home for all of those years. My father passed away in 2015. My mother passed away in April 2020. When my father died, they were living half the time in Florida and half in Chicago. So when my father passed away, my mother moved

to Florida full time. And then my brother Mark sold the house in Glencoe in 2017, but that was our house for 63 years. And I kept going back there, especially in 2014-15, to clean out that house of sixty-some years of stuff.

Q: Are your brothers and sisters now nearby or are you all spread out?

MILLER: I have a sister who, toward the end of my father's life, lived with my elderly parents when they were in Glencoe. Joy now lives in Wheeling, Illinois, another Chicago suburb. She's Number Four. My brother Mark, Number Two, is a lawyer and lives in the northern suburbs of Milwaukee, near where my mother grew up. My brother Number Three, Craig, passed away about eight years ago at age 60. And the caboose, my baby brother Scott, who is thirteen and a half years younger than me, lives near San Luis Obispo in California. He's a chemical engineer at a nuclear plant. So everybody's all over the place, which is inconvenient because when my mother became infirm a few years after my father passed away, we all took turns flying in from wherever we lived to take care of her in Boynton Beach, Florida. For me, it was a nonstop flight on JetBlue, but for the others, it was more of a transportation hassle.

Q: All right now, as you're now growing up in Glencoe, what kind of a town was it as you were growing up? It's now the early sixties.

MILLER: Glencoe was and still is an upper middle-class suburb of Chicago with a population of about 10,000. Most families were business or professional and financially comfortable, but some were very wealthy. Some of my Glencoe classmates were born there. But as time went on, many others were moving to Glencoe from Chicago like I did as their parents acquired enough money to buy a home in a more affluent place that had an excellent school system. It was a nice, compact town with a little downtown that had a library, a drug store, two delis, a playground, a kind of Walgreens Five & Dime, a small supermarket, and a record store where you could put on headphones and listen to the latest tunes. We lived in a cul-de-sac at a dead end, with a golf course on two sides a house away, woods across the street to explore and play hide-and-seek in, and a bird sanctuary two blocks away. Gail, my best friend throughout elementary and junior high, lived next door, and we were inseparable. Her father was our terrific family pediatrician, and I remember him driving past our house on the way to work, rolling down his car window, and checking on me in the middle of our little drive.

We had a lot of freedom to roam Glencoe on foot and by bike and just had to be home by dinner. No one locked their doors, especially since the moms were home most of the day, so it was a very safe place to grow up. There were no school buses. Fortunately, I lived close to school for elementary and junior high, but by seventh and eighth grade, the junior high for the whole town was at Central School, and all of the students biked or walked to school; it was that small. Much of the population was Jewish, especially the newcomers. I would say it was about 60 or 70 percent Jewish, but in my elementary school from kindergarten to sixth grade, it was about half and half because we were in the central, older part of Glencoe.

I went to a local day camp, Sunshine Valley—I love that name—and a four-week sleepover camp in northern Wisconsin. We often vacationed for a week in the summers at the Wisconsin Dells. Our family was big on tennis, so we joined a tennis club when I was in eighth grade, and I played tennis and swam there.

Family played a big part in my life. My father's family was in the area, my grandparents and one uncle's family on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago and another uncle's family in Glencoe. We would get together for American and Jewish holidays at one home or another, and we visited my grandparents one or two Sundays a month. I had my three siblings and five cousins on my father's side, and all eight were born between 1948 and 1957, so everyone had someone to play with. Scott was born in 1962, so his memories of our family are quite different. I also used to take the train to Milwaukee and spend some weeks visiting my grandparents at their beautiful home on Lake Michigan.

Q: Did both your parents work or did just your father work?

MILLER: My mom kept having babies. She was a stay-at-home mom. I think all of my friends' mothers were stay-at-home moms. My dad was an entrepreneur. He started his own building materials company while he was in his early twenties. He sold windows and garage doors and other things like that, which was helpful when he was building his own house.

Q: That's pretty remarkable. Did he, as he built it, have to add on for the additional kid?

MILLER: I was very surprised, but I guess my parents weren't so surprised at the late pregnancy (planned) when they were 36, which was considered extremely old. We added on one room; it was eventually a small study, but with the fifth child, it was a little nursery. And I remember there was a sink in that little room, and my dad put in plumbing. I was into mosaics at the time, so I mosaiced the tiles around the sink for the nursery. And that's where my baby brother lived for a long time, because even when I went to college when he was four years old, they saved my bedroom for me, which was very nice. My two brothers shared a room, and my sister had her own room.

Q: Now, as you're growing up and going to school, do you also begin to take part in any extracurricular activities, music, or sport, or maybe Girl Scouts or anything?

MILLER: I was in Girl Scouts. I was not an enthusiastic Scout and considered it uncool but was involved through eighth grade. I took piano lessons. At the time, extracurricular sports weren't really available to girls.

Q: Were any of the local synagogue activities ones that you know were intramural or where they work to bring in other kids from other areas?

MILLER: No, nothing like that. Our synagogue was purely local. I was a member of the choir in seventh grade. A friend of mine persuaded me to join. As I saw it, the main function of our synagogue, besides religion, was fundraising. First of all, when I was young, it was for trees in Israel. And then in junior high and high school, it was all about

fundraising to build a new synagogue. They built an amazing, expensive, huge new synagogue on Lake Michigan, which opened my sophomore year, just in time for my confirmation in 1964. And it is still there.

Q: Alright now, as you're going through high school, it's also the 1960s. Did the counterculture or the protest movement reach you?

MILLER: Not at all. Contrary to junior high school, where I did learn the basics and useful subjects and excellent grammar that provided the groundwork for learning foreign languages and has helped me in my present avocation of editing, New Trier High School was supposed to be one of the premier high schools in the United States. That's what they kept telling us. New Trier never missed a day of school for a snow day, through snowstorms and freezing weather when all the other local schools were closed. I was not a curious student; I found little that was very interesting or relevant to my life in my high school career. I was more into social activities. I did get a New Trier Alumni Award there a few years ago and was asked to go back and give a big speech and say how terrific the education was in the 60s. By this time in 2013, it **was** wonderful and included current events, relevant subjects and critical thinking. But in the 1960s, we had a very traditional memorization-based curriculum, and I was an excellent memorizer, so I got good grades, took the tests, didn't learn a lot and retained even less, except maybe science. No relevance to current events, which in the mid-60s was very real. However, New Trier did have some outreach projects, and when I was a senior, I tutored in the Lawndale area of Chicago. They bussed us down there an hour away to tutor inner city Black kids, which gave us a perspective of how people lived outside the lily-white suburbs.

Q: And so was that your first experience with diversity?

MILLER: The short summer after I graduated high school and before I went to University of Michigan in mid-August of 1966, I volunteered at Head Start, a new national program to help underserved preschoolers in poor neighborhoods in Evanston, which was a few suburbs south towards Chicago. And later, I kept circling back to Head Start and those anti-poverty programs until finally as a professional, I got a contract to work there when I was teaching at George Mason University.

Q: Now you had mentioned college, but a little before we get there, was there anything else in high school you recall that began to get you interested or make you more aware of international work or international affairs?

MILLER: I had a boyfriend sophomore and junior years in high school who was not interested in international issues, only gymnastics and cars. By my junior year, he was away at college. On April 15, 1965, there was a boy that I sat next to in my Spanish class. Every year, he had tickets for the White Sox opening baseball game. He was supposed to go with a friend of his, who was also a friend and a neighbor of mine. But as they were getting ready to leave, the neighbor said, "I can't cut school; I'll get in trouble." So this boy turned to me and asked, "How would you like to go to the White Sox opening game this afternoon?" And I impulsively replied, "Sure." I was kind of into baseball; all my

brothers and cousins were fans of the White Sox, Cubs, and Milwaukee Braves.

So I said, “Sure,” and we cut school. His father used to write an excuse note to the principal every year saying, “Please excuse Tommy. His grandmother died.” So he got out with permission. This was 1965. His grandmother actually passed away in 1997 at the age of ninety-eight. I had no excuse. Anyway, we went to the ballgame and we had a really good time, and I got in trouble for cutting school. And we became really good friends. His name was Tommy. And eventually I dumped the college boyfriend, and we became boyfriend and girlfriend during our senior year. And we've now been married for fifty-one years.

Q: Incredible. Well, that's a wonderful story. All right. So as you're going through high school, are your parents talking to you about college? Are you thinking of college? How was that working?

MILLER: My mother went to the University of Michigan at a very challenging time during World War II. She lived in the Sigma Delta Tau sorority house, and there were almost no men on campus because they were all in the military. Her sorority sisters were getting some nice letters from their boyfriends and brothers, and others were getting official letters notifying them that their brother or fiancé was killed in the war. So it was a very weird and traumatic time in the mid-1940s.

At the time that I was applying to colleges in fall 1965, the University of Michigan was the best of the Big Ten schools, and I was limited by my parents to a Midwest college. Tom's parents had also attended the University of Michigan. His father was from the Detroit area, and his mother was from Chicago. In the middle of their sophomore year, in 1944, they dropped out for his father to enlist in the military during World War II. They left Ann Arbor and got married, and they never went back to Michigan or pursued further education, but Michigan was always this dream. Tom and I both applied, we both got accepted, and we went to Ann Arbor together in 1966.

Tom is the second of four brothers. His father wanted him to take over the business that he had started from the ground up. Tom was the only one of the brothers who showed any interest or acumen for business. His father's dream was that Tom would go to Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. When Tom was accepted, his father exclaimed, “This is great! You're going to Wharton! You're taking over the business.” And Tom's like, “No, I'm going to Michigan with my girlfriend.” We were seventeen. His father’s thought was, “You're crazy. Who does that?” But we entered Michigan together in August of 1966.

Q: So Michigan was coed by then?

MILLER: University of Michigan was always coed as a land grant state institution since 1817. Michigan was 150 years old in 1967 and there was a big Sesquicentennial celebration.

Q: Now once again, now you're in a much bigger field, a much different place and it's

1966. What was the campus like?

MILLER: That was an awakening. The University of Michigan was a very liberal, idealistic, and special place. In 1960, JFK stood on the steps of the Michigan Union and announced the idea for the Peace Corps. Tom and I grew up in Illinois listening to the Beatles, the Beach Boys, and Sonny and Cher and that kind of music, but at Michigan, it was 100 percent Motown. Motown was blaring everywhere. All the parties were Motown. Fraternity parties were flowing with beer. Lots of students were smoking pot.

In the mid-sixties, University of Michigan was a very politically active environment. There were anti-war and other protests all the time, all the way through my four years of undergrad there and even through grad school and beyond. And during my senior year, there was what was called a BAM strike, Black Action Movement. It was similar to Black Lives Matter. Protesters were shouting that Michigan was a state school and that Michigan's population was 12 percent Black, so the state population and college admissions should be proportionate. They closed down the Admin Building for weeks.

The week I graduated with my BA in Psychology was the massacre at Kent State University in neighboring Ohio, where the National Guard gunned down numerous unarmed protesting students who were our age, injuring many and killing four. Our government had turned against America's protesting college-age youth. And this was the same time that Nixon and Kissinger, after lying to the American public for years about the "successes" in the Vietnam War and covering up the massive U.S. military casualties and Vietnamese civilian deaths, extended the bombing into a secret war in Cambodia. I think that all of these events shaped the worldview of my generation, especially those of us living on college campuses and in university communities, as Tom and I did from 1966 until 1976.

The University had teach-ins all the time with wonderful world-famous speakers. Timothy Leary came to campus and imparted his psychedelic wisdom, sitting lotus-style on the stage in front of a huge audience: "Turn on, tune in, drop out." But there were also lectures by the psychologist Jean Piaget and some other cutting-edge scholars because U of M could attract those great speakers, artists and musicians.

The classes were terrific, and besides my Psych and Sociology courses, I took Art History, Music, the Soviet Union, and other broadening classes. Also, for Psych majors, they started an outreach program to get students into the Ann Arbor community. They assigned me a Head Start kid, a little boy who was four years old, and I was supposed to hang out with him. He was the second oldest in his family, and he wound up having four more younger brothers and sisters over the next ten years. I was close with that African American family from the time he was four and visited them the whole time I lived in Ann Arbor—10 years— and even afterward until that once little boy grew up and entered the military.

There were a lot of outreach projects at U of M in the late 1960s. When I was a senior, I took a course where the students volunteered at an institution called Wayne County Child Development Center about thirty minutes from Ann Arbor. That institution was not "developing" children; it was the dumping ground for unwanted kids from Detroit. It was

an institution as you think of an institution. The Black kids were just kids who grew up in poverty in inner city Detroit with parents who maybe were drug users or neglectful of their kids, usually struggling single parents. Many of the white kids had intellectual disabilities. I took the course and "tutored" a boy, and then I was asked to teach the course second semester of my senior year and continue as a teaching fellow through the two years of my social work grad school.

So I taught the course bringing University of Michigan students out to "tutor" these kids, but mainly to hang out and give them individual attention. After he graduated from U of M a semester early, Tom wound up working at that institution from January to June of 1970. Seeing the dismal situation and the bleak future for those Detroit kids, we realized that they were really being warehoused and weren't going anywhere except possibly the pipeline to prison. So we decided, with a couple of psychologists, a lawyer, and a few of the experienced people who worked at that center, to start a group home for the kids who had some potential but were languishing at the institution. Tom and I had gotten married in 1969 between junior and senior year. We were living in a tiny little basement married students' subsidized apartment for $94 a month, but we would have these kids spend weekends with us, one or two at a time.

We raised several tens of thousands of dollars, and we were taking the boys out shopping and for dinner for their birthdays; many did not even know when their birthdays were. We also took small groups of them to restaurants for a different experience. One year, I cooked a big turkey for the whole cottage of twenty boys at the institution, and we celebrated Thanksgiving with them just to give them a holiday experience. So we thought it would be great to get ten or twenty of these young boys into a group home and offer them a better chance in life. We started fundraising, and Tom went through all the red tape of establishing Hope for Kids, Inc. as a 501(c)3 in Michigan. We never did raise enough funds for the group home, but we did get some money to afford to have these kids come to our house and also take them to restaurants, museums and field trips and expose them to different experiences that normal families have, but that they weren't exposed to. We later used the remaining funds to help people living in poverty whom we encountered during our time in the Foreign Service.

Q: Okay. Now, you graduated in Psychology, and did your husband in the end go into the field of business?

MILLER: His concession to his father was to enroll at U of Michigan as a Pre-Business major in 1966. But he immediately changed to Political Science, and he graduated with his BA in Political Science, and then got a Master's in Southeast Asian Studies, then another Master's in Political Science and his PhD in Political Science. You were asking about international interest. Tom's father was a businessman and did import-export work in Japan during Tom's whole childhood, back and forth to Japan for several months each trip. He was living in Japan half the time. So Tom was interested in international matters from his father's experience in a foreign country after WWII and through the 1970s.

The first time I ever traveled on an airplane, I had already graduated high school. I was

always interested in travel and different cultures. Tom was in the Southeast Asian Studies program at Michigan and took several languages. For his PhD field work, we went to northeast Thailand in 1974. The town of Khon Kaen was between two U.S. Army bases, each an hour away, but no U.S. military personnel were allowed in Khon Kaen in 1974 during the last years of the Vietnam War. There were no foreigners in our town except for our project, which was researching opportunities for resettlement of hundreds of thousands of farmers and townspeople who would be flooded out when the largest dam in the world would be built. We lived in that upcountry town for six months and then in Bangkok for a month. I learned Thai because I had to, because nobody spoke English. Tom had taken Thai language in grad school at Michigan, so he was more proficient, but I learned survival Thai pretty quickly. It was a totally different language and tonal like Chinese. I couldn't read past first grade level, but unlike many Thai learners, I was able to distinguish and replicate the five tones.

Q: I was just curious with the kids that you tried to create the group house with. Were you ever able to stay in touch with any of them? Did you find out how they did?

MILLER: We were not able to, and their names were very common American names. We'd be reading *The Detroit News* and expecting to see their names there, like this one got arrested for this charge. We didn't have a lot of optimism that these kids would wind up going to Harvard or Michigan or anywhere else. I think that this was kind of the institution-to-prison pipeline, especially for those Black kids.

Q: And so that then, before you and your husband went to Thailand for the PhD, you had not traveled out of the country.

MILLER: My family and I took a trip to Mexico as a high school graduation trip, my siblings' and my first time on an airplane. I had taken Spanish in high school and was really interested in the culture. And then two years later, we took another family trip to Mexico, and that was really great.

Q: Did that spark any new curiosity for you in foreign cultures and so on?

MILLER: There was always curiosity. There just weren't the means. But Tom and I did the traditional student "Europe on $5 a day" adventure for two months during the summer of 1970. We had very little money and actually almost stuck to the $5 a day budget, and it was terrific to visit so many countries and see the art and architecture that I had studied in History of Art at Michigan. Most of my friends and sorority sisters traveled to Europe between junior and senior years. We did it differently. We got married between junior and senior year and went to Europe after we graduated college in 1970. We immediately went to graduate school, so we were at Michigan from 1966 to 1975. I got my Master's degree in Social Work in May 1972, and Tom finished his PhD in August 1975.

Social Work graduate school at U of M was a two-year program, with half the time each year in class and half in internships in the field. My internships were disappointing and not in my fields of interest. Plus the academics were exclusively based on behavior modification interventions rather than focusing on family dynamics, mental illness,

culture, poverty, oppression, racism, etc.

Q: And so now during that time, did you intend to be a working spouse?

MILLER: Yes, I thought I'd first get a Master's degree, so I did that on two fellowships. Tom had several fellowships for grad school too. He took the Foreign Service exam in his senior year and passed it and went for the oral interview. They said, "We would like to accept you, so when can you start?" And he replied, "I want to get a PhD. It'll take five years." And they said, "Then retake the exam in five years," which is exactly what he did.

I was always interested in traveling and learning new languages and experiencing other cultures, and I figured that I would definitely work at the beginning full-time. And then after having kids, I would somehow fit in work and raising children, but once Tom joined the Foreign Service, you can never plan any career, ever. For Foreign Service spouses, who were mostly women at the time, it was kind of catch as catch can, and I was actually able to do that. None of it paid well, but I was actually able to have a portable career as a Foreign Service spouse, as a mental health professional, a psychotherapist, a professor, and a training facilitator, and I was able to cobble together a bunch of different jobs as well as raising our kids. I think that for most spouses, there was no such thing as a continuous career path where they could progress up the ladder and get promoted. But I did take advantage of some opportunities that were growth experiences.

Q: All right. So now you're both studying in the same school, and you're married as you are going through your own graduate education. Your career aspirations remain to be a practicing psychologist.

MILLER: For grad school, Michigan had a very highly rated School of Social Work. We both went through grad school, and we were poor as church mice. We got no financial help from our families, even our senior year when we were married and not eligible for scholarships. So we both financed school by working and also on fellowships. We had jobs throughout our undergrad years, and in grad school, I was a Teaching Fellow, so we both got in-state tuition, which made a difference.

Q: What were the work experiences like? Did your work during college or maybe even high school provide you with tools or talents, resources, skills that were useful later?

MILLER: I was a Psych research assistant as an undergrad, but I also worked at a nearby preschool when I was living in the Sigma Delta Tau sorority house, and they had rules for dealing with the kids that were really instructive. I remember those guidelines, and I used them in raising my own kids and even decades later, when I wrote a book on parenting. So from Head Start days, I liked little kids, and working in the preschool was fun.

I also worked in the summers during my undergrad years. My first summer in college, I sold women's clothing in the Chicago suburbs at a popular store that had all the clothes that everyone my age wanted to wear and gave employee discounts. My second summer, between sophomore and junior years, I worked for the Office of Economic Opportunity, a national anti-poverty program based in Chicago.

In 1968, I worked in the northwest suburbs of Chicago in a program called Neighborhood Youth Corps, where the particular demographic I worked with was sixteen- and seventeen-year-old Spanish-speaking children of seasonal migrant workers. Their parents were from Mexico and were working in the fields near Chicago in the summers. The Neighborhood Youth Corps program got summer jobs for the teenagers, so I had to find temporary jobs for these kids who did not speak English. But not grunt work jobs either, you know, jobs that would help them and give them some work experience. And then every Friday, we would take field trips, which was tons of fun. I loved it. I used my Spanish. My boss was an alcoholic and never came to the office, so I got to run everything on my own.

I had a secretary who manned the office, and at age nineteen, and I ran the program, kind of making it up as I went along. It was wonderful. I was invited to come back to Neighborhood Youth Corps the next summer between junior and senior years. So I went to the Office of Economic Opportunity office in downtown Chicago and had an admin job working for the greater Chicago/Illinois Neighborhood Youth Corps to set up the program, especially the Friday "cultural enrichment" piece of it, for a minority cohort, mostly Black and some Latinx. But that boss was pretty lazy and incompetent, so I had to do much of his job too. And then Tom and I got married on August 3, 1969, and we moved into our tiny Ann Arbor married students' apartment and started school two weeks later.

Q: I am curious about one thing in preschool. You mentioned you, there were rules about how you could deal with the children. Was that based on Piaget or Montessori or was it a particular theory of early childhood education?

MILLER: Probably all of those. But a lot of it was just communication techniques and not telling kids, "Don't" and giving choices and building self-esteem, telling kids what you do want instead of what you don't want. You know, how not to be punitive with kids who are acting out. So it just seemed to kind of ground me. But this was the way that my mother communicated with all of us, so it was in my framework.

Q: Great. Now why don't we go to Thailand? It sounds like all of the background and development work you've done kind of prepares you for Thailand, even though you don't have the language.

MILLER: Right. So I have to backtrack a little bit. I finished graduate school in 1972. Tom completed his PhD in 1975, so he was still in school in Ann Arbor for three more years. In 1972, I landed a school social worker job in Michigan. I don't know if you've heard of Howell, Michigan. These days, it's kind of a happening place, an exurb of Detroit, but in 1972, Howell, Michigan was the state headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society and was 100 percent white. I was living in liberal Ann Arbor and commuting to conservative Howell, forty-five minutes away but a cultural chasm away. We school social workers worked in what was called a county Intermediate School District that combined five different townships. Howell was the middle of it, the office was in Howell, and my schools were in Howell. They were just starting the school social

work program, with no higher oversight or supervision, and we were the first social workers in the schools, so it was flexible, and we were on our own to create the job description any way we wanted. Also, they were just starting mandatory special education in Michigan.

We had psychologists, social workers, special ed teachers and others. I was responsible for six schools where I served as the only social worker: a large high school and middle school and four elementary schools. And we all made it up as we went. I was able to be creative and started student groups and teacher training on social-emotional learning in the schools, which is big today some fifty years later. I worked with parents; I was a so-called "expert" on parenting, but I was 24 years old and didn't have my own children, and I ran parenting groups and was kind of punting.

All of the social workers had a secret: either we were Jewish or married to Blacks. Many of the families that I worked with had participated in "white flight" from Detroit, as Blacks migrated from the south to the Detroit area. As Blacks got jobs in manufacturing and especially the auto industry, there was a huge Black influx into Detroit, and the white people there fled to Howell and the townships surrounding it. So obviously my worldviews were not the same as the Howell community, but the parents that I was working with said, "Oh, wow, you went to college. You must know a lot." So we young professionals got respect because of our education. It was really fun and interesting, and the kids I worked with were great. I was just getting to know about learning disabilities and attention deficit.

Q: So attention deficit was already a named issue as far back as the seventies.

MILLER: Yes. It wasn't a real diagnosis yet, I think, and children didn't have an IEP for it, an Individualized Educational Plan. But we saw a lot of kids with those symptoms, and I don't think any of these kids were on medication.

I worked in Howell doing individual counseling, kids' groups, teacher consults and other related activities for two and a half years, and then I took a leave of absence for seven months to go with Tom to Thailand. In Khon Kaen, we lived in a tiny, unheated one-bedroom house with no kitchen and a squat toilet that we threw water in (no flush), no shower or bathtub or anything, but we did have cold running water. To take a shower, we had this big three-foot high ceramic jar, and we would dip the dipper into the jar to rinse, and it was cold, even in warm weather. We ate our meals next door with the project director and his wife who were also on the University of Michigan team. One evening at dinner, I commented on how cool and pleasant it was compared to previous days. We looked at the thermometer—95 degrees.

I tutored three teenage Thai girls who worked at the "Number One General Store." We lived in a town with three main streets, all unpaved. The Number One Store was a little hole-in-the-wall general store. I taught the girls English, and they taught me Thai. I had to kind of learn Thai by the seat of my pants, and it was a different dialect than Bangkok Thai.

Tom was traveling all over rural northeast Thailand to interview farmers and townspeople who would be flooded out by the largest dam in the world. The proposal was that after the Vietnam War, they were going to build a dam named Pa Mong to generate electricity and provide irrigation from the Mekong River for much of Thailand and Laos. But what do they do with all of these farmers who are going to be flooded out? So Tom and his Thai team interviewed a sampling of farmers in that flood plain; he went all over the rural areas, and I often traveled with him. He asked, "What would you want when the dam is built? Would you move to the city? Would you want to just be given cash to compensate for your land?" That was his PhD research and dissertation. But for political reasons, the dam was never built after the war, so it was pretty much an interesting academic exercise.

Q: Fascinating. Because at that time of life to be able to see that kind of living and that part of Thailand was, it must have been fascinating. Did you have any access to medical care in the event of emergency?

MILLER: Yes, it was fascinating, I can't remember about the medical care. Fortunately, we were 25 years old and healthy. I don't remember visiting a doctor or a clinic, but we probably got meds for frequent intestinal problems due to poor food preparation and storage.

Q: Now, once the project research ends, do you stay there for any other length of time to get it written up or typed up or published, or are you then back on your way to the U.S?

MILLER: We went back to Ann Arbor in the fall of 1974 so I could start the school year in the Howell schools and work there for the next year and a half. Tom wrote his dissertation. As in Thailand, I worked as his unpaid research assistant, typing reports and organizing his work. He got his PhD in August 1975 and retook the Foreign Service exam the spring before that.

For a few months in 1975, we had a fourteen-year-old girl live with us. She came from a very troubled family in Ann Arbor, and we wanted to give her a more stable home life. We had known her for several years and realized that she had a lot of potential. When we moved to DC in 1976, we kept in touch with her for a few years until we moved to Thailand when we lost contact. She found us again about ten years ago, and now we are back in touch, and she is almost 60 years old.

In 1975, Tom was working for a company called Bendix, where he was traveling to U.S. military bases and interviewing young recruits, 18-21-year-olds, to research why these kids were not doing well in the military. Then the State Department started calling and saying, "You passed the written exam; you passed the oral. We'd like you to come into the May Foreign Service Junior Officer class or the June class." Tom was traveling, and I was on the phone with the State Department folks, saying, "No, not yet. Just wait."

And then they'd call back and Tom was traveling again. "We'd like to invite Tom for the July class or the September class." Nope, I'm still working. And then they called again, and said, "If he doesn't come for the January 1976 Junior Officer class, this invitation is no longer valid." So it was me on the phone again, and I was pregnant, and I said, "I

guess he's coming," because this Bendix job was temporary. Tom left Ann Arbor for Washington in January 1976. I stayed behind to finish my work in the Howell schools, knowing that there was no way that I could get a job in DC being pregnant because employers could discriminate back then. I stayed in Ann Arbor until March when I was six months pregnant.

Oh, the other thing, as I backtrack to our life in Ann Arbor, was that Tom was in ROTC in undergrad, and it was another culture shock when we went to Fort Benning and lived in Columbus, Georgia, where I did not understand the Southern dialect of English, and the Southern and military culture was completely different from Ann Arbor. That was the summer of 1972 at the height of the Vietnam War. Tom was marching around in the fields of Georgia all day in the 100-degree heat. I was also taking courses at Georgia State University in Columbus because, unbeknownst to me, to be credentialed as a licensed school social worker in Michigan, it was required to have twelve extra credits in Education beyond a Master's degree in Social Work. So I took the courses with military people, and it was a piece of cake. But I was starting to get bored, so I went to the Fort Benning mental health clinic and said, "I'm yours. I have a Master's in Social Work. I'm happy to volunteer." And so I volunteered doing counseling for some of the time that we were at Fort Benning.

Q: Okay. So he goes into training, but then they don't deploy him.

MILLER: So here is the story of how we got to Fort Benning: In 1971, Tom had a Master's degree in Southeast Asian Studies during the height of the Vietnam War. I was working as a medical social worker at the University of Michigan Hospital in the summer between my two social work grad school years, and Tom came in to see me in my office. We knew he owed the military two years of active duty, and unexpectedly, he had just received a letter saying that the military was not losing as many Military Intelligence officers as they had anticipated, so they were only going to deploy eight out of ten people in Military Intelligence for the full two years. Ten percent would go for a six-month period, and ten percent for only three months. "Which option would you like? We'll give you the extra year to get your second Master's degree. Would you like your name to be entered in a lottery for a shorter time?" The answer was obvious—yes!

So he lucked out with the shortest three-month active-duty option, and we were at Fort Benning in the summer of 1972. And then I was starting my new job in the schools in Howell. Tom's commanding officer was wonderful to let us out two weeks early so that I could get to Michigan by the start of the school year. So it was two and a half months at Fort Benning, but it felt like two and a half years.

Q: So now you were saying that you're six months pregnant in 1976, correct? And now Tom is already in Washington.

MILLER: I moved to Washington in early March of 1976. Tom finished the six-week Junior Officer intro course, and then we moved to a brand new four-bedroom townhouse in Franconia in Fairfax County. I gave birth to our daughter Julie on May 29, 1976, and

we really didn't know anybody; everybody in Tom's A100 Junior Officer course was posted abroad immediately for their first assignment, so all of his classmates were overseas. We had never known anyone who had served in government or the military. One exception was my third cousin (by marriage), who was twenty years older and who had been in the Foreign Service for many years. Their family was kind of our anchor in DC; they had three teenagers and we hung out with them, but it was not easy to make friends.

Our daughter Julie had some medical issues when she was born, and we decided that we could have another baby, but it would have to be in Washington where excellent medical care was available. I was not going to be one of those adventurous women giving birth in Ouagadougou. Tom's first job in the State Department was in INR [Intelligence and Research]. On March 30, 1978, a Friday afternoon, Tom came home and announced that there was a junior officer position opening at the consulate in Chiang Mai, Thailand, for the following year. Chiang Mai was like heaven compared to Khon Kaen, the Thai town where we had lived four years before. And he said, "I have to tell them on Monday if we're going to take it." So I said, "Yes, but we have to have a baby first." So two weeks later, I was pregnant again, and our son Eric was born in early January 1979, and we went to Chiang Mai that September.

Q: So during the period while you're pregnant, are you taking time at FSI or what was the interim, what did you do in the interim?

MILLER: When I arrived in Washington in the three months before my daughter was born, I was able to take advantage of several spouse courses, which were really interesting and instructive, since I had no idea of government culture or the role of Foreign Service spouses. Then I had Julie at the end of May of 1976. I was at home with her full-time for five months.

And then I thought I'd like to use my counseling skills and work part-time. Tom, as most of his colleagues in the Department, was working ridiculous hours and weekends, and I figured that he wasn't going to be active in raising our daughter, but I could still work part-time. So I went to our wonderful pediatrician and said, "You might be able to use someone to help with the parents and parenting stuff and communication and discipline.". He said, "I already have hired somebody like that." He was so ahead of the times. He suggested, "But maybe Dr. Ira Seiler in Springfield would be interested." And coincidentally, we were living in Springfield.

So I call Dr. Seiler, who had a three-doctor pediatric practice called Nova Pediatrics. He said, "Yes, that sounds interesting to me." I interviewed and made my pitch: "Here's what I can do. I'm a social worker specializing in children and families. I can work flexible part-time hours doing counseling with kids and parents." And he said, "How many cases do you need to start?" I said, "One," and he said, "Here's your case. You start now." I worked for them part-time that whole three-year period before we moved to Chiang Mai. I got my Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) credential a year later and have renewed my license every two years for over four decades.

Childcare was a challenge. My schedule was very erratic, and every time I went to work to see a few clients, I had to find a babysitter, which was difficult. There was no such thing as part-time daycare, so I had to arrange it for different hours every day that I worked. We finally wound up going to Chiang Mai when our daughter was three and our son was eight months old.

Q: I don't know many parents who would take their small children with them to Chiang Mai, but you had already spent some time in Thailand. So you had the experience and you felt confident that the surroundings for them would be safe and you'd be able to manage their growth and so on.

MILLER: Chiang Mai was a scenic little town at the foot of a mountain near hilltribe populations. Before we left for Thailand, Tom was working all the time. He was actually taking Thai language—which he had studied in grad school—at FSI so that he could get proficient. And he was doing a lot of work with AFSA and also work on refugees in 1979, which was a huge issue at the time, so he was never home.

Q: When did you actually go out to Chiang Mai? But his first job was in the Department was in INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research].

MILLER: His second job at State was working for Phil Habib and David Newsom in P [Undersecretary for Political Affairs] from 1977 until the day before our son was born on January 4, 1979. Phil wanted a Chief of Staff who was at a senior level and an assistant at every level, and Tom was at the lowest level, so he was the grunt. I barely saw him at all during my entire second pregnancy. He would be up and out by five in the morning and home very late at night. And then he got the Thai assignment and started taking Thai language, but he was still working on refugees and AFSA and was at the Department or FSI all the time.

I planned really well for our first foreign posting with children. I went to ToysRUs and bought toys for one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-year-olds. I got all the nice Fisher Price toys, but unfortunately, they were all stolen in our sea freight in transit to Chiang Mai, so my kids had nothing to play with, because toys in Thailand were flimsy plastic and lead-based painted and unsafe.

I figured it would be safe in Chiang Mai. Thais liked Americans. I didn't know if there would be a preschool for my daughter, since there was no way to find out beforehand in those days before emails and CLOs. My first week in Chiang Mai, this American woman came to our house and said, “I'm running a preschool in my home. One of my daughters, who is a year younger than your Julie, will be in my preschool, and another daughter is two and a half years older than Julie. And I'd like for Julie to come to my preschool.” This wonderful woman, who became my best friend, was Joyce Powers. And that was a saving grace for me and for Julie, because Joyce provided a great little preschool for Julie and was a close friend to me.

We had a home staff consisting of a cook and a maid who did the laundry because we only had a non-electric, hand wringer washing machine and no clothes dryer. And for a

pittance, we hired a nanny, mostly to take care of our active baby son. That way, I could spend quality time with each of my kids while the nanny looked after the other one. Our maid and her husband, who was our gardener and handyman, lived behind us in the same compound, and they had a daughter two years older than Julie who was the world's greatest "big sister" to her. Both of our kids became fluent in the local Thai dialect and would chatter away in Thai.

Those were nice, quiet times. But we were totally out of communication and isolated from the world outside of Chiang Mai. Sometimes we had a working local phone. One time, my father called me from Chicago, and I knew it was costing five dollars a minute. He was telling me about the basement flooding, and I was thinking that this is the house I lived in my whole childhood in Chicago; the basement floods every year and he's spending lots of money telling me this. But I was missing five words and getting five words of what he was telling me on the erratic phone line. And then I realized it was *our* basement in *our* townhouse in Virginia that we were renting out that was flooding, and the renters wanted to move out, and they wanted us to pay for their hotel.

I asked my dad to take care of it, so that we didn't have to pay for a hotel, and he handled the situation and got the flooding fixed. All communication in Chiang Mai was really terrible. Once a week, we would get the *Bangkok Post*, and it would say, "The American hostages are still prisoners in Iran." That was our news, and the Thai papers did not report American news anyway, so that was all we knew about the outside world. We had Thai TV, but nothing in English. Snail mail took two and a half weeks, so it would take over a month to receive a response.

Q: Incredible. Almost like being a Peace Corps volunteer.

MILLER: Almost, except that we had the terrific home staff. We needed a cook because there was only one actual food store in town besides the open market where you had to bargain in Thai. We went to that store once and bought salad dressing, and the expiration date was older than our daughter. And I said, "Let the cook make salad dressing." There was a small PX. Our son had a cow's milk allergy and needed soy milk, and when the PX ran out, he wound up dehydrated overnight in the hospital at twelve months old.

It was not the sophisticated and hip Chiang Mai that tourists visit these days. Transportation was by bicycle pedicab. There were no stores selling ready-made clothing. After chasing around after Eric for a year, our nanny decided she wanted to be a seamstress, so I bought her a sewing machine, and she practiced making clothes for our kids. When we left, I got her jobs working one day a week as a seamstress for five foreign families.

Another interesting aspect of this posting for Tom was his work with refugees. Hmong hill tribe refugees were flooding into northern Thailand, a few hours' drive from where we lived, hoping to gain entrance to the U.S. because they were being persecuted after they had helped the CIA in Laos during the Vietnam War. We visited them in the refugee camps and heard their stories. Tom also had temporary tours of duty [TDYs] in Udorn, northeast Thailand, for a week, on the Thai-Cambodian border with Cambodian refugees

for two weeks, and then with our family in Songkhla, southern Thailand, for a week. In Songkhla, Tom and I visited refugee camps where Vietnamese boat people had just arrived after enduring the most horrific journey, first escaping from the repressive regime in Vietnam and then being beaten, robbed and raped by Thai pirates. So much suffering in that area of the world!

Chiang Mai seemed safe, and we could travel until October 14, 1980. That day, I got a strange phone call from someone at the U.S. consulate telling me to bring our kids to the consulate. What is this? I was sitting alone in the consulate office and someone was saying that Joyce Powers, who as you remember was my daughter's preschool teacher and my best friend, had been kidnapped. And then, the American secretary came in and announced abruptly, “She's dead.” Wow. What a way to tell someone that their best friend had been murdered.

So backtracking that day, Joyce, a real go-getter who in addition to heading the PTA at the American elementary school and running her own preschool three mornings a week, was also leading an exercise class two mornings a week at the consulate. I went to her exercise class that morning, and she said, “I'm going downtown after class. Do you want to come with me?” I told her that we had visitors from Bangkok, the parents of this little girl who was my daughter's age, and her name was Baba. And I always feel that Baba saved my life. So I went home for the playdate and didn't go with Joyce that day. Joyce was with her nanny, her nine-month-old baby, and her daughter who had just had her three-year-old birthday party the day before. And some thug came up and kidnapped them at gunpoint, kidnapped Joyce with the three-year-old daughter and tried to take the baby.

The nanny grabbed the baby and ran off to notify Joyce's husband, Mike, who was the head of the DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] office in Chiang Mai. There was a standoff after many hours in a parking lot where Mike was with a bunch of Thai police. He took off his shirt to show that he didn't have a weapon and negotiated for Nicki’s release from the gunman. He had Nicki in his arms and was turning to hand her off to a cop behind him when they all heard gunshots. Joyce was shot in the head point blank. Then right away, the police shot the gunman. This was so very traumatic. Forty years ago this fall.

Q: Unbelievable.

MILLER: We didn't know why she had been kidnapped, and perhaps the original plan was not to kill her or her children; we’ll never know. Joyce was wearing a baht necklace, which was an expensive gold necklace, which the gunman took. We didn't know if the kidnapping was because she was a “rich” foreigner, an American, or was it linked to Mike’s job as head of DEA? My somewhat informed guess was that they tried to kidnap as many people as possible to trade them for drug traffickers whom Mike had put away in jail. It was a horrible day. I arranged for someone to take my kids home where the nanny could take care of them. They were four and one and a half years old. And then I went to Joyce's house because she had kids who were six and a half, three, and nine months old.

I didn't take my kids out of the house for a month afterwards because I didn't think it was safe, and there was a lot of uncertainty and apprehension. Everybody was traumatized. My daughter obviously was out of school. They did restart her preschool several weeks later with another DEA wife teaching, and outside of this little home preschool were armed guards with huge guns. There was no such thing as a CLO [Community Liaison Officer] at this post. I was the closest thing to it. I got a call from the embassy in Bangkok. They said, whatever we can do for you, but they really didn't do anything. And it was just a horrible, traumatic time.

Q: Did the husband and the DEA and the kids go back?

MILLER: Mike wanted to stay in Chiang Mai to investigate further. Joyce's sister came from New Jersey, and she was more emotional than anybody. She and I went through all of Joyce's things to give away. She offered me jewelry, and I should have taken one piece as a memento, but I said that Joyce had two daughters and to keep it for the daughters when they got older.

Then Thanksgiving week, Joyce's sister and my husband took the three kids to live in New Jersey. They had never lived in the U.S. or experienced cold weather, and they didn't have any winter clothing. I was on my own for Thanksgiving with my two little children. Nobody reached out. This was kind of a divided U.S. official community between agencies.

Joyce's kids lived with their aunt in New Jersey for a while until Mike, some months later after trying to solve this case which was never really solved, moved the family to West Springfield, Virginia. We were nine months away from finishing our tour and returning to DC. We sold our house in Franconia and moved to West Springfield in August of 1981 so that we could help Mike with the kids and also for our kids to be in a better school district. He brought his dedicated Thai nanny, who was also Joyce's assistant preschool teacher in Chiang Mai, back to take care of the three kids. So that's how we bought a house in West Springfield that we lived in until our kids graduated high school and beyond and finally sold in 2000. And then Mike got a job in Tampa two years later as the regional head of DEA in West Florida. He's almost 80 now and is a grandfather and still in Tampa. Several years later, he married a wonderful woman who adopted his children, and they created a successful blended family. So it was a reasonably happy ending for him, but still, the girls were really traumatized. And it was hard for everybody. Later FSI was teaching security courses saying that officers must be vigilant and need to vary their routes, but nothing dangerous ever happens to spouses, and I'm thinking, "Wrong." That's what they were teaching at FSI: "Watch out if you're an officer; families are safe."

Q: And, and of course, at least in those, in those years, in the late seventies, there were no courses for spouses and spouses weren't given any training whatsoever.

MILLER: Actually, you were asking what I was doing when I was pregnant and had just arrived in DC in 1976. There were FSI workshops for spouses, and there were even better courses for spouses than now. Joan Wilson and Barbara Hoganson were involved in

designing and facilitating those courses for many years. They started a two-week basic spouse course and other cultural courses. Later, I wound up teaching part of the Cross-Cultural Adjustment course, and decades later, I taught the entire two-week DCM Spouse course. And so that was the first thing that I did when I arrived in 1976 because I knew nothing about the Foreign Service or government or Washington, which was a different culture than the Chicago suburbs or Ann Arbor. And then way later in the 2000s and 2010s, I taught a session every year for many years of the Area Studies course on Bosnia and Former Yugoslavia. So I was in and out of FSI, but yes, there was training for spouses and then they kept narrowing it down. And so the two-week course wound up being about a day and a half. There wasn't a security course until later, only a briefing at Embassy Bangkok, but later it was mandatory for everyone at FSI.

Q: But in that first period of time all of the courses you're describing were sort of generated by the spouses themselves.

MILLER: No, it was Joan Wilson and Barbara Hoganson, under official State Department auspices and funding. They were seasoned Foreign Service spouses, but under the old system until 1972, where performance of spouses—almost all of whom were wives—was included on their husband's efficiency reports.

And then there was a woman named Stephanie Kinney, who was a spouse and later became an officer in 1976. She is one of my oldest and best friends, and she is actually why I'm here now, because she suggested that I do an oral history to Susan Johnson, who is the president of ADST, your organization. In 1976, Stephanie gave a one-day course about career planning and future planning. That was a really cool day to contemplate where do you see yourself in one year or two years or five years? I couldn't even project ahead; I was pregnant with my first child. I couldn't see myself past a second baby and maybe a first tour to someplace unknown, but it was like, what do you really want to do? What are your goals? What is your vision?

Q: So the reason I'm asking is because as you go through the years in the Foreign Service, first of all, there's a watershed with 1980 and the Foreign Service Act where a lot of things or at least in trying to improve a number of these things for families and so on, it takes a while to go from law to actual practice. But what I'm curious about is in any of the preparation before you went out to Thailand and some of these early assignments, did you feel that the Department was, or at least maybe FSI was, recognizing that spouses needed some particular training?

MILLER: I think that two-week course in 1976 was very useful, and most spouses new to DC and on their way to a foreign posting did not have jobs. For me, it was different not being posted to an embassy in a capital city; our first posting was a small upcountry consulate. Tom was the Vice Consul and one of only two Foreign Service Officers. The other officer was the consul, who was a very introverted single man, so he let Tom do a lot of the interesting and exciting stuff, which was great. We visited refugee camps and interviewed Hmong refugees from Laos since Tom had the background in Southeast Asian refugees. In the consulate, there were no other Foreign Service Officers, and there were many ancillary people like DEA, another agency, and a few military families. It was

a very different kind of consular assignment, and there was no "first lady" of the consulate, since the consul was single. Tom didn't have to do visa work like many first-tour officers, but he conducted prison support visits for Americans who were imprisoned long-term in Thailand for drug offenses.

Q: And I imagine very few other foreign consulates were even located there.

MILLER: There were the Chinese, I think; I don't think the U.S. was talking to them then. There was the British, whom we always have excellent relations with. French, Canadian, Indian.

Q: Were there any opportunities to socialize with them?

MILLER: We would go to their national days. But it wasn't like being in an embassy, and later, we were in Greece three times and in Bosnia, which were all different experiences, but they were all embassy experiences, with a bustling official and social life, especially in Greece. There wasn't that kind of thing in Chiang Mai because it was such a small community and because of the U.S. agency clashes, which also extended down to the spouses due to certain personalities there. There wasn't comradery, which was unfortunate, especially when Joyce was killed. It would have been nice to have received that support.

What I actually did was to get a job at Chiang Mai University. I worked at all of our overseas postings and was always the only spouse to be employed in the local economy. At Chiang Mai University, I taught Psychology. I spoke English because my proper Thai was rudimentary. I could get around, but I certainly didn't have academic Thai. The Psychology professors sat in on my classes, and I would bring in my yellow pad notes, and the students were adorable. But they would never ask questions. And so finally, I realized that it was a cultural issue, that if students ask the professor a question, they're showing the professor that she didn't explain it well enough, and they didn't want to insult me by asking questions. But then the regular professors would model what we wanted and asked lots of questions, and by the end, the students would start raising their hands.

I also got a contract through the embassy. I was the closest thing to a CLO. I wrote a manual on adjusting to life in Chiang Mai as an expatriate. It was called *"I'm Not a Tourist. I Live Here,"* with information on navigating the foreign environment: where you buy this, how you do that, Thai culture and holidays, common words to know, recreational activities, etc. There were no computers, so I would go all around town and do my research and then type it all up at consulate. The embassy in Bangkok paid me a huge salary of $200 for months and months of work.

Q: So after the shooting, you were still there for nine more months, right? And does the embassy send you or pay for any changes to security as a result of that?

MILLER: Not that I remember. We had a house guard at the time who weighed about 110 pounds. He would sleep outside our gate. As far as I know, no, except for the DEA

spouse who became my daughter's preschool teacher, who was protected by armed guards with big guns.

Q: As the end of the tour is approaching you and your husband must've been talking a bit about where you wanted to go next or what your intentions were. Do you recall that?

MILLER: Yes. I wanted to go back to West Springfield and help Mike with his kids. Tom always liked working in the Department, and he was offered a job on the Israeli desk, which was a terrific job, especially at that time. So that assignment was from 1981 to 1983. And then he had other jobs in the Department. He would commute from West Springfield to work at the State Department. To me and the kids, which job in the Department didn't make a big difference, obviously not a cultural difference. Julie, Eric and I were living a suburban life in West Springfield where they started elementary school.

Q: Then the return to Washington, the new Foreign Service Act of 1980. Once it was completed, were you ever given any briefing on how things were changing? Particularly, I mean, I don't know that you were on your husband's evaluation, but of course before the Foreign Service Act, wives were considered sort of part of their husbands' evaluation and would be graded on how well they entertained and so on.

MILLER: It was legislation in 1972 that changed the role of spouses. The change did not affect us by the time Tom entered the service in 1976. He probably would have remained a junior officer and then be booted out if I were being evaluated. I did not pour tea; I was pretty independent. The Protocol course said spouses needed to go to the parties—although they were on the hook for finding and paying for babysitters in order to do that. And if you're invited to an official U.S. Embassy function, you need to show up before anybody in order to help. You're an unpaid employee in that situation. But the other piece was that you don't have to do that, and the officer is not being evaluated on your performance, and your behavior and participation are not affecting his promotions. So that was in 1972 when things changed.

Q: But then again, after 1980, you know, I've interviewed people who say they had to attend lectures or explanations about everything that was changing now, but you don't recall that?

MILLER: No. We were in Thailand in 1979-81 when the Foreign Service Act of 1980 was passed, but as I said, the significant change for spouses was in 1972, not 1980. It was definitely a culture shock to return to the U.S. We came back when Julie was in kindergarten, and we didn't know anything about American kid culture in the suburbs. Eric and I were home for the first few months, and then I got him into a two morning a week preschool until he was finally old enough to get into Prince of Peace, which he called Prince of Pizza, for three mornings a week. That was a terrific experience, where he had creative and caring teachers.

The good thing was that I went back to my pediatrician employers, who were now my

children's pediatricians, which was wonderful and convenient and free. And I said, “Here I am.” And they said, “Great! When can you start counseling?” So I worked for them with a flexible schedule from 1981 to 1985, when we went to Greece.

Q: You were working as a clinical social worker. I'm curious about what you began to notice about kids in terms of comparing what you did when you were younger in Michigan to now, what you're doing in West Springfield. Are approaches changing? You had mentioned that there were ADHD kids, but undiagnosed. Were things beginning to change in that way, were you beginning to apply different standards and approaches?

MILLER: First of all, since I was working with pediatricians, my child clients had access to medication for ADHD, depression, anxiety, etc. The schools in Fairfax County were very good. And by this time there were IEPs [Individualized Education Plans] and educational testing, and so I worked with the schools with these kids and there were more services out there. And LD and ADHD were in the media; you turn on *Good Morning America*, and some psychologist would be talking about attention deficit. So more people were familiar with it, but I was diagnosing left and right for attention deficit and then sending kids to psychologists or through the schools to get their learning disabilities diagnosed and educational services. In my private practice, I was also working on family problems, adjustment problems, and marital problems. It was a child and adult practice.

Q: And then the other thing I'm curious about is given all this work that you're doing at home in the U.S., does it help you prepare for what you will be doing later as a spouse, as you begin to go to other places in the world?

MILLER: You know, everything prepares for everything else, or you take pieces of it, but no, it was just a suburban lifestyle. Tom was working all the time. I was with the kids, and we spent four years back in the States and I was working part-time.

Q: Were you doing anything with the Department in terms of advising or making recommendations or taking any courses or anything?

MILLER: I worked at FSI occasionally. They would ask me to do a presentation, and I think it was mostly on adjustment. It was just a piece, not a full seminar, but I would come for a half day and give an interactive workshop on stress management or cross-cultural adjustment, which because of my experience, became my thing.

Q: Yeah, absolutely. Were you beginning to see changes in the way the Department addressed families, the support that it was providing for things like that?

MILLER: Yes, definitely. When the FLO [Family Liaison] office was established at the State Department in 1976, it didn't affect me. But establishing CLO offices overseas emphasized that officers were going to foreign posts and bringing their families, and that families needed support. CLO offices started out at some larger posts and then were finally at almost all posts.

The other thing I want to say about the Department, and it was very short-lived, was in the mid-eighties when they started a mental health program through the Medical Office at State. There was a mental health program coordinator in addition to the CLO at certain posts. So when we went to Greece from 1985 to 1987, I was the mental health program coordinator. I set up cross-cultural adjustment seminars and stress management and mental health and substance abuse referrals. I led a teen group at the American Community Schools for embassy teens, and we did a variety of fun activities.

I conducted mental health workshops like coping with anxiety and depression. I brought in a colleague, an American social worker who was an expert on substance abuse, to give some workshops and take referrals. I got paid next to nothing, probably ten cents an hour, but I did that the whole two years I was in Athens, and I think it was beneficial for the community that the State Department put an emphasis and a little bit of funding into employee and family mental health. And then they abolished the program as I was leaving Greece in 1987. They couldn't afford those pennies for that program. So instead, there was a Regional Psychiatrist who visited once or twice during the two years I was there, even though Athens was a high-threat post.

Q: Wait, you're talking about Greece now. Oh, sorry. I was wondering if, if back while you were in Washington, there had been anything that began to be discussed or used at all in spouse preparation and training, but that's okay.

MILLER: In the last interview, I discussed the programs for spouses that were offered when we first came into the service in 1976. When the Family Liaison Office opened in the Department and later satellite CLO offices at embassies, they provided a lot of services for families, among them information on educational choices for children at posts. You had to go into FSI and sort through the box for each post and then photocopy the material. From 1981 to 1985, I was basically in the suburbs, and Tom was in the Department, and I think by the time we left for Athens, it was mandatory to take the one- or two-day security course to go out.

Q: Okay. Now, when they're preparing you to go to Greece, are they giving you a security briefing? Were they telling you what kind of threats there might be?

MILLER: I don't remember specifically, but our traumatic experience in Chiang Mai made us cautious, if not paranoid. We knew that there was a terrorist group in Greece called November 17th. My husband was in a two-person Greek language training class with a Navy captain named Bill Nordeen, who was going out as the Military Attaché at Embassy Athens. They were briefed on everything about Greece, especially the political situation after the junta. Over those nine months in 1984-85, Tom learned a lot about November 17th and terrorism. Spouses could take language, but I was trying to balance the kids, the packing, and my private practice in psychotherapy. I had a little bit of survival Greek training, a couple of mornings a week for a few months, so I could learn the numbers and letters and how to read, and I did ask a lot of questions about Greek culture. We arrived in Greece in July of 1985. One of the factors that helped us decide on Greece was that Athens had an excellent elementary school for our kids.

Q: So today is August 24th, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Bonnie Miller, who's done a little bit more sleuthing in her ancestry and now has a better couple of connections to include.

MILLER: Right. In our first interview, I said that in my genealogy searches, I always hit a wall and I could never get beyond the Atlantic Ocean in tracing my ancestors. I knew that one grandfather was from Latvia, a grandfather whom I knew very well. He immigrated from Libau (Liepaja), Latvia, as a young man in 1906. But the others were from the generation before, my great grandparents, and they had passed away before I was born. So through 23andMe, two new cousins just popped up a few days ago and asked, "Do these names and places sound familiar?" And the name was Robinson, which was my paternal grandmother's maiden name. And the place, which made me think this is definitely a connection, was Escanaba, Michigan. Who immigrates to Escanaba, Michigan like my family did? So I knew we were on track, and these cousins and I share great, great grandparents.

Our great grandfathers were brothers. So I went into my family tree and added to that. I found that they came from a little shtetl in Lithuania, but Lithuania has changed over time. It was Russia, Poland, and now I believe that this town is in present-day Belarus, but they came through Vilna, which is now Vilnius. And these cousins recorded the same immigration dates as I did; the three brothers and their wives and children came to the U.S. in 1891. My grandmother's family probably immigrated through Sweden and maybe Canada to Escanaba, which is in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, with five young children, and they settled there. My grandmother, the youngest, was the only one born in America. Then sometime between then and when she was in her early twenties, they moved to Chicago where she met my grandfather, who was raised in Chicago. And so this was all new to me and filled in a lot of gaps of why Escanaba. It's because they came through Scandinavia, and there were a lot of Scandinavians in that area of Northern Michigan. My newly discovered cousin also sent me a photo of the three brothers. So that was very cool. And I spent last weekend doing genealogy.

Q: Very interesting. It's wonderful that you were able to catch up with all of that so fast.

MILLER: Yeah. So we were back and forth. We all had done research, and I just added to my family tree, and I looked up the history of those little places in Lithuania. The Jews in the part of Lithuania where they came from were totally obliterated during World War II, so it was good that they got out fifty years before that war.

We ended the last interview as our family was going to Greece in 1985, but I forgot one important piece, so let's backtrack a little. We came back from our two-year tour in Thailand in 1981 and moved to West Springfield so we could help Mike Powers with his three young motherless children and get our kids into good Fairfax County schools. Our daughter Julie was starting kindergarten, and our son Eric was in preschool after a few months. Tom came back to the State Department to work on the Israeli Desk, which was a plum job where he also met FSOs who were also working on Middle East desks and have been lifelong friends. All of these NEA [Near East Bureau] officers at the time were young go-getters. They all became ambassadors. David Welch, Marc Grossman, Robin Raphel and Wendy Chamberlain are still among our closest friends, and they were

working with Tom on the Middle East from 1981 to 1983. Then Tom was briefly in Congressional Relations at State. Then the U.S. Marines were blown up in Lebanon in October 1983.

So President Reagan asked former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who was running a pharmaceutical company in Chicago, to deal with the Lebanon disaster and bring peace to the Middle East. That was his mission. Representative/ Secretary/ Ambassador Donald Rumsfeld was a name that was well-known to us because he went to our high school sixteen years before we did, and he also married his high school sweetheart. He was our U.S. Congressman from Winnetka, Illinois in New Trier district. Rummy was living in Chicago, and Tom was pulled from his Congressional Relations job in the Department to be his chief of staff for a few weeks until Rumsfeld could organize a team for Middle East negotiations in the region. The few weeks turned into nine months during which Tom assembled a great team, and they were on the road constantly. So it was another chapter in his career where he was traveling and never home; I was raising the kids.

This was becoming familiar. In 1983 and 1984, they were doing shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East, landing in one, two, even three countries in a day. Our daughter was seven, and our son was four. Tom would call from wherever he was, and Julie would say, “I don't want to talk to him until he's home.” She just couldn't deal with it. I would be watching the news, and Eric would ask, “Is Daddy okay? There's bombing everywhere.” So that was pretty stressful. Then Tom would come home for a week or two and then go back out with Rumsfeld and the team. It's obvious that they never made peace in the Middle East, but this was an interesting time in Tom’s life and career. And we’re still close with Don and Joyce Rumsfeld although our political views are far apart.

Then Tom was chosen for the job in the Political Section at Embassy Athens. We had been to Greece in 1981 for six hours on our way back from Thailand, via Israel, and we were not allowed into Greece as diplomats; only tourists were allowed on one-day visas. We were at Immigration at the Athens Airport with our two little children, who had been traveling all day and night, on the plane and off the plane, getting patted down in Islamabad and stopping at various airports along the way. Arriving in Athens, we told the authorities, “We are here for six hours, and we just want to see the Acropolis.” And the Immigration folks said, “You can't get in; you’ve got diplomatic passports and you don't have tourist passports.” “No, we have to see the Acropolis, and we're here for six hours.” So, in the meantime, our son who was two and a half, and had been toilet trained for a long time, was hopping around and pleading, “Daddy, I gotta pee.” And Tom was saying, “Just a minute, just a minute, we're going to get in,” and kept arguing with the Immigration authorities, and of course he spoke no Greek and they spoke little English. And finally, Eric had an accident at Immigration. So they said, “Go!” We had numerous pieces of luggage for our move to the U.S., our dripping toddler, and our five-year-old who had never seen an escalator, since we had been living in Thailand. Julie was carrying all her stuff, and Tom was carrying all of our luggage, and I was carrying the dripping toddler. We got on the escalator, and Julie didn't know how it worked. She fell and cut open her knee, and the airport people said, “We want to take her to the hospital.” And we yelled, “No, just let us see the Acropolis!” We'd never been in Greece and never expected

to go there again. We wound up going to the Acropolis and taking the funicular up to Lykavitos Mountain for a beautiful view of Athens. We had a lovely day. Then we flew to Israel for a week of orientation and then on to the United States. So that was our one and only experience in Greece in 1981. Then in 1984, Tom was chosen for a job in the Political Section in Athens, which was a language-designated position.

In 1984, after he finished with Rumsfeld and they didn't make peace in the Middle East, Tom went into language training in a two-person class. The other member was Bill Nordeen, a Navy captain going out as attaché, who had never taken any other languages, didn't even have Spanish or Latin. Unbeknownst to them, the kind of Greek that they learned at FSI was called *katharevousa*, which was kind of this highfalutin', old-fashioned Greek. It's kind of like if someone were to study modern American English, but instead they were taking British English from the 1800s. So Tom thought he was pretty fluent, but he wasn't. We got to Greece, and he had to relearn it. But it was terrific to have this Captain Bill Nordeen and his family in Athens with us. His lovely wife was British. Their daughter was nine, the same age as our daughter. And so we became really good friends and traveled to the islands together in Greece, and their daughter was an only child who was very kind to Eric and treated him as a little brother.

Q: Fabulous.

MILLER: You were asking about our preparation for Greece. Our two kids were in first grade and fourth grade. I took a little bit of survival Greek language so that I could get around to the market, etc. We took the security course, which made us totally paranoid. November 17th was a domestic terrorist group that had been killing Americans and others, foreign diplomats and certain targeted Greeks like journalists and politicians, starting with the U.S. Station Chief, Richard Welch, in December of 1975. That was their first hit. They murdered him outside a Christmas party at his house. Nine years later, there was still no progress to identify or apprehend those terrorists. This group kept killing people and issuing proclamations, and the authorities couldn't track them down. We were always taught about varying your route and varying your times of going to work.

We came to Greece very paranoid, constantly checking our car and our environment, especially after our first posting where our best friend had been murdered. But despite that, we wound up having a wonderful tour and thriving for two years in Athens. It was a great place to raise kids, and we did a lot of cultural things and a lot of traveling. We made Greek and American friends; our kids were at the American Community Schools [ACS].

But unfortunately, our good friend, Bill Nordeen, did not survive. He was assassinated by a car bomb in June 1988, a year after we left and a couple of weeks before he was supposed to return to the U.S. He did not vary his route because he lived on a one-way street, and he did not vary his times, and November 17th was waiting for him and remotely blew up a vehicle next to his car as he was passing by. I won't describe the details because they're too grizzly, but he was killed instantly.

In Athens, I worked at ACS, the American Community Schools, as a consultant. I also told you about the mental health program coordinator position that I did and coordinated with the CLO. I led a teen group at ACS, and we did a lot of fun activities and discussed positive strategies for adjusting to Greece. I gave workshops and brought in an American colleague who knew all about addictions and led workshops and took referrals. We had a really great program for those two years in Athens. I also did some private practice counseling. Tom was the lowest ranking embassy employee to be assigned an embassy house.

Q: Did they provide the house, or did you have to go out on the market to rent it?

MILLER: The embassy provided the house, and we were very lucky to get a house at all. It was a four-bedroom house with a huge yard, right across the street from a delicious taverna. And we had lots of stray cats that we adopted. My kids were bussed to school, a ten-minute ride. And it was in a nice neighborhood.

Q: Now you had mentioned that you have these various jobs. Were they all going on at the same time, or did you have one and then serially when one ended you started the other, in other words, how did you manage your time?

MILLER: All the positions were very flexible and part-time, and none of them paid well. In fact, at the American Community Schools job, I led a series of parenting workshops. They hired me for that, but then they couldn't pay me, which was only $70. They were getting rid of their Olympic-size trampoline, and I said, “Don't pay me, I'll take your trampoline.” They made me sign a stack of legal releases so they wouldn't have liability in case my kids broke their neck or something. So we transported the trampoline and kept it under an awning outside our house. We hired the PE teacher at the American school, who was a gymnast, and she came over and gave lessons to our kids, and the three of us learned how to do flips. We had birthday parties on the trampoline, and our kids had friends over to play on the trampoline. It was so much fun. We brought it back to the U.S. and had it here for several years. So I would much rather have the trampoline than the $70.

Q: That's extraordinary. Were you ever offered—was there ever the possibility of actually working in the embassy in one of the sections?

MILLER: I never wanted to. I thought one person in a family working at the embassy was enough. It wasn't my thing. Mental health was my thing. I had a small private practice doing counseling. I was consulting at ACS. I was doing the embassy mental health position. It wouldn't have fit to have a full-time position. I don't think it was open to State Department spouses at the time. In the mid-eighties, it was not on offer, but I didn't want it anyway. I enjoyed working at the school. My kids were at the school and I loved doing what I did.

Q: Now, different from your first post, you have a lot more responsibility for socializing.

MILLER: The Greeks are very social, and so we were invited out a lot, and we did have some responsibility for official entertaining. We didn't host numerous breakfasts, lunches or dinners like in subsequent postings, but we did give some receptions. But the Political Counselor had a staff and a huge house, and so a lot of the entertaining was done by him and his multilingual wife.

Q: Did you end up getting through any of your contacts people who were interesting for your husband, in other words, contacts that you may have thought, "Oh, I should get to know these people as well."

MILLER: Not really for our first time in Greece. When we got to Bosnia, there was a large overlap between mental health, refugees, trafficking, and recovering from war that were more trauma-based, and we worked a lot together. And later in Greece in the early 2000s when I worked on anti-trafficking initiatives. But in Greece in the 1980s, my contacts were mental health people, education people, and so they were not very helpful to my husband.

It turned out to be only a two-year tour, and Tom got called back to DC to take a senior position in the Counterterrorism Office, which was very hot at the time, with a lot of high-profile world events like hijackings, some through Greece like TWA, and bombings and other things that were happening during that period. So we came back to West Springfield, and Tom worked with Ambassador Jerry Bremer in Counterterrorism, and it was a great job. Coincidentally, Tom was the first one —because of his position, not our relationship—to receive the call from the Ops Center that Bill Nordeen had been murdered in a car bomb in Athens in June 1988. The Department had no idea that Tom knew Bill. Tom got the call in the middle of the night, and he got on the next plane to Athens and stayed for a week to help Bill's wife and daughter to deal with the trauma and to pack up and move out.

Q: Incredible. Just one other question about Greece before we leave there, were you able, during your time there to learn Greek? Did you feel more or less fluent by the time you left?

MILLER: I was okay. I didn't have study materials or in-person instruction like Tom did. I learn languages in a certain way, so, like I did with Thai, I picked it up by the seat of my pants. I was the one to do all the shopping; I drove, I took taxis, I was out and about, so I needed the Greek because not many people on the street spoke English at that time. But we were fortunate because at all of the social events, anybody who was invited spoke excellent English.

Q: Okay. Are there any other recollections of Greece before we go back to the U.S? Are there any other recollections from Greece that I haven't asked you about that still stick in your mind?

MILLER: Well, the traveling was great and learning about history, and it was a terrific and enriching experience for our children in elementary school. They rode bikes and

roller skated outside of the 1896 Olympic Stadium, and we would go to the Acropolis and beaches and walk around the Plaka area, and we vacationed on the islands. The first year, Tom was number three in the political section, so he was not considered "important." People liked us for ourselves, and we retain those many social friendships—and political connections for Tom—with Greeks to the present day. So from 1985 to 2020, a lot of those Greeks are among our closest friends, and we go back to Greece twice a year when there's not a pandemic to see those friends who liked us when my husband was not "important."

Q: That's lovely. You were satisfied with the schooling that was available to you?

MILLER: Whatever jobs Tom was considering in the Department in DC he would choose on his own, because I was at home in Virginia and working and doing my private practice with a group of pediatricians and later with psychiatrists and teaching at George Mason University. So there was more or less travel depending on his job. With Rumsfeld, it was constant travel, and with Phil Habib and David Newsom, it was long hours in the Department. With other jobs, there was frequent travel, but Tom chose his jobs in the Department. However, I had a huge input in selecting his posts overseas because it impacted our lifestyles. For Chiang Mai, we had lived in Thailand before and learned the language and were familiar with the culture. For Athens, I did a lot of research on the schools since that was the most important issue, and also on lifestyle. ACS was among the best schools in the world, certainly in Europe. And then we went back to Greece two more times, in the 1990s and 2000s, and then Bosnia, which was fascinating. So Tom said, "You do the research and, and we'll discuss it and we'll decide from there."

We were in Thailand from 1979 to 1981, Washington 1981 to 1985, and Greece 1985 to 1987. Counterterrorism in DC 1987 to 89. When we were packing out and transiting from Greece to Virginia, we sent our kids to spend six weeks with my parents in Chicago because Julie wanted to learn to be "American" and fit in with her new peers. Eric was always an easy adapter to the overseas environments, but Julie wanted to live in an American house with a white picket fence. She's forty-four now, and she actually lives in a suburban house with a white picket fence.

Q: That's wonderful. I mean, she knew even at that early age that this was not for her.

MILLER: She did. She had been in a gifted program at a different school in Fairfax County before we left, but when we returned, she wanted to be mainstream and be like everyone else. She was in sixth grade and announced that she would graduate high school in the United States and go clear through. And Tom said, "You don't know about the five-year rule [that officers can only work in the U.S. for five years]." But actually, she got through high school because of how Tom maneuvered his various jobs for those seven years in DC.

He worked at several positions in the Department: Counterterrorism 1987 to 1989, head of the Maghreb [North Africa] Office 1989 to 1992, and then head of the Israeli/Palestinian Office from 1992 to 1994. He worked on really interesting issues, and he traveled a lot.

Q: Now during that period of time, now that you're back in the U.S., what sort of things were you doing?

MILLER: I was in private practice working with the same group of pediatricians doing counseling and psychotherapy, the same job I started in 1976 and always came back to. My kids were now in elementary school, so I decided that I would like to teach in addition to my part-time private practice. So I applied to be an Adjunct Professor at George Mason University. There was a tenured professor who was on maternity leave, and I took over teaching her classes in January of 1990 and stayed there teaching my own Social Work courses until we left for Greece again in 1994.

Q: How did the teaching Social Work change at the time?

MILLER: It was great and then continued all the way through to recent years. It got better as technology evolved. I taught the introductory Social Work course and a communication course and the Senior Practicum where the students were working at their internships. I visited the students at various local agencies, and then we'd all get together to discuss their experiences.

I also started working with a very well-known local psychiatrist named Dr. Joe Novello, a TV and radio psychiatrist, who collaborated with another group of local pediatricians. He had a private practice in West Springfield, which was a block from my kids' schools and about three miles from where I lived. So during the seven years that we were back in Virginia, that's what I did: the teaching and the private practice and raising our kids.

Q: So now how will you resolve your daughter's interest in staying in the U.S.?

MILLER: We pulled it off. We thought that we could stay in DC for six years and Tom would take the Senior Seminar and Julie would live with local friends, but he got offered the job as the head of the Israeli/Palestinian Office, which was an amazing two-year position, and that gave us the seventh year. That ended in 1994, and Julie graduated high school. Eric was going into tenth grade, and we went back to Greece for Tom to be the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. Julie started at the University of Virginia in 1994. It was hard for her with no family nearby for school breaks, but she would come back to Fairfax and stay with our family friends with whom we had always celebrated holidays. But we couldn't just go back and forth from Greece like other local parents to visit their kids. Tom and I each visited once separately, and Julie graduated in three years. She came out to Greece for summers and worked at the embassy.

Q: So at least during those periods, she was able to come back and see you. So this second experience in Greece is going to be quite different from your first one in many ways, I imagine.

MILLER: Definitely. Tom was DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission, number two in the whole embassy, a very large regional embassy with many agencies. He supervised a lot of

people. We had a very active social life, and we were out a lot of nights for the late Greek dinners. You know, you're invited at 9:00 or 9:30. You sit down at 10:00 for dinner.

Q: So you were both giving receptions and dinners and going out quite a bit and always quite late, right?

MILLER: Yeah. But we would have our driver or our son call Tom at around 11:15 pm and say, "There's a big emergency. You have to get back to the embassy." The other guests would think, "Oh, this is really important. We want to be on the ground floor of this." And Tom would say, "Well, read it tomorrow in the newspaper." But it was actually because I was teaching 9:00 am classes at the University of Indianapolis, and Tom was going to the embassy very early to start reading up on what was going on and having early meetings. So we couldn't afford to do what the Greeks do, which was socializing at these dinner parties until 1:00 am and working from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm the next day and then going home for afternoon siesta. That just didn't fit into our schedule. There was a heavy social life.

Because you were asking about language, I want to mention that there was a wonderful study abroad program called College Year in Athens. It still exists, and we're still active with them. This program is for American college students doing a junior or senior semester or year abroad. They offer a full curriculum during the academic year and language and archaeology classes on the island of Paros in the summers. I thought, "I need to suck it up and pay for this course to improve my Greek for the next two years." So I went to language immersion classes for three weeks in the summer of 1995 on the beautiful Island of Paros with fabulous teachers and a textbook that was my style of learning.

This really helped me put into a structural framework how to learn the Greek language. It gave me the background and jump-started my Greek. I really stretched my brain to learn the complicated grammar and increase my vocabulary and gain fluency. I was good enough, and people do appreciate when you speak the local language. So that summer was wonderful. I was with a bunch of college students; some of them were having kind of mental health crises, and I was trying to help. I became friends with the teachers and the head of the program, and they invited me back for the three-week summer course in 1996 on scholarship. I didn't have to pay and was kind of a consultant to the program, and I took the language classes and improved my Greek. I even went back to Paros for a week in 1997 just to help out. We're still close with Alexis Phylactopoulos, who has been the head of College Year in Athens for some fifty years. He and his wife are terrific, and we see them when we go back to Greece.

While Tom was DCM, I got an assistant professor position at University of Indianapolis and was teaching many Psychology courses from 1994-97. University of Indianapolis is an American-accredited university with a branch in downtown Athens. I taught a lot of courses in Psychology, and my students were all Greek, but they had good enough English so they could understand. I brought in new courses like Psychopathology and Child Psychopathology and Addictions and Counseling. It was an American school, and I insisted on adherence to American norms, meaning no cheating, because the Greek ethos

is that if you can cheat and get away with it, you are smarter than the rest. I announced, “When you walk into this classroom, you're in America, and cheating will not be tolerated." I taught there for the whole three years.

I also had a contract as consultant at ACS (American Community Schools) to institute a full substance abuse prevention curriculum, K through 12. I taught substance abuse prevention classes to the kids; I led parenting groups and did consultations and evaluations on individual students. It wasn't a full-time job, and it was flexible. I had great relationships with the faculty and administration at ACS; some of them are still there. One of the counselors I worked with is now president of the school. And I got to be close with the ACS family community because our son, who had attended first and second grade there, was now back at ACS as a 10th, 11th and 12th grader and graduated in 1997. Tom gave the graduation speech.

Q: So that's quite busy.

MILLER: Yeah, I was busy. And even when I moved back to DC in 1997, and resumed all my activities, teaching and clinical work in the U.S., I did go back to Athens to the University of Indianapolis for January of 1998 and taught a condensed semester there.

Q: During this second time, when Tom was DCM, did you then also begin to have some contacts who are also of interest to the embassy, whether they're economic or political or social groups?

MILLER: Again, not so much; my contacts were mostly mental health and education folks. We still have a lot of friends from that tour in Greece. They had summer homes on the islands, and they would invite us, and that was fun. But no, my contacts up until Bosnia were not very useful to Tom.

But his were interesting to me. I followed the issues and terrorism; November 17th was still assassinating innocent people, killing U.S. military personnel and many others. It was the embassy’s highest priority, certainly Tom's highest priority because he promised Trish Nordeen that he would solve this November 17th domestic terrorist threat and bring them to justice. The embassy had many different offices working on that issue and lots of motion but no movement. Unfortunately, when we left Greece in 1997, it was a big disappointment—still no clues about the identities of the members of the terrorist group who killed our close friend and many others, some of whom we knew. Later when Tom was ambassador to Greece, we got to know many of the families of the November 17th victims as we tried to be supportive to them.

Q: Now the fact that Tom has now become a DCM, are the two of you thinking that at some point now it may be that he will be considered for an ambassadorship?

MILLER: No, the DCM job in a large embassy in a country that we loved where we had friends and he knew the political situation was great. As you know, the percentage of officers who are selected to be career ambassadors is very small. He wasn't thinking about that at all as a next step, and at the end of his tour, he was supposed to go back to DC for a job in the Department. The officer who was currently in that job was a close

friend of many years. He came out to stay with us in Athens in 1997, and I asked, "So tell me about this job. What do you do? What does your day look like?" And he said, "Well, I get into the office at 7:30 am. I have an 8:00 meeting, a 9:00 meeting, a 10:00 meeting, an 11:00 meeting and so on through the day."

And I said to myself, "My husband would die doing this." This friend was an extremely bright and competent officer who became two-time ambassador to very important countries. But I was thinking that this job was not going to be a good fit for Tom. Then Richard Holbrooke, whom we had known since Tom's earliest days in the Department and who was hot off the success of the Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia, called Tom in 1997 and said, "I've just been tapped as the main negotiator for the Cyprus negotiations. I'd like you to be the Cyprus Coordinator, my guy on the ground, the one who's actually doing the commuting and interfacing with all of the parties. I still have a big paying job in New York City, so I would be the 'closer,' the one who gets the agreement from all sides for the deal. I really need you to do this, and I'll make sure it's a Senate-confirmed ambassadorship." And finally, Secretary Albright said, "You're not going to have to take the job in the Department, and you should work with Holbrooke."

So Tom learned about that at the end of our Greek tour in the summer of 1997, and for the next two years, he was based in Washington, but he was never really in Washington. Eric had gone to college and then gotten a job first in a tech job at the State Department, and then another tech job, and he moved to his own condo because he could afford it. Julie graduated a year early from the University of Virginia, and she came back to live with us, with me, for a year as Tom was commuting to Europe. She was working at NIH in Bethesda, and it was nice to have her home because Tom was never home. He was doing shuttle diplomacy between Cyprus, Athens, Ankara, Brussels, and many other countries and trying to do these negotiations. And then Holbrooke, who was probably working a quarter time, would get involved and try to kick some butt and get the parties—Greeks, Turks, Greek Cypriots, and Turkish Cypriots—to agree. Their idea was sound, but they never did get an agreement.

Q: So they would not be the only ones who tried and failed and on and on.

MILLER: Here we are more than twenty years later. At first, the Greeks were cooperative, and the Turks were not. And later, our third time in Greece, I was going back and forth to Cyprus because I was teaching at universities there and also giving educational workshops, and I was there for the 2004 referendum. So when the Greeks were agreeable, the Turks were not; when the Turks were agreeable, the Greeks were not. The referendum was defeated on the Greek side, while the Turkish side overwhelmingly supported it. And this is the current situation, which is kind of a status quo, everybody living the way they're living. On the Greek side, they're pretty prosperous; on the Turkish side they're not, but they have over a third of the land in Cyprus.

In the fall of 1998 in the second year of that Cyprus negotiator assignment, Tom was talking with Assistant Secretary for Europe Marc Grossman and his deputy, Tony Wayne. They had just been informed that the current US ambassador in Bosnia-Herzegovina was

curtailing and not going to stay for his third year. They needed somebody to go to Bosnia the following summer, and they asked if Tom was interested. This was like our Chiang Mai situation so many years before with a hard and immediate deadline. Tom came home and said, "I've got a weekend to decide on Sarajevo." This was three years after the war when we made the decision in 1998, and we thought that this could be an interesting opportunity, and if we missed it, we'd never know. So we decided to go to Bosnia, and we went in August of 1999.

Q: So the thing that you hadn't considered actually now materialized.

MILLER: It did. I left my private practice, and I left my adjunct teaching position at George Mason. I had also completed a contract with Fairfax County Department of Family Services, where I trained 200 social workers in Strengths-Based and Solution-Focused methodologies. Coincidentally, my daughter wound up working there after social work grad school with many of the social workers that I had trained.

I took some hours of survival Bosnian language because I hate living in a country where I can't communicate. So I had a little bit of Bosnian as I was packing out and teaching and doing psychotherapy. I'm sure you ask everybody this question: "What was your most life-changing post?" It was Bosnia from 1999 to 2001.

Q: Before we go into that, there is one other question I want to ask you. Certainly, all of your employers and colleagues knew you were going. What did they think? What were you hearing from them?

MILLER: I don't think any of my employers really understood diplomatic life or the overseas experience. In fact, before we left for Bosnia, I was teaching a very large introductory Social Work class at George Mason. Half the students were social workers and half were in criminal justice. And I said, "I'll finish this semester, but I'm going to be moving to a small country in Europe that just had a long war. Guess which country." Their guesses were off the wall. Nobody even guessed Yugoslavia; that was not on their screen.

I'm sure they could find other people to teach. Every time I returned from abroad, George Mason always invited me to teach the intro Social Work course and Senior Practicum and other courses. The psychiatrist I worked with had a lot of other social workers, so I'm sure he hired somebody to replace me. It wasn't like I was indispensable. So I left and gave them plenty of notice because we found out about our new posting in November 1998, and we didn't leave until August of 1999.

We flew into Bosnia over this beautiful landscape on a sunny day in August 1999. It's kind of like you want to sing, "The hills are alive," from *The Sound of Music*, with lovely, wooded mountains and green hills and gorgeous scenery. But as we dipped lower for our landing, we could see that none of the houses had roofs. It was still a totally devastated country, and Sarajevo was mostly destroyed, with many buildings in shambles and most other pockmarked with shell and bullet holes. We had never been to Yugoslavia before. We learned as much as we could from briefings and reading about the political

situation. Prior to 1998, I was under the impression that the country had a gone through terrible three-way civil war from 1992-95. But that was wrong; it was a Serb invasion of a sovereign country with the purpose of ethnic cleansing and driving out anyone who was not Serb ethnicity. They had the idea of a Greater Serbia, that anywhere Serb people lived should be part of Serbia, including Bosnia (and prior to that, Croatia). Recently somebody sent us a video from three years ago of Joe Biden giving a speech at a Bosnian-American event, and Biden said, "This was not a civil war. This was genocide." And so Biden was always on board with Bosnia from early times, condemning Milosevic and trying to get aid for the besieged and war-traumatized Bosnian people.

On the fifth day after our arrival in Sarajevo, who flies in for a huge visit and reception but Richard Holbrooke and Joe Biden, the great friends of Bosnia! Richard was returning to Bosnia as the conquering hero and also wanted to get out the message: "Tom Miller is my guy, and I got you the peace, so respect Tom. He's going to be a great ambassador." It was Tom's first actual ambassadorship to a country. The Senate had approved him as an ambassadorial level appointment as the Cyprus Coordinator, so he had already served as ambassador, but he didn't have a country. Bosnia-Herzegovina was our first country. So Holbrooke flew in and reminisced on our windshield tour, "Oh, there's the Holiday Inn. I remember when there was blood all over the floor and all the windows were broken." And so he comes in the big hero, and Joe Biden comes in the big hero, and we hosted a huge reception at the rebuilt Holiday Inn.

It was my first experience at this kind of reception, because in Greece, everybody who attended an official reception spoke fluent English, while in Bosnia, nobody did. I had an interpreter glued to my side, because my Bosnian language was by no means fluent, to translate every conversation. It was very surreal.

Because I was a mental health specialist, many of the NGOs invited me all over the country. I traveled everywhere, to Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and many other places. Tom and I rarely traveled together because we were doing different things and working on separate issues, but the NGOs wanted to tell their stories about their experiences in the war and their activities to rebuild physically, socially and emotionally. And it was just fascinating. I listened and learned, and people would send me videos and reading material and I would go to former concentration camps and other places and talk to people on the ground and to NGOs helping war survivors.

I was teaching American service members at University of Maryland University College at the base for the NATO peacekeepers called Butmir. The American peacekeepers were pretty much locked down. They weren't allowed to go anywhere, whereas the European peacekeepers could walk around Sarajevo and shop and eat pizza. The Americans were not allowed off base, but they could take weekend courses through UMUC [now the University of Maryland Global Campus]. I taught mini-courses on domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse and communication and those kinds of practical topics. As an introduction, I would ask these American peacekeepers, "How long have you been here?" And they would say things like, "We have three months, two days and seven minutes to go." And was thinking that was not a good attitude because they really were not connected with their overall mission in Bosnia and did not comprehend the importance of

their peacekeeping role there.

They didn't seem to realize why there hadn't been violence for more than four years after the big war, and how crucial they were for keeping the peace. So I created a course called "Psychosocial Consequences of War," where I played the videos of children and elderly people and refugees and others talking about their traumatic experiences during the war and after. I had everything for this course: videos, poetry, readings, a detailed PowerPoint, etc. I taught it to the American enlisted military and their commanders at Butmir through UMUC for a two-day weekend course, but I wound up teaching it everywhere, including for other international peacekeepers in Bosnia. I taught it as a graduate mini-course at American University in DC. I taught it for several weeks at the University of Michigan, my alma mater, as part of a conference on the 10-year anniversary of Dayton. And I taught it at the Foreign Service Institute as an area studies course for FSOs being posted to the Balkans every single year up until a few years ago, because the war was the focal point that influenced everything in Bosnia and the region. What happened during the war and its aftermath was the defining issue for anybody being posted anywhere in the whole region. I taught FSOs going to Kosovo and Albania as well, but mostly they were going to Former Yugoslavia. And I knew that officers posted in Serbia would hear a completely different story on the ground about how it was a civil war, and the Serbs were the real victims, so I wanted to explain what I had learned by traveling around Bosnia and talking to the people who were affected.

I was also connected with Butmir Base because they had a lot of excess merchandise at the PX, including clothing in small sizes, and their military personnel were not small sizes, so they were willing to donate their surplus. They also had extra shampoo and toiletries and other useful items. They asked me if I wanted their extra stuff. There were lots of refugees, displaced people, poor people and clients at the NGOs that could use their surplus, so I was happy to take it. We had a garage at our house where I could sort and keep all these items before distributing them to the NGOs, orphanages collective centers, refugee camps, and others in need. So this was the start of my connection with the International Organization on Migration, IOM, that was operating a shelter for young women who had been trafficked and wound up in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The women and teen girls were mainly coming from Romania and Moldova and had been promised jobs as waitresses in Italy. But instead, had been trafficked and raped through Serbia and wound up as prisoners in bars and apartments all over Bosnia and were being sexually exploited by Bosnians and internationals who had the money to pay for them.

It was a horrible existence. They had been rescued or had managed to escape after weeks or months in captivity. I was invited to go to the shelter as a mental health professional and listen to their stories, which I did, and I brought a lot of the PX clothing and toiletries for them. It was just appalling what these young girls had endured. They were all poor; that's why they wanted to sign on for six months or a year to be waitresses in Italy. Some of them had children, some of them were very young, just teenagers. And I decided that I need to get involved. In 2000, I didn't know what trafficking was, and most other people didn't either. When I mentioned trafficking, people would say, "Yeah, the traffic on the streets of Sarajevo is really getting congested these days." And I said, "Please let me tell you about human trafficking; let me tell you their stories."

And not only did I visit that shelter, but in subsequent years, I went to many other shelters, mostly in the region in Albania, Kosovo, and Bulgaria, but also Thailand and many other places to talk with the women and hear their stories. And these stories still stick with me. So I said, “People in Bosnia are curious about you and want to know about you. And since you're only the second American ambassador's wife there, the media have been asking you for interviews, and you can publicize this issue. You have a platform. You can raise awareness that these young women are not paid prostitutes but instead, they are sex slaves who are getting no money and who are imprisoned and forced to service up to a dozen men a night.” So I did a lot of media appearances; I was giving radio, TV and print interviews just to get the word out. I also worked directly with the young women at the IOM shelter as well as bringing in people who could offer some vocational training and wellness exercises for them. We had an indoor swimming pool at our house, and I'd invite them over for swim parties and buy them swimsuits, floaties and pool noodles so they could have some carefree enjoyment. They loved it!

There was an American woman from Atlanta, Susan Anderson, who was phenomenal. She was committed to healing the war trauma in Bosnia, so in 2000, she started a project called ArtReach and brought over American art therapists to train Bosnian teachers to help children heal from their traumatic war experiences through art therapy. We worked together, and her team trained hundreds of teachers, and it was a great collaboration. Sometimes she would send her art therapists to Sarajevo early before they actually started training the teachers. She offered, “I'm sending two or three therapists a week ahead of time, and they're yours, Bonnie.” I used them many times to work with the young women in the IOM shelter. And I used them one time at our house to do a therapeutic workshop with female concentration camp survivors. ArtReach was a great program, and Susan is still one of my closest friends. I also learned some art therapy techniques that I could then use in various workshops that I was leading.

In addition to teaching at the University of Sarajevo, which I'll talk about in a minute, I thought, “Here's a country that has survived the war, but all of the countries outside of Former Yugoslavia that were socialists or communists have moved on. Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and other countries had progressed, but Bosnia seemed to be stuck in many ways in its recovery from war. So how hard could it be to write a parenting manual with the best parenting advice that I could find from American sources, but adapted to the Bosnian context?” So I got permission from parenting experts like Stephen Bavolek and Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, who wrote *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk,* and used a lot of their material. I used the internet, and I wrote a lot of the manual from my experience as a parent and therapist and created an illustrated parenting manual, which was about 120 pages.

I was also teaching at the University of Sarajevo. I had not applied for a job. I wanted to teach Psychology as I had at my other posts. The terrific CLO [Community Liaison Officer] at the embassy said in the fall of 1999, “I'd like you to come with me to the University of Sarajevo; they want to meet you.” So I met with six professors in this tiny room at the University of Sarajevo. They urged, “You have to teach English to our students.” And I said, “I don't want to teach English. It's not what I do. I've learned

languages myself, and it is not easy." They kind of trapped me in this little room and said, "You have to teach English because we're instituting an American English curriculum now. And your American English is pretty good."

They offered, "You can teach anything you want as long as you speak American English." And I said, "Done," and they said, "No exams, no papers, no grades." And I said, "Done, done." So I taught three English classes every semester for two years. One class was fifteen students; one was twenty-five, and one was seventy-five, which made no sense. And none of my classes had assigned classrooms, so at the beginning of each class session, we would roam the halls looking for a suitable classroom that could accommodate all the students. I came up with about twenty topics and gave the students a choice of what they wanted to learn. I was teaching Psychology, Communication and other subjects, even the U.S. electoral system. This was during the 2000 election, so it was hard to explain why it took many weeks to elect a U.S. president in our democracy, especially since Bosnia-Herzegovina had just held a successful election and announced its results immediately.

Teaching was a wonderful experience. I learned so much from my sophomore students, who had been in middle school during the war, fleeing to other countries or other regions, being under siege in Sarajevo or other towns, losing their homes or apartments, sporadically attending makeshift schools in bombed out buildings and having many gaps in their education, and losing friends and loved ones in the war. The students who got into the university—which was the best in the country—were the smartest ones. Their English was amazing; they were really at a high level of proficiency, so I didn't have to teach English as you would teach the ABCs. But I heard their stories. Many had lost parents in the war. Some were from ethnically mixed families. And all they needed to do in my class was to speak English. It was a totally interactive class, a lot of back and forth with me and a lot of small group work.

I had my students translate the first version of my parenting manual without my knowing that Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian dialects were a little bit different from each other, and that there were political issues involved in the language. And then somebody came from the NGO Connecticut Friends of Bosnia with some funding and said, "You need to take your show on the road to get this valuable parenting information to the people, and we'll give you some money to do that." The NATO SFOR's [Stabilization Forces] PsyOps proposed, "We have plenty of funding, and we can print thousands of copies of your manual, as long as you put our logo on it."

In the meantime, the Minister of Education for the Bosnian-Croat Federation asked to meet with me and said, "You need to write a manual for educators." I responded, "I've got some ideas about an education book. I've got the internet; I've got my own knowledge." So I wrote an education manual for school administrators, counselors, and teachers. It was twice as big as the parenting manual and on a more professional level, and it was translated professionally by a friend of mine who was a former teacher and translator at the embassy. It was passed around for everyone to read so that it would be neutral language, not Serbian, not Croatian, not Bosnian, but language that everybody

could accept. And SFOR printed thousands of copies of that manual with their logo on them.

I also revised the parenting manual many times to get it in the right format and language. I was taking the parenting manual on the road with some of my students who served as my interpreters because that gave them professional experience. Although I couldn't pay them, they could put this experience on their resumes as they traveled with me to the far reaches of Bosnia-Herzegovina and worked as interpreters. The students were just fantastic and had lots of energy.

Q: Here, given how developed these manuals were. I understand that the military strategic communications people wanted to or were willing to print it, but what about the State Department? Public Diplomacy Office, weren't they able to get any funding to help you? Because at this point you do have something that is helpful. The money isn't going to you directly.

MILLER: All volunteer. I didn't get paid. I never went to State because both in Bosnia and in Greece, people and organizations were very generous, and SFOR printed thousands of copies of the parent and teacher manuals in Bosnian language. And later in Greece, UNESCO [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] printed thousands in Greek language. And then Bosnian NGOs invited me to give workshops. The parenting manual was on communication, discipline, and building self-esteem in children, but the underlying goal was to prevent child abuse, because the main way to discipline children in Bosnia at the time, after the trauma of the war, was to just hit your kid. And hitting works, at least temporarily. The kid stops the behavior, but it sends the wrong message. One day, one of my NGO colleagues told me, "I read your manual. I was really angry at my eleven-year-old daughter, and I raised my hand to hit her, and then I thought, 'What would Bonnie say?' I put my hand down and I talked to her; I communicated in the way that you said." That was gratifying to me, and I knew that these were new and practical ideas that would be widely accepted.

The education manual served to counteract the socialist system that had been in place for decades: memorization and regurgitation of many irrelevant facts. Every single teacher in my seminars from Former Yugoslavia—thousands of teachers—told me that when they were students, they had to memorize all of the natural resources of Australia and how many kilograms of each were produced. So I said, "We've got to do something else. We've got to encourage relevant education using interactive techniques, engaging critical thinking, and helping kids with social skills and life skills to prepare them for a career and their futures."

So that's what I did in Bosnia. I took it on the road and then I hooked up with an organization called Training Workshops International that was training teachers and orphanage staffs. And I worked with them for another decade. Even when I moved to Greece and later when I lived in the U.K., I went back to Bosnia several times a year, and they set up workshops, each trip with three workshops in one region of Bosnia with multiethnic educators, at least two ethnicities of teachers and school administrators at each workshop, sometimes three, and use this material as well as a video that I created in

Bosnian on learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. I kept up my work in Bosnia because I was in love with the country and I thought, “These people really have so much potential, but they've been through so much.”

Q: Right. In working on all of these things, and as you said, you are doing it principally with the help of people outside of the embassy. Were you also talking to other spouses about what you're doing and how invigorating it is and inspiring and giving them any ideas or support for trying to follow their ability and do something while they were in Bosnia?

MILLER: I did not do that for a variety of reasons. This was my own initiative. And I was the ambassador's wife, and you always hear about the witch who is the ambassador's wife. My predecessor had kind of compelled all of the embassy spouses to bake cookies and cakes one full day a week and spend another half a day a week selling the baked goods at the embassy to fund her favorite charities. I said, “I'm not that person and I'm not going to put the arm on other spouses." And it was a kind of an unusual embassy too, because spouses were allowed, but minor dependents were prohibited from living in Bosnia due to security concerns. There were many singles and very few spouses, and I didn't want to coerce any spouses to do volunteer work for my projects. I did what I could for mental health at the embassy. I always led cross-cultural adjustment workshops as I had done before in Greece. I tried to be the kind of ambassador's wife that I would have wanted when I was at other embassies.

The embassy really was a community, even though we didn't have children at post. I was on the board of the American School, QSI, which was very tiny because the embassy didn't allow children of diplomatic employees at post. I was in meetings with the embassy security officers, and their motto seemed to be: If there aren't children here, then children won’t get hurt. There were a bunch of criteria that had to be checked off first. One was health, were there medical facilities and hospitals? Another was education, and another was safety. I really pushed with the security folks. I was on the board of the school; the medical situation was getting better; and we were not that far from solving that.

But they were saying, “What if this? What if that?” and there were still mines everywhere. We were told at the beginning of our tour, and it lasted for the two years we were in Bosnia: “Don't step off the pavement. Never go on the grass or in a field because of the mines.” So finally, as we were leaving in 2001, they changed the regs to allow children to come—pregnant women and children up to the age of six. And I said sarcastically, “Yeah, because with your six-year-olds, you're just going to let them run all over Sarajevo and play in the minefields.” But it was a start, and they did allow children at post up to that point because they felt that those young children were being supervised by their parents. Obviously, all children are supervised by their parents, especially at a foreign post. Now it's a normal post where diplomatic children are allowed.

When we were living in Sarajevo, my husband's father passed away. When we visited him in California before we left in 1999, we knew that that would be the last time. He passed away in November of 2000. So we took some of our money and built a playground at the SOS Kinderdorf orphanage in honor of Tom’s father. It was an

orphanage that we could actually walk to from our house. SOS's model really worked and was different from the other orphanages that I visited in Bosnia and Montenegro. The children were actual orphans, and SOS set up permanent "families" for them in a small group setting with an "SOS mother" and an "SOS aunt," many of whom were war widows with children of their own.

I had facilitated training through Training Workshops International with orphanage staffs all over Bosnia and in Montenegro. The kids were so affectionate, but the tragic part was that many of them actually had biological parents, but the parents couldn't afford to raise them. Some had single moms and others were "illegitimate" or born from rape during the war. Sometimes the biological parents would visit their kids. Babies arrived as newborns, and kids entered at other ages and were warehoused in the orphanages until they were eighteen, which was much more expensive than providing extra funding so that the kids could live at home with their own or other families. Foster care was not an option until much later, when the powers that be discovered that it was much better for kids socially and emotionally than living in an institution. I was pushing that initiative.

What was so ironic was that there were many families living near the orphanages, both Bosnian and foreign, who were eager to adopt children of any age. However, adoption was not legal in Bosnia, and part of that was driven by the orphanage staffs themselves who would lose their jobs if the children were placed in families. This was so tragic and detrimental for the kids who grew up in these institutions and then at age eighteen were released on their own without families or outside supports.

In 1996, Ambassador Marc Grossman invited me to Ankara to conduct adoption home studies for two embassy families in Turkey, so that was the start of another career for me. These studies are quite comprehensive and are required by the U.S. government and adoption agencies for any parents who want to adopt a child. Those two were successful adoptions, as were all of the subsequent seven I did. While living in Bosnia and afterward, I did home studies for American families who wanted to adopt babies or young children. They were living within miles of Bjelave Orphanage in Sarajevo but had to adopt foreign children from Russia, Georgia, or China instead of kids who were in their own neighborhood. I really enjoyed working with those dedicated families who wanted to open their hearts and homes to children in need, and these adoptions all worked out well.

The other thing I was involved in was a project for young leaders in a peacebuilding program. There was an organization called Peace Trails that asked me to be on their board. They selected young leaders who created projects to help their communities. It was conceived, led, and funded by Dan Whalen, a fantastic donor from Walnut Creek, California, who had made a bundle working on telecommunications. He never thought he would be rich, and he made lots of money, and he decided, "I'm going to do something constructive with this money and I'm going to do it in Bosnia." He was one of several terrific American humanitarians we met in Bosnia: Susan Anderson of ArtReach, Carol Schaefer of Connecticut Friends of Bosnia, Bobby and Mike Houser of Training Workshops International and many others.

So Dan Whalen started this multiethnic Peace Trails, and it was run with Bosnian staff. I

was on the board, and they chose participants in their twenties and funded the projects that they conceived. The leaders had to write business proposals for their projects and then implement them. They were mentored and given grant-writing, financial, and other useful training.

Another great NGO, Seeds of Peace, was run by my friend, Chris Covey, and also Aaron Miller's wife, Lindsay, and they wanted to start a program in Bosnia. I headed the Seeds of Peace program and chose the first and second cohorts of fifteen-year-olds who participated in the Seeds camp in Maine with other teens from conflict areas to learn communication and peacebuilding skills, etc. It was a fabulous program. I'm still in touch with one of my students who went there. This is twenty years later, and he's now the head of the Bosnian-American Chamber of Commerce in Sarajevo and the father of toddler twins.

I knew that Seeds of Peace was an excellent program, but what was really needed in Bosnia was a multiethnic program within the country, this hurting country, this destroyed country, where kids were growing further and further from each other, where they were not having contact with peers of other ethnicities because their schools were segregated. Some schools were called "two schools under one roof": Croats would attend in the morning, Bosniaks in the afternoon. Or the students would enter the school through separate entrances and use different facilities. And their curricula were different, even though the country had used the same pre-war curriculum when it was all Yugoslavia and the students spoke virtually the same language. But the Croats Croatianized it and the Serbs Serbianized it, and the teaching with revisionist history was pulling the students further and further apart.

And I thought, "We have to get these kids together while they're still at an impressionable age; they have so much in common with their culture and music, etc. I have great ideas, but I don't have any funding." This was the year 2000, and Dayton was celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Peace Accords. They awarded the first Dayton Peace Prize to President Bill Clinton, and along with a stipend of $25,000, which Clinton couldn't personally accept because he was president. He asked Tom and me to find a way that this money could be utilized to further peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. With that funding, I established Youth for Peace. My artists designed T-shirts, and we got hundreds of teens to participate.

These were young teens who came from all over Bosnia. We sent Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Muslims to camps in a remote place to play and interact and participate in workshops with each other. There was an NGO called UN Volunteers that acted as counselors and did all the work on the ground. I collaborated with them, but they were the ones who organized the camps, the activities, the meals, the dorms and all of that. It was a terrific program that had several iterations for a summer. So that $25,000 was really well spent and reached hundreds of teens.

Another worthwhile project that I supported was the Multiethnic Doll Project with my good friend Sabiha from Gorazde. Gorazde was one of the hardest hit areas during the war. It was under years of siege by the Serbs, and there was terrible ethnic cleansing—torture, rape, and murder of Muslims by Serbian forces. After the war, Sabiha started a

craft cooperative of women, many of whom were war widows, to sew cloth dolls. There were four kinds of dolls—Serb, Croat, Muslim and Jew—each with her own costume and an accompanying story book about the girl with a name and a story. These stories pointed up similarities of the lives of children in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Q: That is remarkable. And once again, there were no opportunities through Public Diplomacy or through the Department for you to get money for some of these initiatives.

MILLER: I didn't explore that. And in Bosnia, but much more in Greece, I was always in touch with the Legal Department at State to ask, "Here's what I'm doing. Do I have State's permission to do it?" But as the ambassador's wife, I didn't want to go to the Department for funding. It just seemed muddy to me.

I never asked for U.S. government funding, I never had to. And in Greece there were many generous donors. One foundation enabled my going back to give educational seminars in Bosnia and later in Kosovo and funded a lot of my other projects. So we had private foundations that contributed, and I didn't get paid, but I wanted to continue my projects, and I needed to pay my staff on the ground, my translators and interpreters, my admin staff who were arranging the venues for workshops and all the logistics of inviting the teachers and printing/duplicating the handouts and videos, etc. So I got money and it wasn't a lot, but a little can go a long way in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I'm going to wrap up the Bosnia part. And I think I'll save this as a segue to Greece about teaching at the pedagogical academies of Sarajevo and Mostar and the cross-cultural adjustment workshops we always held at our house. When I was back in DC in 1998 and 1999, I taught the DCM Spouse course. I was very proud that we were inclusive, and one member of our course was one of the first gay partners to go out as DCM partner. And not only that but he was going to be the partner of my husband's DCM in Bosnia. That was very cool, and I adapted the course for modern times and taught it that way.

I think what I'll do in the next session is to start with my teaching at the pedagogical academies and how that segued into Greece, because we went right from Bosnia to Greece in 2001 with a one-month interim back in Washington. And that month encompassed 9/11, I'll talk about 9/11 and our transition to Greece and my work in Greece, and that will finish up the Foreign Service part, but then there have been fifteen years after the Foreign Service to the present.

Q: Wonderful. We want to follow you throughout because we do that with everyone to begin with, but given the uniqueness of your entire career, we're certainly interested in following you in the post-Foreign Service life.

MILLER: Okay. Any suggestions for me about how it's going and what I should be doing?

Q: No, once again, the only questions that I had, because you're providing great detail, you're explaining how everything worked, the how and what the impacts were as you reflect back on it later, the only thing I would recommend is to think about how with all

of your initiatives, what sustainability they had, not necessarily even for the programs, but for the people who benefited from the programs to just think back on where they are now. And you've already mentioned some of them, but that would also be a helpful thing.

MILLER: Okay. I can do that. I'll wrap up the trafficking part and then talk about our month of 9/11 in DC, and then we are on our way to Greece with even more events and projects.

Q: Today is August 25, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Bonnie Miller, and Bonnie, you are still in Bosnia-Herzegovina. And just as a reminder, what year is this?

MILLER: We arrived in Sarajevo in August of 1999 and left in August of 2001 to come back to the U.S. for a month in between Bosnia and Greece. So just a few more things about Bosnia: One of the cool things we did there, which we started in Athens when Tom was DCM and continued when he was ambassador, was to host Newcomer Orientations at our residence for all new Americans at the embassy and their families, which we coordinated with the CLO. After a buffet dinner, Tom and the CLO did a welcome and introduction; I presented the cross-cultural and psychological adjustment piece, and the heads of Public Diplomacy, Security, Political and Economic sections gave a brief summary of important information. This was a terrific way for newcomers to get to know each other and for families to get involved.

Another fun but physically exhausting project, conceived by Tom, was called "Housecleanings." We involved embassy staff and local Bosnian communities in selecting several houses in any part of Bosnia that had been destroyed in the war. We cleared out many houses on weekends over the eighteen months of the project. We would literally get our hands dirty, and with hardhats, shovels, pickaxes, and wheelbarrows, clear out the debris so that the house could be rebuilt. It was a great way to bring the Americans and Foreign Service National staff at the embassy together and to connect with local communities around Bosnia. As this project gained notoriety, local leaders and politicians also joined in.

I already described how Joe Biden and Richard Holbrooke came to Sarajevo on our fifth day there and endorsed Tom as ambassador and said that he was going to do a great job. That went a long way. One of the things that I admired about Richard was that he was very interested in meeting with representatives of the NGOs to see what was happening on the ground. This was less than four years after the war ended, and he wanted their views on what was going on outside of Sarajevo and with the real people and their needs and the progress being made.

I was fortunate to be able to participate in that meeting on day six. That was really instructive for me and also gave me an entrée to the NGOs. And as I said, NGOs from all over the country were inviting me to visit their projects, and they really wanted to tell their stories. Security-wise, Tom had the full package: the advance team, the armored car, and the follow car full of weapons. I was only allowed to drive myself within Sarajevo, which essentially meant driving to my university and the embassy. There was nowhere else that I needed to go. So when I was invited to all of these other places all around the country, our security people would decide what I needed, a driver and possibly others. I

would often take an interpreter, one of my students or a protocol person, and either I didn't need any security because my driver was enough, or I needed a bodyguard. Only in one town in the Republika Srpska did I need two bodyguards, and that was a really dangerous place.

So even after we moved from Bosnia officially, I continued to go back to give educational seminars until I moved to the U.S. at the very end of 2008. I returned twice a year and facilitated workshops for teachers and school administrators all over the country. My team on the ground, Training Workshops International, chose an area in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and I facilitated three all-day seminars for each trip and met with various people. I had no security after 2001 because I was not official in Bosnia. I just had my good friends on my small team: my driver/interpreter Vjeko and his wife Azra who arranged the seminars. And I survived it.

Richard Holbrooke, Madeleine Albright, and Bill Clinton were viewed as heroes in Bosnia; they ended the war that had created so much destruction and carnage for almost four years. It was a real advantage to be an American in Bosnia, except with many of the Bosnian Serbs. The Dayton Accords weren't perfect—Dayton should probably be revised, but it probably never will be— but at the time, it stopped the bloodshed, and the peacekeepers came in and prevented further violence.

Americans were also viewed as saviors in Kosovo, where streets were named after Bill Clinton, and there were large pro-American billboards in Pristina. Americans were highly regarded in Bosnia and Kosovo, whereas in Greece, there was a lot of anti-Americanism in the 1980s, some in the 1990s, and less in the 2000s when we went back for the third time. The U.S. was considered the only superpower after the USSR broke up. Anyway, it was good fortune for us to be able to go to Bosnia and for me to continue my work in Kosovo, where Americans were respected, and our leaders were heroes.

Back to the University of Sarajevo and my Bosnian students. I learned so much from them. I told you that I wound up teaching English, meaning I could speak English and teach whatever I wanted. My second year of teaching, the university actually let me teach Psychology classes, and I taught several interactive seminars. One of my students, Anela, served as my interpreter. Some of these young people who were helpful to me and who were my students have become great successes, and this young woman, twenty years later, is now a professor at a university in Bosnia. Years after she graduated, I happened to be giving a seminar in Sarajevo and visited her in the hospital when she gave birth to twins. I was also friends with her mother, and I'm still in touch with the family. I have mentioned the "two schools under one roof." They were outside of Sarajevo, one near Zenica. Anela's mother was the principal of the Bosniak school, one of the "two schools under one roof" buildings where one shift was Bosniak and the other was Croat. She quit in protest saying, "It is wrong to separate these students."

I learned from a young leader organizing blood drives as his project for Peace Trails, and also from the International Commission on Missing Persons—coincidentally the organization that Tom has chaired since 2011 that started in Bosnia to identify Srebrenica victims using DNA—that Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Muslims are

genetically identical. The Muslims converted when the Ottomans conquered the region in the sixteenth century, because it was advantageous for them, for business and to avoid discrimination in other aspects, to be the same religion as the Ottomans. But they are all the same. They look the same, and basically, they speak the same language but slightly different dialects. All of the children went to school together in the pre-war days under the Yugoslav system, and all spoke the same language. They all liked the same music, ate the same food, and pretty much had the same culture. So the purpose of the project I started with the funding from Bill Clinton, Youth for Peace, was to bring the teens together to interact and realize their similarities, even though their nationalist leaders were pulling them apart.

One of the things that Tom and his embassy team tried to do with USAID [United States Agency for International Development] funding was to rebuild schools that would be multiethnic. We had a meeting with a group of teachers and a principal upcountry. Their school had been destroyed in the war, and they were holding segregated makeshift classes in different places. My husband offered, “I have a quarter of a million dollars. The U.S. government can build you a school.” And I added, “You can have computers, science labs, state of the art this and that, but it will be one school for all of your students.” And the teachers—mostly Croat—retorted, “Can you imagine a school where they speak German and English in the same class?” And I said, “That's not the case. You all worked together before the war, and we're all sitting here, and we all understand each other’s language, and your students can too.”

At that meeting, there was an older gentleman who was the principal of the school who said, “In the old days, I was the teacher, and all of the teachers in this circle were my students; they were all educated under me.” But the Croats said adamantly, “We won't do it.” And my husband said, “You just gave up a quarter of a million dollars to build a beautiful new school. Too bad. Sorry. We’ll spend the money somewhere else where they're more open-minded.” So a lot of what he was doing was trying to support refugees and internally displaced people returning to their villages where they were now minorities and also trying to create a safe, multiethnic future for Bosnia-Herzegovina after Dayton.

Tom had an idea, along with the very competent British ambassador, to host what was then called “Secret Dinners.” The two ambassadors didn't name it secret dinners—the press did—but we had many secret dinners at our house and the house of the British ambassador, and they lasted until 2:00 in the morning. Tom and the British ambassador chose three moderate Bosnian Croat leaders, three moderate Bosnian Serbs, and three moderate Bosnian Muslim leaders. They met for dinner, and most of them did not speak English, but they could communicate with each other; Tom and the British ambassador used interpreters. The purpose of the dinners was to determine whether the moderate leaders from the three ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina could cooperate in an effort to break the monopoly of the hardliners who were in power. This initiative finally succeeded when the moderates won the 2000 elections. There were a lot of similarities between these moderate leaders. They really could agree on many things to move Bosnia-Herzegovina forward. Dayton mandated a tripartite presidency, so there were three rotating presidents of this small country of four million people. The way things were set up, there were two entities. One was the Bosnian-Croat Federation. The other was

Republika Srpska, which is the Serb entity. There was way too much government. There are ten cantons within the Federation, each with its own ministries. Bosnia, a country of less than four million, has twelve Education ministries (one in each canton, one for the Federation as a whole, and one in the Republika Srpska), too many competing ministries of everything.

And only much later did they establish a common army. There were promises made by these moderates that they could reform the government and help the country progress because they had lost so much during the war and its aftermath. They were still receiving a lot of foreign money. Zlatko Lagumdzija was a Bosniak leader who made many promises. He became Prime Minister through the democratic election in 2000, and the people who elected him had so much hope for the country. But of course, he couldn't fulfill most of his pledges, so they gave him two years and said, “Sorry, you didn't succeed, so you’re out.” And many people went back to supporting their old nationalist leaders who were active during the war. The moderates were elected in 2000 and were defeated two years later and never came back politically.

By 2002, the electorate voted for the same old nationalist leaders. And here we are in 2020 with the same nationalist leaders in power like Milorad Dodik (who was a moderate in 2000 but became a hardline Serb leader later) and Bosniak Bakir Izetbegovic. And the situation is even worse than when we were there because the Serbs are now threatening to secede, either to be independent or to join Serbia. So those were heady days back in 2000 and 2001. It was wonderful to have the hopeful and collaborative secret dinners with all of these people who spoke the same language and came from the same genetic background. But the populace was expecting miracles, and they didn't get them. And they said, “Well, at least we know our nationalist leaders.” So that's what they have twenty years later.

One time at the University of Sarajevo, I organized a seminar for my English students and invited a very close Bosnian friend, a graduate of their university department, who worked in Embassy Protocol as a highly trained interpreter and who was one of those secret dinner interpreters. I thought my students should learn what the professional possibilities might be for them after graduation. She discussed how she got this position and what skills were needed for the job because this is what most of the students wanted to do. She was engaging, and the students were really interested. Then a few days later, I was summoned to meet with the Faculty Dean who demanded, “Who is this person? Why did you bring in an outsider?” And I responded, “She's one of your graduates, and she's a huge success. And she told the interested students the career potential for their degree in English.” And the authorities said, “Never bring in an outsider.” So they were closed-minded in many ways.

Here’s a funny story about getting paid at the university: My teaching salary was 350 Convertible Marks (equivalent to Deutsche Marks) a month, which was equivalent to about $150 a month for teaching three weekly classes, 125 students. Once a month, the administration would call the professors into a room and say, “Come and get your salary.” We had to sign for it, and we could see what everybody else on the list was earning. Most of the professors were getting 350, like me; some who had tenure were

getting 500. Our salaries were paid out of a huge transparent plastic bag full of bills, not folded, just crumpled and stuffed. There were just a bunch of bills, and they would pull out our 350 and give us the cash.

The university was interesting, and the students were very enthusiastic because my teaching style was new, and relevant information was taught in fun and interactive ways rather than emphasizing memorization like most of their other classes. Our classrooms at the University of Sarajevo were right next to a building that was totally bombed out during the war, so when we looked outside, there was this twenty-story building where all the windows were blown out. Then later, the Greeks and other EU governments donated money and rebuilt this building as the Joint Institutions Building, so it's really beautiful. The Philosophy Faculty where I held classes was located directly across from the Holiday Inn, right on the street that had been the dangerous Sniper Alley during the war.

I left Bosnia in August 2001 and continued to go back there to give educational seminars twice a year while we were living in Greece and the U.K. until I finally moved to the States at the very end of 2008. My Bosnian team chose an area of the country, and I facilitated three 100-person seminars for teachers and administrators, always multiethnic groups with at least two, often all three ethnicities. The teachers always had a lot in common, with the same goals and the same challenges, regardless of ethnicity, and all were very receptive to the new information as well as the free manuals, handbook, power points and videos that I had created.

While I was still living in Bosnia, I taught some classes at the pedagogical academies in Sarajevo and in Mostar, two hours away. One class was on learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD]. My students at those universities, who were teachers or future teachers, said, “We know all about that because learning disabilities are the same as mental retardation, and attention deficit disorder is caused by war trauma.” So I said to myself, “You are leaving this country, but you cannot go on without clarifying this.”

So that was the end of my time living in Bosnia. We came back to Washington between assignments for the month of September of 2001. My birthday was September 9, and we had a wonderful time that day with our kids and good friends on their boat on the Potomac River. Tom and I started Greek language training at Foreign Service Institute September 10. He had the same teacher from when he had taken a Greek refresher training in 1994. I had an adjunct teacher, and that matters because she was not a badge-holding, security-cleared employee. We started on September 10th, and on September 11th, we all know what happened. Tom and I were in separate classrooms. We were all evacuated from FSI. There was no cell phone connectivity; our kids both worked for the government, and we couldn’t communicate with either of them. We were rotating between staying with different friends during that month in DC, and on September 11, we were staying in Old Town Alexandria. We walked around Old Town, and everything was closed like a ghost town. Everybody has a story about those days. Tom was able to resume his Greek training, but I couldn’t because my instructor wasn’t cleared.

I was going to Greece as the ambassador's wife, so I was selecting American art for the

ambassador's residence through the Art in Embassies program. This was my second round because we had a wonderful art collection in our home in Sarajevo, where our theme was peace and reconciliation and bridges. But in 2001, I was choosing art for Greece, and Art in Embassies sent me to New York to art galleries near Ground Zero, and that was just a weird situation being there only a few days after 9/11.

Then we moved in with other friends who lived in Washington, DC. On September 11, their son and his partner had been campaigning at Ground Zero for the primary for the partner to be a New York State Senator [he won]. A few days later, I talked to David on the phone from his parents' house, and he said, "I'm so traumatized. I can't take this; all I see is smoke and ashes, and the smell is awful." So I said, "Come to Greece; come as soon as we get there." David was a filmmaker, and he had promised that he would help me make a video on learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. So that is what we did. Tom's swearing-in was ten days after 9/11, and our friends and families drove to DC because most airlines were still not flying.

Then a few days later, Tom had to stay in Washington because the foreign minister of Greece, George Papandreou, was coming to DC for meetings on Capitol Hill and with State Department personnel. With the approval of the Legal Department at State, I flew out on a private plane of a billionaire friend to precede Tom to Greece by five days for his second ambassadorship and our third time living in Greece. As our private plane was landing in Athens, I was looking down and exclaimed, "Wait, wait, this is not Athens! Where are you taking us?" I was seeing beautiful superhighways with green signs. I was seeing a brand-new airport that was fantastic. And I was yelling, "This is not Athens!"

We had only been gone for four years, but in the interim, Athens had really ramped up for the 2004 Olympics. They had a new Metro. I had always taken buses to my downtown university before, and now I could take the new, fast and clean underground Metro. They built this fabulous airport, which is still one of my favorite airports. It really works, whereas the old airport was smoky, rubbish-filled and horrible. And so we landed, I got my air freight and unpacked everything. A few days later, Tom flew in commercially with only a briefcase, no luggage, and he came to our beautiful residence as I was hosting a large meeting of the American women's group [AWOG] at our home.

That was our start in Greece, and Greece was all about the 2004 Athens Olympics. Tom's work was on counterterrorism and ensuring that the Olympics would be secure. All the American Olympic teams and officials came to Athens in 2003 and 2004 to check things out. Their parents were all worried about whether it would be safe. We showed them around, and Tom would fly the VIPs in helicopters for a birds' eye view of the venues. At that time, the venues didn't even look close to being ready, and just before the Olympics, most of the Athenians left town and went to their island homes because they were sure the Olympics were going to be a huge bust. But at the glorious opening ceremony, which we attended with our kids, literally the paint was drying; the flowers had just been planted; and everybody was watching the Olympics on TV. People were exclaiming, "The traffic is orderly, the venues are working!" And then the Greeks came back from the islands, and the second week was just booming. It was truly the Golden Age of Greece.

I mentioned the terrorist group November 17th before and how our best friend in Greece,

Bill Nordeen, was murdered. We stayed in touch with his family, we're still in touch with his daughter. Her mother passed away a few years ago, but we were very close with her until the end. Tom was determined to apprehend and prosecute November 17th, and yet when he came back as DCM in 1994 and as ambassador in 2001, there had been no progress, despite a huge effort by the embassy to arrest them. In 2002, Tom asked the American College of Greece (Deree) to invite Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, who is of Greek background, to receive an honorary degree. Tom also got an honorary degree, and they both gave speeches at the graduation ceremony on June 28.

Olympia and her husband were supposed to go to the island of Hydra the next day, but there was a large explosion at the ticket kiosk at the port that night as they were giving their speeches at the university. The perpetrator accidentally blew himself up and landed in the hospital. It's a long story, but the dominoes started falling, and this guy started spilling and naming names, including his two brothers. They found out that he was one of the operatives of November 17th, and they put it all together. So they apprehended, tried, and imprisoned all those terrorists before the Olympics. The danger in 2004 was no longer domestic terrorism, but this was the first major international event after 9/11. The threat was international terrorism, especially al-Qaeda, and that is mostly what Tom worked on.

I came to Greece in late September and immediately connected with Doctors of the World, who learned of my work on trafficking in Bosnia. I had talked with dozens of women and heard their traumatic stories and thought, “I really need to do something, raise awareness, get legislation enacted, establish shelters, etc.” Doctors of the World was a fantastic NGO that was starting to work on counter-trafficking, so one of the first things they did was to invite me to give speeches at their conferences. I kept thinking, “This is Greece; they're in the EU, so of course, their problem can't be like Bosnia’s, which had been through a war.” But Greece was worse because trafficking was so accepted, and these young women were tricked when they were trafficked. They thought they were going to be waitresses in Greece, and they were deceived and raped through Serbia and Bulgaria and held as prisoners in bars, similar stories as the women coming to Bosnia from Moldova and Romania, some Ukraine. Similar stories, but the situation was worse because it was kind of accepted in Greece. Cheating on your wife was very accepted, and it was better, in the minds of many, to cheat on your wife with some anonymous foreign girl than with your neighbor or your kid's teacher or your secretary. So we really had a lot to do to change attitudes.

On UN Human Rights Day 2001, which was December 10, a few months after I arrived in Greece, I was invited to be on a panel to talk about trafficking. On my panel was my husband (the US ambassador), the ombudsman, the chief of police of Athens, and Dr. Gregoris Lazos, who was a professor at Panteion University, one of the top universities in Greece. Professor Lazos had been researching the phenomenon of trafficking in Greece for twenty years. Somehow the bar owners and the pimps would let him in and talk to him and allow him to talk with the women. This guy was a major expert. My speech was: “Here are these young women and they’ve been deceived, and you might think that they're prostitutes making a lot of money, but they are actually sex slaves.” And next,

Professor Lazos lectured, “Let me tell you about one Albanian teenager. She had dozens of clients every day and she was bleeding” and on and on. It was just the worst-case horrific scenario. So what did the press pick up on? “This is the ambassador's wife. Why is she talking about this? She should be home pouring tea. It is not her position to comment on trafficking in our country.” Every single publication reported this on day one. Day two, “She's a psychologist. Does she know anything about trafficking after her experience in Bosnia? Maybe she does.” Third day: “Do we have a problem in this country?” Fourth day: “Maybe we should be listening to the expert,” who was Dr. Lazos. So it very quickly evolved during the week from the role of the ambassador's wife to stay home and shut up to “maybe this woman has some experience and maybe she's telling the truth.” That was the start of it, and thereafter I was highly sought after by the media to discuss my experiences in Bosnia.

Doctors of the World ran a shelter for immigrants, some of whom were trafficked women. There was one terrific activist who was a dentist, and he was very involved in this whole anti-trafficking movement; he was my closest contact, although I also collaborated with the head of Doctors of the World and others on their staff. The dentist met this Russian woman because she had dental problems, which is an impediment for anyone who is forced to participate in the sex trade. She would come for dental appointments, and he knew she had been trafficked and was unable to escape from her captors. So he said, “Next time you have an appointment, bring your purse and whatever else you need.” She asked, “Can I bring my friend?” “Sure.” The next day, they walked in the front door of his office and walked out the back door, and he saved those two women. Those two women were the heart and soul of the new shelter.

Kristina was much older than the typical trafficked women and was a tremendous help. She was in her early thirties and had two preteen daughters who were back in Russia at the time. I'm still in touch with her, and she's living happily and safely in a non-European country now. We worked very hard on establishing a shelter for trafficking survivors, separate from the other immigrants. I also collaborated with another Greek leader, a woman who ran a domestic violence shelter and was taking in trafficked women. For three years, I also worked with an organization called Stop Now, which had Greek government funding. We created campaigns on anti-trafficking. But mostly it was me giving interviews and going around to conferences, giving speeches, reading speeches in Greek, because with the help of my wonderful tutor, I had a good accent and phrasing, about the plight of these women and how we needed to help them.

Tom and I kind of divided things up. He would work with the ministers of what they called the “competent” ministries, really the relevant ministries like Foreign Ministry, Public Order, Education, Interior, etc. and I would work with the deputy ministers, just educating and lobbying them. And then came the first TIP report, the 2000 Trafficking in Persons report that the State Department started publishing annually, and Greece was on Tier Three, the worst rating. So together, Tom and I met with the Greek foreign affairs person who was in charge of foreigners and immigration, and we told him, “Turkey has moved up to Tier Two, and Greece, along with Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and some other countries that you don't want to be associated with, is still on Tier Three. Is that where

you want to be? Is that what you want your reputation to look like right before the Olympics? What you have to do is to pass a law." So they wrote a law. And I think part of the wording was guided by a coalition of anti-trafficking NGOs in Greece called the Galatsi Group because we met in a suburb of Athens called Galatsi. So the government finally passed a law in 2002.

But as you know from the Trafficking in Persons Office, it's much more complicated than just a law. Governments are required to have implement plans for prevention, prosecution of traffickers, aiding the victims, public awareness, and all of that. It was a long slog, but by the end of my time in Greece, anti-trafficking initiatives were starting to move forward.

One glitch regarding victim protection was that in order to get admitted to a shelter, victims had to agree to testify against their traffickers, which was really perilous. I've talked with some of these women and they told me that their traffickers would threaten, "We know where your family is. We know where your little sister is, we know where your son is [in your home country]." So how could they testify in person against the bar owner who had the judge on his side?

I worked a lot on that. Actually, after I left Greece and moved to the U.K., I wrote a training manual for judges and prosecutors to help them understand what the women had been through and to help the women rather than siding with their slick traffickers. I was invited to give that training for Greek judges and prosecutors who were prosecuting the traffickers.

I also decided for all of these ministries, the "competent" ministries, the relevant ones, that I would write some suggestions to move the counter-trafficking initiative forward even more. I wrote recommendations in English for what each ministry needed to do to comply with the law and to improve prevention, prosecution of traffickers, and protection of women. Little did I know that word for word, it would be translated, and it became the Greek National Action Plan against Trafficking. When I read it in Greek, I was thinking, "Wait, this sounds familiar."

They had great aspirations, and little by little, they started making progress. I left Greece in 2004, but other activists like my friend, Judy Boyle with the NO Project, stayed to work on prevention with teenagers and to educate the future crop of potential johns, and Doctors Without Borders and Doctors of the World continued their work and their shelters. The movements kept gaining momentum, and Greece moved up on the TIP Report, finally to Tier Two. They're still not on Tier One, meaning that they're doing everything required, but in the sixteen years since I left, there has been an effort to educate people, even in airports and at borders, to identify these women, and there have been increased prosecutions.

Q: Just one question about the women who had been trafficked. Were the immigration authorities in on the trafficking as well, because at some point they must've had some kind of documentation or how did they get all these people into Greece?

MILLER: I think one by one, two, three by three with their "fathers" or their "uncles," or

they were driven. I'm pretty sure that the immigration officials were not complicit. They were not part of the problem, but they could certainly be part of the solution and watching for these traffickers and women coming through the borders and airports. And just the awareness of what you're looking for, that the man doesn't let the girl talk, that she looks disheveled, that she looks like she hasn't had any sleep, all these kinds of things. And so it did get better and better. I left and continued on this mission to reduce trafficking in Greece and the region. And in the meantime, I was visiting IOM shelters in Albania, Kosovo and Bulgaria and other places to hear more stories and to learn more about best practices for running a shelter and helping women and repatriation.

In our last two years in Greece, I was recognized with many anti-trafficking awards. In 2003, I received the Avis Bohlen Award for outstanding achievement by a State Department spouse [I had been the runner-up the previous year]. They had a lovely ceremony on the eighth floor at State, and I was thrilled that my parents, our kids, and many friends could attend. In 2004, I was named as one of the State Department Trafficking in Persons "Heroes Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery." I also got another award from the TIP office as well as an award from Doctors of the World.

Here's another of my projects: When I first arrived in Greece in late September 2001, my friend the New York filmmaker, David Sigal, came over, and I wrote a script on learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder, what they look like, how they affect children, and how frustrating they can be for children's learning and emotional development, what teachers can do and how they can understand these children and not punish them. I went to the American Community Schools where I had worked for years, and they told me that we could film at ACS if we got parent permission, so I got signed permission from parents of all the children who were to appear in the video, especially from two sets of embassy parents. In fact, one of the parents just wrote me this morning. He had given permission for his second grade daughter to be the star of my video, and that second grade daughter is now in medical school.

Those seven-year-old girls were both terrific actresses. David and I directed them. David made a template of the video, and I narrated it in English. My friend Djana, a former teacher who had interpreted for the secret dinners in Bosnia, narrated the video in Bosnian, and she was wonderful. The Greek version was narrated by my colleague, Zaphie, a special education teacher with whom I had worked in Greece in the mid-1990s when we were giving a lot of educational seminars. She translated my manuals and the accompanying handbook on LD and ADHD and PowerPoints into Greek, and then we wound up working together on frequent trips to train teachers in Cyprus in 2002-04.

I spent a full year going to one of the major Greek TV stations and worked with a TV employee for numerous eight-hour shifts to edit the videos in the three languages. Then I used those videos every time when I went back to Bosnia and duplicated them and the manuals for all the teachers in my seminars. I also went to Cyprus, the occupied Turkish side and the Greek side, and Zaphie and I gave seminars for teachers from every single school on both sides. For my training at all the schools, I gave away free manuals and free videos in their own language. The manuals have now been translated into twelve languages and the video into seven or eight because I used them later in other countries.

With some educators and a lawyer, we started an NGO, the Institute for the Study of Learning Difficulties. The Niarchos Foundation in Greece was very generous and gave us money so that Zaphie and I could take our show on the road. We had some really good colleagues, and I'm still in touch with some of them. And there was another wonderful foundation led by a terrific wealthy Greek couple who helped greatly so that I could continue my projects, and we're still close with them. That foundation enabled my frequent trips back to Bosnia and also to Kosovo to facilitate training for educators.

In Greece, there were several American universities besides mine, the University of Indianapolis, where I taught from 1994-98 and 2001 until the 2004 Olympics. The University of LaVerne was another American university that was based in California with a satellite campus in Athens. One day, some administrators from LaVerne came to my house and said, "We can offer scholarships for two students from Bosnia-Herzegovina. We can give them free tuition, and all they need is $5,000 for expenses." And I said, "Thank you very much, but you might as well say $5 million because these students don't have it. So if you're going to do it, you should do it all the way. I'll take the applications, and I will choose the students." I chose two outstanding students, and then there was a third one and I said, "Let's take her the next year." But LaVerne said, "We can take her this year with the two others." So they provided a free ride at LaVerne for one year, which was 2002-03.

Three scholarships for these smart students, some of whom had lost parents, some of whom had been internally displaced or refugees during the war. I was also in touch with some of my students from Seeds of Peace, including a young man named Nedim. He and his brother had participated in the Seeds of Peace international programs and were real leaders. Their father had been killed when he was a soldier in the Bosnian war when they were very young, and their mother died of cancer, so they were living with their grandmother. This family was known to some of my friends, and they said, "You need to support Nedim and his brother for the long term because he's living with his grandmother on $50 a month. And these are outstanding boys." So I found funding to support them.

Back in Greece in 2003, these three young women had successfully completed their first year at LaVerne and were preparing for sophomore year, and Nedim got in touch with me and said, "I would love to go to college in Greece." And I said, "Let me see what I can do." So I went to LaVerne and they said, "We can give him a tuition scholarship, but you need to pay for room and board." So I went to another very close and wealthy Greek friend and said, "Here's the backstory on this talented orphan, Nedim. Can you help?" And she did. She was always very generous with my projects.

Nedim arrived in Athens in September of 2003, and University of LaVerne immediately shut down for good; they closed their university, and my students were already in Athens, high and dry. I had these four young people, three sophomores and a freshman, and I said to the LaVerne administrators, "This is on you. You invited them." They said, "Let the students choose." The choice was between University of Indianapolis and Deree [American College of Greece], which was a large American university in Athens with a big campus and many activities. They chose Deree, and LaVerne paid for them. The three

young women graduated from Deree three years later. For his senior year, Nedim was picked up by the University of Indianapolis on a scholarship. They paid for his senior year, graduated him and gave him a scholarship for his MBA, which he completed. So those are some of the first Bosnian students.

Then there were three other Bosnian students who were Srebrenica massacre survivors. Some lost their fathers and all their uncles and older male cousins, and some of their fathers were disabled during the Srebrenica genocide in 1995. These boys survived because they were only eleven years old then, and the Serbs were only killing teens who looked older than fourteen as well as all adult males. These boys wanted to go to the American Farm School in Thessaloniki, and I said that I would try to enable that goal. Fortunately, the head of that school was an old friend of mine, a Greek American, and he said, "We'll do it. We will bring those boys for the two-year degree for tuition and room and board." Very generous.

They graduated, and that was great. And then these young men came back to me and said, "We would love to have a four-year degree in Thessaloniki from the American College of Thessaloniki (ACT)." Another friend of ours, a former Foreign Service Officer and colleague of Tom's, was the head of ACT, and said, "I'll give them a 20 percent tuition discount," which was a start. Then I went to the Greek Jewish community, which was based in Thessaloniki. Ninety-four percent of the Jews in Thessaloniki were slaughtered in the concentration camps during World War II; it was the highest percentage in Europe. The Jews were rounded up, tortured in the main square and then shipped off to camps like Auschwitz and murdered; very few survived and returned. So when I went to the Jewish community and mentioned the Srebrenica genocide, that resonated, and they were very generous and donated the money for the third year for these students.

And for the fourth year, I put the arm on my husband's poker group. These were well-to-do Greek businessmen. There was one good friend, Stelios, who passed away a few years ago, way too young. He took on the responsibility for these Srebrenica students' final year, and the poker group put them through. Stelios also helped my brilliant young interpreter in Kosovo, Faton, who was eighteen years old, and spoke fluent English, Turkish, and Albanian. And he continued to interpret for me all the times that I went back to Kosovo. So Faton said to me, "I'm studying Computer Science at a university in Macedonia, and the classes are in Albanian language." It was ironic because I wound up teaching at that university many years later. He said, "I speak good English, so I really should be studying Computer Science in English." I said, "Let me see what I can do with the American College of Thessaloniki." So my friend, the head of ACT, gave him a tuition discount, and the poker group chipped for some expenses. And Stelios also got him an internship in between his summers there. He just wrote me last week. He's now in his mid-thirties, married to a Greek-Albanian dentist, has three children and lives in Germany. He's doing fantastic. After undergrad, he went on scholarship for his MBA at ACT in Thessaloniki.

So I am in touch with a lot of these former students whom I helped get an education; I still correspond with two of the three young women I helped put through Deree in

Athens. Two of them are working in multinationals, and Nedim is now the Chairman of the Bosnian-American Chamber of Commerce in Sarajevo. I'm so proud of these young people who endured the war, overcame hardship, and made the most of their education.

My parenting manual and educational materials were in Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian language for Bosnia. In Kosovo, anybody middle-aged or older spoke Serbo-Croatian because Kosovo had been part of Yugoslavia. Somebody in Kosovo discovered my educational materials and asked if they could translate them into Albanian language, and I said, "Of course." People would come forward, sometimes unsolicited, and were so generous with their time, money, and services. There was a Greek publisher in Athens who offered to print my manuals and handbooks and all my materials, thousands of copies, in Albanian language. And she did. And then I teamed up with this wonderful local NGO on the ground in Pristina. I started going to Kosovo at the beginning of 2004, and I continued there through 2008, even though I never lived there.

Kosovo was recovering from a devastating war five years earlier in which killing, rape, and burning villages were commonplace. Most of the populace fled to Macedonia or Albania for weeks during the war. Trauma and destruction were still rampant. I went to Kosovo twice a year, spring and fall, and gave seminars in a region of Kosovo chosen by my team for that visit. I facilitated two full-day, 100-teacher trainings and then a workshop for education students at a university. So almost every teacher in Kosovo had my manuals, handouts, PowerPoints and videos. We used the LD/ADHD video that I made with David Sigal, which was translated into Albanian, and a lot of the training was on learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder and new methods of education. I was working with a Slovenian psychiatrist who was consulting with that organization on post-war trauma and encouraging schools to serve as mental health resources for children. So that continued for years, and I'm still in touch with them. One time, I went back to Kosovo with Training Workshops International to do summer camps for kids. In Kosovo, like Bosnia but even more so, the people loved Americans and appreciated how Americans and their NATO allies supported them in their time of need in 1999 and afterwards. Huge building walls are painted with Bill Clinton's likeness; there is a large statue of Madeleine Albright; and streets are named after Rep. Eliot Engel. I was there one time for Fourth of July, and there was a giant celebration. Kosovo was a fledgling country that was trying to get its act together and finally declared independence from Serbia in 2008, with a lot of support from the US.

Q: Also, fantastic because at the beginning of these countries, you know, people are learning the absolute basics, nothing, with every profession.

MILLER: Right. And again, it was part of Former Yugoslavia, and I asked every teacher in my seminars, "When you were a student, did you have to memorize all of the natural resources of Australia?" And every hand went up; they all had to do it. I said, "Imagine that you got a job in Australia and you needed to know how many tons of bauxite they produce, would you need to go back twenty years to when you were in school and cite that figure you had memorized? How would you find out?" By this time, some people had access to the internet and said, "Oh yeah, maybe we could look it up on the internet.

Maybe we don't have to keep all of those obscure facts in our heads. Maybe we can use our brains for more creative pursuits." So they were getting it, and they were good audiences. And since it was in the Albanian language, I also took my training to Albania one time and did a seminar in Tirana for a large group of school administrators. I learned to read the slides in Albanian, but I had no grasp of the grammar. I just had pronunciation and words. I can't initiate, but at least I could read the slides.

Q: All fantastic. Now you alluded to going to London. Did you want to continue with that today?

MILLER: My husband knew that he could start a second career in his mid-fifties after the great success of the Olympics, and then the Special Olympics in the fall of 2004. He was going to retire and said, "I've been exceedingly lucky. I was ambassador for the Cyprus negotiations and ambassador to Bosnia and to Greece. I'm young enough for another career." He was wondering what he would do next. We would probably come back to Washington; our kids were here, and he would get a job.

One day while I was giving seminars in Bosnia, he emailed me from Athens and said, "I just saw an ad in *The Economist*, and I applied to be the CEO of Plan International." We were already very familiar with Plan International, formerly Foster Parents' Plan. Tom's family had sponsored children in developing countries through Plan from the time Tom was ten years old for many decades. When we first married in 1969 and had no money at all—we were making something like $900 a year in flexible income—we still started sponsoring two kids through Plan. We've been sponsoring two kids, a boy and a girl in various countries all over the world, ever since, and we've reconnected with some of them who are now adults.

Plan had grown since 1937, when it was founded to support children after the Spanish Civil War, and in 2004, it was a huge NGO that was helping millions of children around the world. I had served on the U.S. National Board of Plan from 1977-79. We knew it as sponsors, we knew it inside and out. From its beginnings in Rhode Island, Plan later moved its international headquarters near London because most of their funding was coming from Europe. Headquarters was in a town in England called Woking. Woking is not London or even nearby Guilford. Woking was another culture shock.

Up until that time, Tom had never created a resume, because he'd been in the State Department, and he didn't need one, but a friend and our daughter helped him craft one for his job search. Plan narrowed the CEO applicants down to ten people and interviewed Tom by phone. We thought this might be good practice for him to have a resume and practice interviewing, even though he had no chance for this job. We figured they would never hire him because what they did **not** want was a white American male who had worked in the George W. Bush administration. Then they narrowed it to five, then three, and they were flying him to London for interviews. They finally hired him, even though his demographics were not what they wanted; they would have loved to have had a woman of color from the southern hemisphere or the developing world, but Tom had the international background and management experience they were looking for.

We moved to Woking, England, in January of 2005 and lived there until late December of 2008. We also kept going back to Greece because Tom was on the board of a hotel company that owned the nicest hotel in Athens. The Grande Bretagne brought us back to Greece four times a year until 2009, and then twice a year thereafter, which was wonderful, and we got together with all our Greek friends on those visits.

While living in Woking, I was dividing my time between Bosnia, Kosovo and Greece. With Plan, what I was most interested in, as a social worker, was the developing countries implementing the child-centered community development programs. Plan had seventeen sponsoring countries, First World countries that raised the funds for the forty-nine Third World countries where they actually implemented programs in communities. Tom visited programs in all forty-nine countries, and I went to forty-one. It was fascinating to learn about the Plan initiatives and how they collaborated with the communities for education, health, children's rights, water and sanitation, etc. Tom started in Plan the week after the December 2004 tsunami, so our first visit was to Sri Lanka to see the damage and what Plan was doing to help survivors.

And then we went to Aceh, Indonesia, because that was the epicenter of the tsunami, and that place was just flattened. We were standing on a grassy area that looked like a soccer field, and they said, "You are standing on 70,000 bodies" that were buried underneath the field. It was just devastating. We saw some good things but also the disorganization and lack of coordination of the NGO effort, with tents scattered here and there and no effective plan to deliver coordinated services. Each NGO seemed to want to stake out their little place in the disaster relief effort and plant a flag with their logo. Plan ran a good project for sweet little preschool orphans in Aceh, and their caregivers were wonderful, but their parents had not survived the flood.

In those four years, we went to so many countries. Plan works in twenty-four African countries in West, South and East Africa. Tom visited them all, and I went to many, and it was fascinating and also gratifying to see how Plan was empowering communities. We visited thirteen countries in Latin America, almost all the Central American countries except Costa Rica and Belize, and many countries in South America. And in some of these countries I was invited to work pro bono, which I did. I started giving educational and mental health seminars, and many child abuse prevention seminars using my parenting manuals.

I was invited to China through Plan to be an education consultant and visit their schools, consult with the teachers, and then facilitate a two-day training for Chinese educators and professional teams. At the time, my mother-in-law, who had been a Plan sponsor for fifty years, was sponsoring a teenage girl in China, so I got to visit her at her school and then met with her family at their rural home.

Also in a rural community in China, Tom and I stayed at the home of the community leader. We slept on cement pallets. No running water inside, the rudimentary "bathroom" (squat toilet) was across the courtyard, and we could hear the cows mooing at the crack of dawn. We had a lot of different experiences in all those countries, and I have wonderful memories and terrific photos of the people in those communities. We would

go to the capital first and then we would travel out to the hinterlands and stay in very basic hotels. We always had running water, but often it was cold.

We visited so many of the programs in health, sanitation, children's rights, and education that Plan was implementing. I really believe in the organization, and we still sponsor two kids and donate extra money every year. Then I went back to Sri Lanka in 2006; Plan had translated my manuals into Tamil and Sinhalese, and they organized a book launch and an educational seminar that was bicultural and bilingual. I conducted a training in English for Tamil- and Sinhalese-speaking teachers who sat in the same room together and participated in the workshop. And this was right after their twenty-six-year civil war ended.

I gave seminars on child abuse prevention through parenting education and on other topics for West, East and South African Plan staffs. In Vietnam, it was a more extensive project. Plan translated all my materials and added beautiful graphics of Vietnamese children. They introduced my materials to some rural communities before I arrived. In Vietnam, I gave a one and a half-day training for trainers with government NGOs on parenting education, and then I had two days of school visits and consultations.

In the Vietnamese communes, I met with the kids, parents and teachers. They had already introduced my materials, so I asked, "How has this program impacted you?" And the parents replied, "We used to yell and hit our kids, but now we talk to our kids." And then I asked the preteens and teenagers, "Is that true?" They responded, "Our parents were so punitive before, but they're great now. And we really have a wonderful relationship with our parents." The teachers were also in this meeting; it was a little harder for them to buy into these new methods, but they were moving toward it. And after I gave the seminars, it was easier for the methodology to be integrated into their schools. So Vietnam was a big success.

In Peru, I was able to give a presentation in Spanish because I had boned up on my Spanish language. I hired a wonderful Spanish tutor in Woking, and she pushed me and gave me specific vocabulary on child abuse prevention, etc. We did Spanish interview role-plays and parenting group role-plays, and I got proficient enough to give seminars in Spanish with PowerPoints.

Plan discovered my materials in Paraguay and wanted to use them, and a private publisher worked with me to translate and adapt my manuals, handbook and video, and added beautiful watercolor graphics. They invited me to Asunción to give a book launch and seminars in Spanish. I actually went to Paraguay three times. They published everything in Spanish and also Guarani, which is the indigenous language for a target audience that didn't speak Spanish, the native peoples who live in the mountains and in the hinterlands of Paraguay. I also went to Guatemala several times for training of trainers' workshops on parenting education and child abuse prevention and starting a hotline.

In Africa, I facilitated a two-day training in Malawi for trainers on parenting education

and child abuse prevention. I visited Kenya several times doing parenting education and child abuse prevention and a book launch because my materials were published in English in Kenya with African graphics. I also did a training in Mozambique for NGO reps on parenting and child abuse prevention when we were visiting programs in that country. I went all around the developing world in Asia, Africa and Latin America through Plan and met interesting people and had welcoming audiences for my seminars. I didn't get paid, but Plan and others covered my expenses and travel, and they translated and published the manuals and translated the videos.

So that was really interesting collaborating with Plan. Actually, I was hardly in the U.K. at all, between going back to Bosnia, Kosovo, Greece, and then all those developing countries that I visited with Tom and by myself for work. I had never been south of Mexico before, so Latin America was interesting, and relearning Spanish was fun. I had never been outside of Senegal in sub-Saharan Africa. We went to countries like Mali, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau and places that you would never go on vacation but were fascinating and had very impressive programs to help children and their communities.

There were also initiatives for children in certain countries where kids had been trafficked and kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army. In Uganda, we talked with those teenagers who were utterly traumatized. We had open conversations with many boys and girls, preteens and teens, who had been kidnapped and forced to serve as porters and babysitters and then were exploited as killers and sex slaves as “wives” of the LRA commanders. As Tom and I were finishing our conversation with two traumatized teen girls who had been sex slaves of Lord’s Resistance Army commanders, one man from the community said something to me that really made an impression: “You need to buy soccer balls for these kids. They need to have a life; let them play. These kids have never been children; they’ve lost their childhood.” They had been kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army as preteens. And so Plan started some programs for rehabilitation for them. I saw a big difference between the kids who didn’t get treatment and the kids who were actually in centers who received therapy and vocational training and who had more optimism for their future.

There were lots of amazing experiences through Plan. And after four action-packed years, it was over. We left in late 2008 because we had agreed on four years when he took the Plan job, and we had been out of the U.S. for fourteen years, with the exception of 1997-99 when Tom was traveling all the time for the Cyprus negotiations. We decided we would go back home to DC, and we landed around Christmas of 2008 and moved into Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, where we live now.

Q: Today is August 28, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Bonnie Miller, and Bonnie, you wanted to recall a few things from your previous posts that you didn't have time to add the first time.

MILLER: Right. You had asked me about Thailand and the first two times we were posted in Greece, whether I had contacts that were helpful to my husband, and I didn't really, because my contacts were with education and mental health people. But when we went to Bosnia, it was all about the war and trauma and mental health. So when people

would call to connect with me, or people would request an appointment with Tom, we would have joint meetings at the embassy. Some NGOs would call him and say, “We want to talk about this or that.” And he'd say, “I want my wife to be present for this.” It was always illuminating, and sometimes it led to lifelong relationships and collaborations as with ArtReach or Training Workshops International that I mentioned earlier, where I continued to work with them for a decade.

In Greece, when anybody wanted to meet and talk about trafficking, Tom and I would have a joint meeting. He worked with ministers and I worked with deputy ministers, although I did work with the Education Minister and Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, who later became prime minister. But I mainly got to the number twos, whose portfolios included trafficking, and that's who I was aiming for when I wrote the suggestions that later became the Greek National Action Plan on Trafficking.

When we first came to Greece, the previous ambassador asked us to follow up on an effort that he and his wife had initiated. He said, “We have this great idea, and we think that you should continue with it.” When we lived in Greece in the mid-1990s, the Greeks had just built this gorgeous, gigantic opera house and performing arts center right next to the embassy, and later they opened the Metro underground with a station right in front of it. Tom’s predecessor, Ambassador Nick Burns and Libby Burns, wanted to build a similar facility that would be at the American Community Schools about ten miles away in the northeast suburbs of Athens. It was a grand and grandiose plan. I asked, “With the opera house in Athens already thriving, is this new center really needed?” And they replied, “It would be a good idea, and it would also benefit ACS, but we haven't raised any money for it yet. You guys would do that.”

So here's this enormous plan with the architectural drawings for a brand-new music complex that wasn't really needed, and over to you to raise the funds, Ambassador Miller. Something on a smaller scale was not a necessity, but it would have been useful if it were located at the American Community Schools so they could use it daily for the students. So after quickly realizing that we couldn’t begin to find money to build this huge complex, Tom pivoted to an initiative to build a gymnasium, a smaller performing arts center, and an indoor swimming pool, which ACS did not have. Tom said, “I'm game, let me go to the Legal Department at State and get permission to raise funds.”

ACS was always trying to recruit new students. Other British and American schools were improving academically and becoming more competitive, so Tom’s pitch to the Legal Department at the State Department was: “This is the American school where our diplomats’ kids attend.” It was interesting because we found out that years before, some part of the State Department had provided funding for what they called the American College, a K-12 school in Greece that was not an American school at all. It was that the children of the super-rich and super-influential Greeks attended. No Americans attended because most of the instruction was in Greek language, and it had been the elite school for Greece for decades; almost all the prime ministers graduated from there. So that school, because it had the name “American” even though it wasn't an American curriculum, had been receiving a lot of money from the State Department, but the actual

American school where our embassy children attended was not getting any more money from the State besides the tuitions. We thought this was really unfair that the Greek school had a beautiful performing arts center and sports venues, excellent facilities funded by you and me, the American taxpayer.

Tom asked for and received permission to raise money for the ACS complex and went to all of our wealthy Greek friends and other contacts. We took them to ACS and said, "Here's where it would be located. Here's what's needed. We could name these rooms and facilities after you." There are a lot of well-to-do Greeks, but there were a lot of other causes that they could have donated to. Tom worked hard and raised the money, over five million dollars. And finally, after we left, they built a beautiful performing arts center, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium complex, which they named the Thomas J. Miller Gymnasium. And it did have the purpose of serving as the performing arts center for the greater community as well as ACS. And it also attracted a lot of students to ACS, especially athletes or performing arts kids, swimmers, with the pool as a recreational place and venue for the swim team.

This really improved ACS's standing, and it was able to recruit kids from 2006 up until the present day in 2020. I was invited there the year that they opened the new facilities to give a keynote address on learning disabilities at a conference. And now ACS is doing great, and it has these top-of-the-line facilities. And that was partly thanks to Ambassador Thomas J. Miller.

Q: That's remarkable. I mean, just the combination of all those factors coming together and actually seeing something through to completion is—

MILLER: The Greek and Greek-American donors were very generous, and their names are all over the complex.

Q: You know, of course the interesting thing is often ambassadors have these ideas, but often they go nowhere. And this one is remarkable for having actually seen itself all the way through.

MILLER: The idea got adapted to reality. The original idea was not really feasible. When I first saw it, I asked, "Is this needed? And what's the point? We already have a huge new performing arts center right here in Athens. Look out the window; it's next to the embassy with a Metro stop right there." So we needed to scale it down to what ACS really did need, and that was the pool, the arts center and the gym.

Q: All right. Now, the other thing you, you had something also from Bosnia that you wanted to recall?

MILLER: We were transitioning back to Washington. But before that, in August of 2008, when we were living in the U.K., someone had heard of me from my mental health and trauma work in Bosnia. Cynthia Whittlesey was the head of Public Affairs at Embassy Tbilisi in Georgia. Russia had just invaded Georgia a few weeks earlier and forced the

inhabitants out of South Ossetia, and these people were living in refugee camps and collective centers on the other side in Georgia. Cynthia asked, “Can you come and work with teachers and mental health professionals who are helping these traumatized people?”

The South Ossetians, Georgians, had been forced by the Russians to move out of their lovely, big stone homes with their plots of land on which they were raising crops, and in 2008, they were displaced and living in temporary crowded quarters. They would have loved to go back if the political situation changed. They were totally uncertain about their futures and if they could ever return to their homes and their land. So I went to Tbilisi and facilitated seminars for a fabulous group of mental health professionals and educators. I had never been to the Caucasus, and this group was one of my best participants. We discussed issues of IDP [internally displaced] children, resilience, stress management, solution-focused techniques, child-friendly schools, staff care for teachers, cooperation between home and school, and other topics. They were so appreciative and enthusiastic. I also talked with the smart, open and resilient Georgian kids to get their views.

We bought our present townhouse in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, in 2004. It was a hole in the ground, and slated to be ready in 2005, and we were supposed to come back to DC in 2005, but then unexpectedly, the CEO job at Plan International opened up. So instead of moving back to Washington, we moved to Woking, Surrey, England, where we stayed for four years. We rented out our Old Town townhouse for four years, and then we came back to Alexandria in January of 2009.

I didn't know what I was going to do when we finally did move back to Washington in early 2009. I hadn’t lined up a “job-job.” Cynthia Whittlesey, who had invited me to Georgia in 2008 and 2010, said, “You should apply to be a Fulbright Senior Specialist Speaker.” It’s for academicians who've had significant experience as professors and want to teach abroad for the international experience and a small stipend for periods from several weeks to several months. I did apply to Fulbright and was accepted as a Senior Specialist Speaker. The way that it works is you have to find your own positions abroad. If I were an economist or financial specialist or had a skillset that everybody was clamoring for overseas, they would have connected me with those opportunities, but being a mental health specialist, there was very little out there, so I had to find it myself, and I did.

But first, every December, I sent out a holiday letter with an annual update. It had been a really fascinating four years with Plan, and I included photos of our exotic adventures. But this time, I decided to send out our holiday letter early so that friends would know we were returning to DC and would have our new address. I got an email back immediately from a close colleague at George Mason University, who was head of the Social Work department, saying, “We'd like to hire you. We want you to start January 6.” We were moving into our townhouse January 3, and she wanted me to start a few days later.

She said, “Take it or leave it.” Even though it was inconvenient timing, this would be a good opportunity. It was the temporary Director of Field Education, which oversaw the internships for the new graduate School of Social Work. This position had opened up

while I was abroad. George Mason was conducting a big search for a new head of field education, but they had to go through the whole process with interviews and all of that. So they asked if I could start three days after I moved in, and this would be temporary for six months. It turned into longer than that. But anyway, I said, “That sounds interesting.”

I said I would like to split the job and they found me a wonderful woman in her thirties who was very tech savvy and who had recently gotten her Master's in Social Work from Mason. She was familiar with the program and the technological challenges of a Field Coordinator. I was mostly finding the graduate student internships, especially the clinical field placements all over the Washington DC area: in Fairfax County, Leesburg, Fredericksburg and Laurel, Maryland. I was driving all over the region interviewing agencies to see if they could meet George Mason’s criteria and accept our students, because social work students are in class half-time and in the field half-time working as social workers and being supervised. I did that for seven months, and I also stayed at Mason for the next year to teach the seminar where students discussed their field experiences. These were second year clinical students, and they were working at the agency internships that I had developed, and I visited them at their agencies all over Maryland, Virginia and DC. In our class, they discussed their experiences, so it was kind of a support group for them, and I loved this course.

I did that for a year, and then I was asked by Virginia Commonwealth University to do the same thing with their internships. The difference was that instead of going hither, thither and yon visiting the field placements, I could walk to the field placements; most of them were in Alexandria within three miles of my house. Then I was asked to teach clinical courses in the Master's program at VCU the next year. I declined because I knew it would only be for one year since that program was discontinuing in Northern Virginia and it would only be in Richmond. They closed their whole Northern Virginia social work program, which I thought was not a wise idea because a lot of students really liked it and lived in the DC suburbs. So I turned down VCU. I was also asked to teach the introductory Social Work course for undergraduates at George Mason. I'd taught that a lot of times, kind of “been there, done that.” So I turned it down; I didn't think it was going to be a growth experience for me. And some other international growth opportunities were coming up, so I didn’t accept any of the teaching offers.

A large international NGO called IRD, International Relief and Development, asked me to participate in their mental health contract and develop training materials for Iraq. And as I did with Georgia, wherever I go, I develop a reading list, but most importantly, I create PowerPoints that are translated into the local language and also a manual and handouts for training trainers. The trainees go through the experience for a week, and then they can easily replicate it to train to train others in their schools or communities. I was asked to do something similar in Iraq. They wanted me to have two audiences of trainers: one was in Erbil with Christians and Kurds, with all the materials translated into Kurdish, and one would be for Arabic speakers. It was not safe for me to go to Baghdad, so I went to Erbil and stayed for three weeks and facilitated one week of workshops with the Kurds and Christians and another week with Arabic speakers from all over the rest of Iraq.

We had a lot of mental health people, counselors, teachers, school administrators, very high level. It was a terrific group. It was wonderful with that Kurdish and Christian group; the training was all experiential, and everything was translated. We talked about transforming schools to be more responsive to children's social and emotional needs, especially since most children had been exposed to war and trauma.

The next week, they brought the Arabic-speaking trainers to Erbil. This was the happiest group ever. These participants were so grateful to be in Iraqi Kurdistan, away from the dangerous areas where they lived, and given the chance to learn new skills. My translators/interpreters for both Kurdish and Arabic were psychiatrists, which I always love. They always get it, so when I teach something, they understand that maybe the audience isn't familiar with that concept, and they just explain it in their own words. These were really great projects. Obviously, I was not able to travel a lot, but I did see Erbil for the first time.

Q: Can I just want to ask you a quick question when you're talking about psychiatrists in countries like Georgia and Iraq? In the U.S. everybody has a sort of a general understanding of what a psychiatrist is but is it the same understanding in these foreign countries?

MILLER: Yes. The particular men that I worked with in Iraq all had good clinical backgrounds. They were doctors who really understood the trauma and who had been affected themselves, especially during the terrible sectarian violence in 2006 and 2007. These psychiatrists were risking their lives, driving to work, having really close encounters in deadly situations. Their kids were traumatized. These were folks who had been through it personally and were helping others. Some of them worked at psychiatric hospitals, so they were highly trained as psychiatrists, and they were excellent as interpreters and also consultants for me about cultural issues and how to communicate my program for the Christian, Kurdish and Arabic master trainers.

It was a big program. IRD's headquarters was based in Arlington, Virginia. The headquarters asked for a "no-cost extension" for the project from the State Department to continue this work and extend the training all over the country, but it was not granted. That was tragic, and it didn't make sense after we had worked all so hard. We weren't asking for much and were saying, "All the training is done. Let's just support these master trainers to implement it." And for whatever reason, it was not extended, which was really too bad.

I did continue with IRD because they also requested a staff care component for their headquarters staff in Arlington. I developed programs for preparing employees for deployment and gave a workshop for senior managers on crisis management. And I did work with them on another crisis where their office in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, Afghanistan, was attacked by the Taliban, and people were held up and injured.

IRD wanted me to meet in Virginia with an American who had been in Afghanistan during the attack, which I did. Then they wanted to send me to Afghanistan to work with the traumatized people at that office. That was not thrilling to me. The psychiatrist that I

was working with, whom I had known previously, was Iranian, but he spoke the local language in Afghanistan and was traveling to Kabul anyway, so I asked, "Why are you sending me?" They wanted me to go to Helmand Province and work with the traumatized people, yet they were sending someone a couple of hours flight away who spoke the language. That made no sense to me, so I did not go to Afghanistan, and I did not miss it.

Later, another NGO called KonTerra, which is an excellent organization based here in DC, hired me to do a staff care project for a group of contractors through AECOM, which is a company doing construction work in Afghanistan. Their employees were not mental health people or NGO people. AECOM had two projects based in Kabul, and in their leisure time, the contractors had the freedom to go out to local restaurants and shops. Then there was a huge attack by the Taliban on the Lebanese Taverna in Kabul in January 2014, and twenty-one people were killed, including the taverna owner and many internationals, and many others were injured. After that, everything was locked down for contractors. They were not allowed to leave their office, which was also where they lived.

There were two guest houses that served as their offices. I was brought in through KonTerra along with a Dutch psychiatrist. I don't know how we got paired up, but it was a good partnership. We worked well together, and we developed materials and went to Afghanistan twice, once in spring 2014 and once in the fall. We were invited back to do further training on staff care, stress management, and communication. Unlike all of my other audiences who are mental health people and educators and NGOs, these were not touchy-feely people. They were not "let's breathe, let's discuss our feelings." They were there to construct the roads and bridges, not to do wellness exercises and gain self-awareness, so it was a real challenge. We got feedback from the first round, and we went back the second time and adapted training for harder skills and team-building.

These were internationals, some American, some European, people from different places. The South Africans did the security work. We conducted a week of workshops and activities in each office for a spring trip and a fall trip. We were totally locked down and unable to go out at all. Each bedroom was equipped with a flak jacket and helmet, and we used them during transportation between the two offices and to and from the airport, which was a surreal experience in itself involving numerous pat-downs. I realized that Afghanistan is not my favorite place. In most other projects, I could learn about the culture and visit various places, and the participants were into mental health, but these folks were different. However, it was a good experience, and collaborating with the home staff at KonTerra in DC, who practiced staff care and debriefed us afterward, was great.

Q: No, I guess your work there was principally with the international representatives who were there to help the Afghans. It was not directed toward the Afghan people.

MILLER: That is correct. But a big a-ha moment for the contractors was that we did a unit on communication and cross-cultural issues. They were saying, "Our local employees are all Afghan, and they work for us, so they should listen and understand our way of doing things, and why don't they do this and why do they do that?" So we facilitated a unit the second time around on how to communicate with your staff, how to

be patient with your local employees and view things from their perspective and understand that you get more out of them by using these techniques. It was the team-building piece.

Q: Okay. I would have been also curious, had there been experience with actually trying to work with the Afghans, but that's for a different time—

MILLER: That was not us. We were working with the supervisors, and that's who AECOM was concerned about. Their employees were focused on getting the construction jobs done, but the company was concerned, and good for them, and they cared about the psychological well-being of their employees whose freedom was totally restricted after the Lebanese Taverna attack.

There was a gym in both guest houses, which was nice because I'm a total workout nut, and it's good for body and soul. The food was great, but I could understand how these contractors were feeling in years-long projects of not being able to get out and seeing the same people within the same building all the time. Some of these participants were very open, some less so. Both my psychiatrist partner and I set aside consultation hours, and some people did come to talk with us. Some wanted to discuss their own situations, their own trauma. Some came to talk about their families because they were all separated from their loved ones.

Q: Okay. No, I don't, I don't have much, I mean the whole U.S. connection to Afghanistan, maybe someday there'll be an encyclopedic book that includes everything, but for the moment, no.

MILLER: Of course, we're at an inflection point now and hopefully with a different administration, it will change how they're going to handle the situation because everyone wants to get out of Afghanistan, and no one's been able to. My husband went there often after he got a job in 2011 heading IESC [International Executive Service Corps]. IESC is based in Washington DC, but a lot of their huge USAID contracts were in Afghanistan, so he traveled there a lot. He went to Herat, but mostly to Kabul, and he could see the situation over all these years. He just retired a couple of years ago.

I had been asked to teach at the American University in Kabul. I was in touch with the president of the university because I love teaching overseas. He wanted me to come teach for a semester. I asked, "Can I do a mini-course for two or three weeks?" And he said, "That's not the way we operate," so that didn't pan out. And that was fine. They had significant terrorism on their campus. Just tragic stuff. So that was my experience in Afghanistan. I never went back. And I hope for the best, because we have Afghan friends through Tom's work at IESC, and there are a lot of really smart and ambitious people there. You feel for the Afghan people on the ground and you don't want to abandon them to the Taliban that could potentially abolish schools for girls and rules against child marriage and could increase trafficking and all of that.

I got accepted in 2008 as a Fulbright Senior Specialist Speaker, and they give their Speakers two teaching trips within five years. So I was wondering where I would go, and then in 2010, I received a message from Carol Schaefer from Connecticut Friends of

Bosnia, who had funded some of my initial projects with the parenting manual in Bosnia. Her friend was a woman who had just retired as president of American University of Central Asia [AUCA] in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. There had recently been significant ethnic violence, not in Bishkek but in Osh, between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek people. The former AUCA president wanted me to do mental health training in Osh, and the new head of the university invited me to teach at AUCA in Bishkek. I said, "Sure, I'm a cheap date because Fulbright will pay for all of the academic projects."

At AUCA, the students' English was excellent because the whole curriculum was in English and they had an arrangement with Bard College that the students graduate with a degree from AUCA as well as a degree from Bard, an accredited American university. AUCA is a good liberal arts university, and they teach students to use critical thinking. Students were from Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian backgrounds, and they all were in classes together, and they all got along. The new president, Dr. Andrew Wachtel, had come from Northwestern University with the goal of fundraising to build a real campus with dorms so that students could come from all over Central Asia and live there and to really put this university on the map as a regional center of learning. After about five years, they finally did just that. I taught psychology courses, communication, stress management, learning disabilities, conflict resolution, crisis intervention, solution-focused and cognitive techniques, basically whatever I wanted and what I thought would interest the students. And the students were excellent.

Then in between my weeks of teaching, I went for three days down to Osh; they weren't sure that it was going to be safe for me to fly there, but it turned out to be okay. I traveled with a psychiatrist who had translated all of my PowerPoints and materials into Russian. I facilitated workshops for mental health professionals who were working with the traumatized people who had survived the ethnic violence in Osh some months before. We also took a windshield tour around Osh. It looked worse than Sarajevo. There was still tremendous devastation with almost every store destroyed. Mostly the Kyrgyz had demolished all of the Uzbek shops, and we saw many teenage boys who were doing reconstruction instead of attending school.

I had a really good group of mental health professionals who were working with the traumatized populations. We did units on vicarious traumatization, which I had also learned about and experienced myself through my work on counter-trafficking. You keep hearing these stories and you become traumatized yourself. So they needed support. The participants were great, and these workshops were useful for them.

I did the interim weekend in Osh and then went back to teach at the university for another week. I lived in a downtown apartment in Bishkek where I felt pretty safe, although one night, returning to my apartment, I came upon a homeless guy sleeping on the landing right outside my apartment door. That freaked me out a little, but I could walk all around the town in the daytime, and it was an interesting city, and everything was close to the university. So that was a good experience for my first Fulbright.

Q: It's interesting that you were able to put it together, because that particular Fulbright program was not going to do it for you.

MILLER: I did the teaching through Fulbright, but the Osh component was funded by

Rotary and others to fly my translator and me down there. As a psychiatrist, she had significant experience working in Osh for many years, and she gave me hours of briefings about what these folks in Osh had been through.

Q: Since you have worked in this field for so long, and particularly with people who've had trauma, principally war trauma, have you been able to go back to see the long-term effect and think about the sustainability, how well, the people you trained are actually maintaining the training you gave them?

MILLER: That's a really good question, but that is not how most of my programs are set up. After my 2008 trip to Georgia and after moving back to Old Town Alexandria, I was invited again by Cynthia Whittlesey in Public Affairs at Embassy Tbilisi to return to Georgia in 2010 as a follow-up trip to give some more workshops. I thought the first group in 2008 was the most amazing group. The second group in Georgia in 2010 was even more fantastic. They were so open, so wonderful. By this time, the displaced folks who had hoped to return to South Ossetia in 2008, hoped that maybe the Russians would leave, were totally disabused of those optimistic expectations of returning. It was not happening, so by 2010, the displaced people from South Ossetia were living on the Georgian side, not in refugee camps, but in small homes with little plots of land.

There were recreation programs for the kids, and I met with groups of kids, who were phenomenal. I met with older people. One of my favorite pictures is of this elderly woman. She had been through a lot, and the photo shows her hugging me with a big smile on her face. The South Ossetians were warm and welcoming. However, by 2010, they were resigned to living in Georgia and getting on with their lives.

Georgia is so beautiful, and the food and wine are outstanding. I stayed in a charming little hotel in Tbilisi and was able to walk all around that picturesque city. The town is lovely, and Cynthia and I also visited the scenic countryside on the weekend. I could see potential for tourism for foreigners who wanted to travel to Eurasia. I could envision Georgia being a place that tourists could visit for a new experience, maybe agritourism too. So those were two wonderful trips.

In 2011, I signed on with Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Office of Peacebuilding and Human Rights. A very close friend of ours, David Phillips, was and is still heading the office. We've been friends since 1999, and Tom has known him even longer from Cyprus days. David has written many books too. In fact, he recently wrote his autobiography, and I edited it and just finished two months ago; it will be published in October 2020. David is a great friend, and he's very dedicated to causes of oppressed people. He has worked around the world in Bosnia, Kosovo, Armenia, with Chinese dissidents, Kurds, Rohingya, Darfuris; anywhere where there were populations experiencing trauma and oppression, that's where David was. So he hired me to conduct conflict resolution training and sent me all around the world. The first project was in Sri Lanka. I had already been to Sri Lanka twice. I had visited Colombo and Hambantota with Tom in January 2005 with Plan International to see the devastation and relief efforts after the December 2004 tsunami. Then I went back in 2006 through Plan to give a multiethnic workshop and a book launch for my education and parenting manuals with the Tamils and Sinhalese.

David sent me to Colombo to train a huge group of trainers and facilitators. I worked closely with his right-hand assistant, Danielle Goldberg. Danielle has two degrees from American University in Conflict Resolution and wrote a terrific curriculum and manual for trainers and participants and a PowerPoint for a weeklong training. We worked beautifully together. We split up the presentation; it was all interactive, and I did the mental health and communications part while Danielle did the conflict theory pieces. We adapted the training for each place and each audience. We went to Sri Lanka twice. We gave that training for an enthusiastic group of master trainers and facilitators in Colombo. On the weekend, we took a long trip to the elephant orphanage where elephants played in the river, and we were able to get close to them and touch them.

Then we were asked to go back to Sri Lanka several years later to facilitate similar workshops for Tamil professors in Jaffna to use in teaching conflict resolution courses. There had been a twenty-six-year civil war, and finally, the minority Tamils gave up and were slaughtered including many civilians, and it was still a military zone in Jaffna. We gave seminars for the group of professors, but unlike our experience in Colombo with very enthusiastic participants, we couldn't get these folks to talk. Danielle and I were both experienced trainers, and we were wondering, “Why is their response so muted?” And then we realized it was because the junior professors were shy to speak in front of the senior professors. By the third day, we remedied it and were doing the interactive activities and working as groups, and finally it was very successful.

We went with our sponsor on the ground to the destroyed parts of Jaffna and to see Muslim mosques and Hindu temples next door to each other. It was very multiethnic, but we also learned how repressive it was under the Sinhalese military crackdown and that the Tamils’ rights had not been restored in Jaffna. That was the first Columbia University project. Danielle then went on to greener pastures at UNICEF.

Next, I was asked to go to Aceh in Indonesia after their twenty-nine-year civil war. When the tsunami destroyed the whole region, the only positive consequence was that the warring factions that had been fighting in the long guerrilla war in jungles realized that it was counterproductive to continue to fight. Everything was destroyed; it was all flooded out.

I was the only facilitator for the Aceh training sessions, and I revised the PowerPoint and curriculum. Parts were focused on Islamic teachings because this is a very conservative, fundamentalist population, more than anywhere else in Indonesia. I had to be totally covered up from my wrists to my ankles. All the women were totally covered, and the one technical glitch with this training was that at least once during each day of the seminar was a call to prayer. The men could just take off their shoes and find a special place to pray, but the women would go to a special room, take off their outer garments, wash, put on prayer clothes, and then put on their street clothes again after they prayed. I had to revise my training and cut out parts because it took much longer because of this call to prayer. But when in Rome, you know, you respect their traditions.

And so there were two parts to the training and two training modules. The first one for

four days was for university professors. I facilitated it in English with some translation. This was an amazing group with professors from seven local universities who were planning to use the curriculum, either as pieces or as a whole course, to teach conflict resolution and conflict transformation. They were wonderful. My organizers, my team on the ground, were professors and/or activists who were very efficient and took care of all the logistics, tech issues, etc. The second week of workshops was with former combatants and current community leaders. These were militants who had been fighting in the jungles for many years. The head of the former combatants also participated. As community leaders, they wanted to bring the conflict resolution curriculum to the people in their communities, but it was a harder sell than with the professors. Some were gung-ho and others less so.

After the second week, David Phillips came out to Indonesia, and he wanted to do a joint session with participants from both sessions, the professors and the former combatants. We did it on an island called Sabang, and we all took a boat together to this island as a retreat. David got these two groups together. These groups could have been at odds. One could have said, "We're the intellectuals. We know everything." And the other could have said, "We were the separatists, and we were fighting for the cause." But David and I emphasized that both groups' interests were similar: to ensure human rights for the people of Aceh.

So how can both groups help each other? In the coming fall, there was going to be a tenth anniversary of the signing of the agreement that ended the war. The truce worked to stop the aggression, but the Acehnese rebels felt that not all of the government's promises had fulfilled, and so they had a lot of grievances against the government for not keeping all their assurances. David said he would come out again, and I believe he did for that tenth anniversary. So that was Columbia's Indonesia project. And in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital, I could see in those nine years since the tsunami how the town had been rebuilt. That was interesting too, because much of it had been under water when I was there right after the tsunami in 2005.

In 2013, David sent Danielle and me to Southeast Europe University in Tetovo, Macedonia [now called North Macedonia], where we facilitated another weeklong training on conflict resolution/conflict transformation for professors so that they could teach the course at their universities. That was a good group, with everybody fluent in English. Afterwards, I met with the rector of the university and pitched an idea: "I could do my second Fulbright here. This costs you nothing because Fulbright pays. I can come out and teach whatever you want." So I did that in the fall of 2013 and taught cross-cultural communication, stress management, conflict resolution, as a variety of mini-courses. I did it in English, speaking more slowly for those students, and the professors sat in so that they could teach these courses later.

Q: I totally understand. The Aceh war where you were doing it. I just quickly tried to look it up so I could understand what the combatants were about.

MILLER: Yeah, it's a province, but they were separatists. They were much more

religiously conservative than most of the rest of the country. They said, “The government of Indonesia is doing nothing for us. We want our own country, and we're going to fight for it.” And so they fought the government of a big country. They were never going to win, but at the end, the agreement at least gave them some concessions. And what they were still angry about was that the government didn't follow through on all of the concessions that they had promised nine years before.

Q: Within Indonesia or the Philippines, countries made of islands where individual communities develop, even within the country, it's always going to be that way with an archipelago.

MILLER: Yeah. But the tsunami ended it, and they kind of looked at each other and said, “We've all been devastated, and for us to fight in the jungles that have been destroyed is pointless. Let's see what we can work out.” I don't know the whole history with the government of Indonesia, but that was the only positive outcome of the tsunami. Interestingly enough, the ambassador in Indonesia when I went there was the same ambassador as when I was in Sri Lanka, who was a longtime friend, Bob Blake; we're still friends. So at least I had support from him and also from the Jakarta Embassy Public Affairs representative. They were interested in what our project was doing in Aceh.

Q: Great. That's certainly the Foreign Service. It's sort of like once you get a good reputation among officers, it helps in getting more exposure to others.

MILLER: Yeah. Our reputation preceded us, and also David was adept at securing funding, especially from the Norwegians who are great humanitarians, but also from others. We had funding for these Track Two projects which involve non-state actors doing informal diplomacy. And one of the centerpieces of all of these Track Two projects was the curriculum on conflict resolution. So after Danielle left for UNICEF, I became a one-woman show. If I ever do it again, I know that I can facilitate the workshops alone with a good logistical team on the ground for the tech support and the admin stuff.

Q: Quick question as you've been going along through all of these. Both when you were in the Foreign Service with your husband, and then subsequently, did you meet other Foreign Service spouses who were also able to do something similar to what you were doing?

MILLER: In every post, I was the only spouse working on the local economy except for a few wives who were teachers at American schools. There weren't a lot of male spouses; some couples were tandem. So I was kind of out there on my own from the very beginning, be it Chiang Mai or the three Greece tours or Bosnia.

One spouse worked at the Sarajevo Embassy in Admin and proposed that I needed a house manager for the ambassador’s residence. I didn't even know what that was. My husband had never been ambassador, and when he was DCM, our cook served as our house manager. She said, “You need a house manager, and here are three people you can interview.” They were all terrific, and I picked one, and she's still one of my good friends. She made my life wonderful in Bosnia, so I'm totally appreciative of that Admin

spouse who suggested that. Another spouse was the CLO who brought me to the University of Sarajevo for that interview that landed me the teaching job.

Q: Well actually I mean the broader sense. What you had mentioned you knew no spouse that was working on the economy, but then in subsequent tours or anything—

MILLER: I did check about bilateral work agreements in Chiang Mai, and there was no such thing. But before I went to Greece the first time, they had just signed a bilateral agreement, so I was able to work legally. But the only pay that I got that first time in Greece was as a mental health program coordinator, and that was American pay from the embassy. From the American Community Schools, I got the trampoline instead of cash. At the University of Sarajevo, I got very low pay out of that big plastic bag of bills, and at the University of Indianapolis they even took out IKA, which was like Social Security, from my very meager paycheck, but I am unable to get that back.

The next chapter is another David Phillips connection. The preview of the next chapter is my work going back to Erbil in Iraq and working with the SEED Foundation. And the next time I talk to you, either I'll tell you we are moving, or we are not, because I should know.

Q: Today is August 31, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Bonnie Miller, and Bonnie just let us know where you are in the story right now.

MILLER: I just wanted to review Greece and some of the anti-trafficking initiatives that we implemented. I worked closely with the embassy consular section because one of our initiatives was to inform ambassadors and consular heads from the countries of origin where these young women were coming from and also the countries of transit where they may have passed through before they arrived in Greece. We hosted a lunch at our residence with all the consular heads from the relevant embassies in Athens and discussed strategies to prevent trafficking in their countries, particularly Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine, but also other countries where women were not necessarily being trafficked to Greece but were being transported to other places. We also invited representatives of destination countries all over Western Europe.

Q: Just a very quick note. I worked as the Cultural Affairs Officer in Romania from 2002 to 2005. We had a democracy grant program there, among many other things. A number of our democracy grants went to local NGOs who had training for high schools in how girls can identify traffickers and avoid them. This is way back in 2002 to 2005. And it just gives you an idea of how difficult a problem it is.

MILLER: Romania and Moldova were Greece's and Bosnia's main countries of origin. Part of the prevention effort was to mitigate poverty and to empower these women and to inform them about the duplicity and tricks that the traffickers used. But I'm happy to hear that, because that's a really good project, since a lot of these girls were thinking, "This can't happen to me," or "A woman recruited me, so it must be okay."

We were working at all levels. I wanted to work with gynecologists in Athens, but there

was no receptivity there. What I was thinking was that there were wives who were not cheating on their husbands but were going to the doctor for their regular appointments and winding up with sexually transmitted infections and couldn't figure out where they got them. And it was because their husbands were frequenting these brothels and getting infected by the young women, because the johns paid even more **not** to use protection. They didn't want that extra layer, and this practice, over which the young women had no control, made them much more vulnerable. But the wives of the johns were totally unsuspecting.

The tradition in Greece was that when a boy turns fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, his father or uncle would take him to a brothel as a safe way to have his first sexual experience. The parents were encouraging this. I led a mothers' group at one of Athens's elite schools. It was on a different subject, but we did discuss trafficking because it was their sons who were using these women. I was trying to caution against this practice by informing the moms that these women were slaves, not paid prostitutes. The mothers protested, "But the girls are young and they're clean, so it's okay for our sons." But here was the most astonishing thing: Some of the moms said, "We have to show that our boys aren't gay." So by having sex with a slave who has to accommodate him is showing that your son is not gay?

So that ends our time in Greece. We moved to the U.K. and lived there from early January of 2005, right after the Asian tsunami on December 26, 2004, until Christmas of 2008. Four full years in the U.K. And that was fascinating, because we did so much traveling and visited programs in developing countries that I'd never been to before. And I also continued to go back to Bosnia and Kosovo to give seminars to thousands of educators in those countries.

Before we moved to the U.K., where Tom was the CEO of Plan International for four years, we bought a new house in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, in June 2004, and were planning to move there in 2005. But fate intervened, and Tom landed the Plan job in the U.K. We were in Woking until we moved into that Old Town townhouse four blocks from the Potomac River in early January 2009.

In 2003-04, local developers demolished two square blocks of low-income housing to build our development in Old Town. The plan was to clear everything for a four square-block development, but that didn't work out, so they built two square blocks of new housing and kept two blocks of low-income housing that is still there today. A hundred low-income families were displaced, and they had a choice: To integrate into the new housing at Chatham Square that was our project or to move somewhere else. In these two square blocks, we have four-level market-value townhouses with upgraded hardwood floors and appliances, and they had apartments. The outside of their homes look exactly like ours, but inside were two to four apartments. Many of the people who had lived in the demolished low-income housing are integrated into our development, and that has worked out okay.

When we moved back in early 2009, they reconfigured one of the remaining old low-

income homes into a community youth center called the Ruby Tucker Center. I volunteered there for a project called The Reading Connection that involved low-income kids ages four to eight. We had a group of volunteers who did The Reading Connection program with the little kids for an hour a week to get them interested in books and expand their world. We would bring in bunches of library books on a topic like birds or diversity or Thanksgiving or China or a STEM subject or even George Washington, because he used to hang out in our neighborhood of Old Town over 200 years before. After the warmup and the reading, we would do a related craft or an activity. Ninety-five percent of the kids were African American, with an occasional Hispanic kid. The project worked pretty well, and I volunteered every month for eight years and enjoyed the little kids, who are actually my neighbors and whom I see near my house all the time.

The other thing I did in the neighborhood about a mile away was to volunteer at a Carpenter's Shelter, which is a shelter for homeless families and singles. I started volunteering there in 2010. They have programs where the families live at the shelter for a few months until they can get on their feet with permanent housing and a job. There is also a program called David's Place for hardcore homeless, most of whom have substance abuse and/or mental health problems. David's Place provides a safe place for these folks to come during the day. They can use a computer to look for jobs or to get counseling. There is also a hypothermia shelter so that people with nowhere else to go in the winter can have a warm place to shower and sleep.

I had a regular shift at the front desk for many years. Having social work skills was sometimes useful. I was the one who would let people in; I was literally the gatekeeper. Then they closed that shelter and demolished it and are in the process of building a large, new building with the upper levels having ninety-seven affordable apartments for teachers, firefighters and essential workers who aren't paid very much. Those nice apartments will be subsidized, low-rent apartments, and the bottom two floors will be a new Carpenter's Shelter that will open in November 2020.

Another way I volunteer is with the American Red Cross, which I've been doing for the past nine years or so. I am a Disaster Mental Health Worker, which means I am called to disasters like fires where people have been evacuated and have lost everything. In this role, I provide emergency support either in person or by phone in follow-up calls. I also took additional Red Cross mental health training to become a resilience facilitator for the Reconnection program, which gives workshops on stress management, communication, coping with depression, etc. for active military, veterans and families. We do that virtually during the pandemic, but it used to be in person.

So with our jobs and volunteer work and travel, that was our lives in Old Town Alexandria. We walk everywhere. The gym is four blocks away; I went there for classes every day before the pandemic. We walk every day to the river, restaurants, grocery stores, etc., and it's a wonderful place to live. We discover many historical buildings and plaques on our walks and also new developments in the rapidly changing Old Town. We have a lot of friends here.

In late August 2020, my husband was outside exercising, and he looked across the street

and saw a “For sale, coming soon” sign. We had never talked about moving, but we thought that there were only two houses in this development of a hundred houses that we would even consider. And one of the two families was suddenly moving. We put a bid in on the next night and we got it three days later.

So we are moving! There will be a new U.S. administration, and we will have a new house! And it's a fabulous house with many upgrades and much bigger with plenty of room for our grandchildren whom I haven't mentioned yet. One of the reasons that we came back to the U.S. was that our family was here. Our daughter married a terrific guy who has two older boys. The oldest is now starting college, on campus but online at George Mason University, and the other is in virtual 10th grade. They had an adorable little girl in 2013. Our son got married, and he has two little boys, three and five. So we are here for good. With the pandemic, we get together with them at a distance outdoors at nearby playgrounds and parks. So that's the reason we are staying in Virginia, and the only international work we're doing is temporary, a few weeks at a time, or else virtual.

Tom was the CEO of the International Executive Service Corps from 2011 to 2018. As I said, they were doing a lot of work in Afghanistan. They bring innovative business solutions to help developing countries. They also had a contract where professors were requested to teach mini-courses at Beijing Foreign Studies University in 2015. So Tom and I did team teaching, which was the first time we had worked together like that. The Chinese students were very bright and spoke excellent English, and their system was much different than ours. They studied to gain in-depth proficiency of a language or language group that they could use in one region of the world. Our students’ area was the Balkans, Former Yugoslavia, and almost all of them were taking Serbo-Croatian. A few were taking Albanian. So that pretty much covered North Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania. Some of them were going to be interpreters, some wanted to teach, and some aspired to join the Chinese diplomatic corps.

This was China, and the way of teaching was pretty much by rote learning. Tom and I had two goals: to teach the substance and to model for the participating professors interactive teaching/learning methods that focused on critical thinking rather than memorization. Tom taught two days, and I taught two days, and then we taught together.

I'm a PowerPoint wizard, so I put together PowerPoints, and Tom added to them for his presentations. He did a daylong presentation on the Greek financial crisis, which in 2015 was very current news. My parts were on the breakup of Former Yugoslavia and Psychosocial Consequences of War and also Conflict Resolution skills, all of which I had presented throughout the world. Then we decided to do something new, a simulation on the last day that was totally interactive and involved teamwork. The directive was: “Okay, it is now 2015. It is twenty years after the Dayton Accords. You students and professors will get together and renegotiate the agreement. This team is China, this one Russia, the U.S, the EU, and Bosnia, and Serb separatists in Bosnia.” So they worked together in small teams and then reconvened with the other teams to renegotiate the Dayton Accords. They had some really good ideas. That exercise was fun, and the

students and teachers really enjoyed it and learned some things about diplomacy and the Balkans.

One Chinese student showed us all around Beijing. He's now a Chinese diplomat using his language skills in Montenegro. I went to the Olympic venues and all around Beijing with him. Tom and I were in China for nine days, for a week of teaching and then a couple of days where we had discussions with the organizers and professors. So that was a great opportunity and an interesting project in 2015.

Q: Okay. So now once again, Bonnie, you're going to be picking up here and it's 2016.

MILLER: 2016. And all things kind of come in circles. So here's David Phillips who was sending me all over the world to do conflict resolution training through Columbia University's Institute for Peacebuilding and Human Rights. He received an invitation for a fundraiser in DC and bought tickets for a table and invited Tom and me to the fundraiser for this organization called SEED that was working in Erbil in the Kurdish part of Iraq, where I had worked in 2009 with IRD. Sherri Kraham Talabany, who founded SEED and leads it, had been in the civil service at the State Department. Through her work in Iraq, she met a young man from a very prominent family. There were two prominent Kurdish families, the Barzanis and the Talabanis.

Sherri was working with Talibani Senior and met his son who was in his early twenties and wound up marrying him. After his father became infirm, the younger Talabani became deputy prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan. Putting this in context, this was the time when ISIS had invaded Yazidi communities in Sinjar in northern Iraq, killed so many of the men and older people, kidnapped the children, especially the boys to become young cubs in their fight for the caliphate, and captured the teenage girls and young women to serve as "wives" of the fighters. This was a terrible and widespread situation as ISIS conquered lands and people all over the region.

You remember Nadia Murad who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. When she was a nineteen-year-old student, ISIS killed her mother and six of her brothers and captured her to be a "wife" of a fighter, and then she got sold around to many brutal men. She was a sex slave and was beaten and tortured. She finally escaped and told her story as one of the voices of ISIS's survivors. She is now a courageous activist who is speaking out on the plight of the Yazidis at the hands of ISIS. I had a long private conversation with her and her cousin in 2016 in DC to get background on the needs of the Yazidis before I went to Iraq. Recently, I heard a webinar by her cousin, who is her interpreter, saying the Yazidis are still in peril and nobody is really helping them rehabilitate their towns that were destroyed in 2014.

At the fundraising dinner, Sherri Talabany was asking for donations for her SEED project to start a psychosocial program to train social workers to help the families who had fled ISIS and were now in Iraqi Kurdistan, many in refugee camps. I was intrigued with SEED's focus on the psychological needs of the Yazidis. At the break at dinner, I went to sit with Sherri and said, "I have to be part of this important project. SEED can use a confluence of my skillsets: mental health, trafficking, sexual violence against women,

overseas experience, and previous work in Iraqi Kurdistan." So I sent her a letter with my resume and said, "Here's what I can do for you."

And she said, "This is exactly what we need." That started my year-long collaboration with SEED. My closest colleague there besides Sherri was a young American woman with a social work degree, who was fabulous to work with. The project was based in Erbil and was two-pronged: one, psychosocial training for the social workers who were helping the Yazidis and others, and two, revising the Clinical Psychology curriculum at Koya University to train future psychologists. I was in Erbil for three weeks. After a thorough orientation, I visited the SEED program at the refugee camp where they had started a shelter and were running a program for children and a vocational program with a women's knitting cooperative.

My part of the contract was to develop training, which I could not give myself because it was in Kurdish, and I wasn't going to be there for the two-year duration. But I did create the mental health and psychosocial support [MHPSS] training modules for social workers who were helping these people. The SEED program envisioned ongoing six-month trainings with rotating cohorts coming in for a week of workshops each month on topics such as sexual violence, trauma, grief, PTSD, gender-based violence, and strengths-based techniques to help the survivors, and also material on self-care and vicarious traumatization to help the mental health workers themselves.

Q: Who are you training in this particular program now? Are these Yazidis or Kurds?

MILLER: Mostly Kurds who were already working with these traumatized people and who spoke Kurdish. This was for people who were already out in the field. They would take a week of training and then go for three weeks to the field and practice their new skills. And then another week for workshops and so on for a six-month training program, and they would graduate with an official certificate. These were helpers with good hearts and energy and commitment but who didn't necessarily have the counseling skills. I wrote most of the training, but there were others who contributed to it.

Q: There's just one concept. You mentioned that I've never heard of vicarious trauma.

MILLER: Vicarious traumatization. I think I mentioned this before with my own experiences working with survivors of sex trafficking, and it affects mental health people and caregivers and others who are listening to the stories about the horrible things that are happening to survivors. They're sitting with these people and vicariously experiencing the suffering that these survivors have endured, and they start developing the same symptoms. Your heart goes out to these people, but you can only do what you can do. And so you're being traumatized by absorbing these stories, and that's called vicarious traumatization or secondary traumatization.

Q: But I suspect if I were listening to the stories and, you know, I'm looking at these human beings, I would want to pick up an automatic rifle and go out and kill a lot of people.

MILLER: Yeah. Some people get angry at the perpetrators and ask, "How can they do this to another human being?" Or they get sad or have sleep difficulties. What can help is self-care for the helpers so that they can be fully present to listen to the horrific stories, but also to admire and respect the survivors' strengths and resilience. We call that "posttraumatic growth" of survivors of those traumatic experiences who have come out the other end as stronger people, like Nadia Murad and many others. Part of this project was to enhance the skills of the mental health and psychosocial support professionals who were working with survivors. These helpers could then understand their own feelings and reactions and how to take care of themselves. We included a lot of stress management and mind-body techniques and exercises in the training too. That was the training, that I wrote online.

While I was in Kurdistan, SEED took me to Koya University, which was about an hour from Erbil. I was thrilled to learn that they actually had a Clinical Psychology program. And then I was disappointed to learn that there was very little clinical in the Clinical Psychology program. The reason they hired me at Koya was to work with the seven professors in their department, most of whom did not have clinical backgrounds or experience, who were teaching this specialty and to revise their curriculum and practicum.

I consulted at the university and also conducted a day-long training for the Koya faculty and practitioners from the Centre for Victims of Torture. The CVT participants were mental health professionals—psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists—who were counseling survivors and listening to stories of torture day in, day out. Their whole clientele were victims of torture. I facilitated a self-care workshop just for them to emphasize how important they were and how difficult their jobs were, and to offer strategies for self-care. And that was amazing; those professionals are real heroes.

The request from Koya University was to transform the whole curriculum to be more clinical and practical, so I not only revised the curriculum, but I also added a freshmen orientation and expanded the practicum for field work. They wanted to divide the practicum into specialties like school/educational counseling. Another was psychiatric and mental health, working with people with schizophrenia and mental health problems, like in a psychiatric hospital setting. And then they were adding a third specialty on trauma. That was the practicum where the students could work at refugee camps with survivors of abuse and trauma. I also added material on supervision, and then I rewrote the entire curriculum to make it interactive.

I created a PowerPoint for the SEED mental health program as well as for the clinical department at Koya on how to teach using interactive methods and not just lecturing. The professors requested that training. And then to give the professors background for the clinical component, I adapted the whole curriculum and said, "Here are the course titles you need to teach." And they said, "Thank you. Now you need to write all the course descriptions for every single course." There were dozens of courses, and I wrote course descriptions for all of them and included the topics that were essential for the students to learn. Now they have a program where they train students who can actually graduate with

a Bachelor's in Science and have the skills from the classes and the experience from their internships to go out in the world and use them in a practical way.

Q: It sounded like people who might benefit from one of the programs that the U.S. government offers. Was there ever any outreach from the embassy or Fulbright or any other to give them a chance to go to the U.S?

MILLER: The good thing about SEED was that Sherri, because she had worked in the State Department, had secured funding from INL [Narcotics and Law Enforcement] and the Refugee Bureau. Maybe there were other funding pockets that she did not explore, but she spent summers in DC lobbying for government and private funding. The program didn't bring social workers to the U.S.; it was better to train many dozens of them right there in the field. Sherri also had a wonderful American social worker who helped write grants. SEED had a small but talented staff. There have been dinners and fundraisers and that kind of thing, but a little money goes a long way. Sherri understood both cultures: in Iraq and in the U.S. government.

My work with SEED lasted for the better part of a year. I went to Iraq for a few weeks, which was necessary and very interesting, but I did most of the work from home, which is the way that I like to operate: Travel to the region and learn about the program by talking to many people on the ground, give some of the training and then create the materials and curriculum from my home computer.

My next chapter starts with a friend of ours who specializes in gender studies, who was asked to do a project for a program called Room to Read to help girls in eight countries, seven in Asia and one in Africa. They asked if she could do a self-care/wellness training for mentors. My friend told the director of Room to Read, "I can't do this project because it requires mental health skills, and I'm not a mental health specialist, but have you tried Bonnie?" I had to compete against seven others in a long interview, but I won the contract.

In the Girls' Project through Room to Read, the social mobilizers, as the mentors are called, are responsible for fifty mentees, ages 11-19. These social mobilizers are young women who are successful, but who may have encountered and overcome challenges along the way, so they are good role models. They acquired an education and were hired to be mentors to fifty girls and their families. This project's mission is to support these girls to progress from sixth through twelfth grade and to graduate and possibly go on to higher education. So that assures them an education, but the program also helps them acquire life skills.

Q: Just give a few examples of what you mean when you say "life skills."

MILLER: So not just the academic skills but also study skills, stress management, job interviewing, communication skills, problem solving, conflict resolution.

Q: Okay. I imagine maybe basic use of computers?

MILLER: Absolutely. Time management, nutrition, healthy relationships, mind-body techniques, financial empowerment, career planning, goal setting, decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, values, empathy, preventing early marriage, and resisting peer pressure. This is a fabulous program; they are very forward-thinking. This was another project where I was not giving the training myself; it would have been so much easier for me to do the training in person. But instead, I had to make very detailed PowerPoints with every single activity and question, etc., and then walk the regional managers step-by-step through how to do the training because they were going to give it.

The focus was on psychosocial wellbeing for the social mobilizers, who also may have been experiencing secondary traumatization—vicarious traumatization—from hearing stories of these girls maybe being offered up for early marriage or experiencing domestic violence, etc. The topics on self-care for the mentors included psychosocial wellbeing, mind-body, stress management, problem solving, trauma and healing. I worked for months to develop those workshops. And then I briefed the regional managers so that they could train the supervisors in each country to facilitate the workshops for the social mobilizers and to reach hundreds of them who had an impact on many thousands of girls. I really enjoyed that.

I was also asked to help a program called The Grandmother Project in West Africa. I declined their offer to serve on the board, but I did make myself available for editing their materials and reports, which had been translated from the original West African French into English, and I continue to do that now.

So this is kind of the story of my life. Things come up, and I take on the challenge. From 2015 to present, these are projects that have come up: Beijing, SEED, Koya University, Room to Read, etc. And then there's David Phillips again, who called me and asked, "How'd you like to go to such and such a place to do conflict resolution training through Columbia University?" So the last thing that he asked was, "How'd you like to go to Rakhine State in Myanmar [Burma]?" The only time that Tom and I had been to Burma was in 1980, when we were living in Chiang Mai. Tom had two issues in his northern Thailand portfolio at the time: one was drugs and the other was refugees. So we went to Burma in 1980, and it was the most backward place we had ever visited. So here we come back almost forty years later and see what it's like upcountry.

This was late 2018, and there had been recent violence, genocide against the Rohingya people in Rakhine State, who were not considered citizens in Myanmar even though they had a history of generations of people who were born in the country. There were discrimination practices in place even before that, declaring that the Rohingya did not have rights to run businesses or vote, etc. Many Rohingya were killed. Their villages were razed, and in 2018, 750,000 were forced to flee across the border into Bangladesh and are still living in dreadful refugee camps. And now with the pandemic, to live in a refugee camp with inadequate sewage and sanitation and with crowded conditions and not much shelter against the elements is deadly. The great hope for Myanmar was Aung San Suu Kyi when she came into power after being under house arrest for so many years. Many Burmese and internationals alike were optimistic that she was going to change things for the better and improve human rights, but she was really captive, literally and

figuratively, to the military regime and did nothing to defend the Rohingya or most other non-Burman minorities in Myanmar. And so that is still an ongoing situation.

There were two parts to David Phillips's vision for this project in Myanmar. Tom agreed to go as a volunteer with just his expenses covered. He worked with a Columbia University local representative to analyze the business environment in Rakhine State and explore possible economic opportunities for Rohingya and Rakhine people. He was on the ground talking to various people, foreigners and locals. The Chinese were moving in fast and taking over economically, so that was an issue. Tom wrote up the report with recommendations for the next steps.

My topics were conflict resolution and social harmony, to train facilitators who were working in local villages, some in Rohingya communities and some in Rakhine communities. The government of Myanmar was very bureaucratic, and there are so many restrictions that it took many attempts to get a visa from the embassy of Myanmar in DC. They finally issued us visas but with the stipulation that we could not go out of the city limits of Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State. They did not want us to interact with anyone or see the conditions or hear about the repression.

The second day in Sittwe, I went on a four-hour "windshield tour," except the windshield was a motorcycle. I did this with the young man who ran the local NGO I was working with, and he drove me all around, out the back gate of the city so that the authorities couldn't detect us leaving the capital.

Then I facilitated a week of conflict resolution/transformation and social harmony workshops with community facilitators. They were young people in their twenties, but they were an amazing training group. Most of the activities were in small groups in their own language and reporting out and devising action plans. I had an excellent interpreter so that I could understand what they were saying.

So this was kind of typical of my conflict resolution trainings. I trained them for half of the first day on workshop facilitation techniques, because they were trainers as well. The rest was on communication, viewing things from different perspectives, personal conflict styles, conflict transformation, etc. We did some mind-body activities, stress management, problem solving, etc. and it was a fabulous group who were eager to learn and were very responsive and worked really well with each other. They could see the relevance of how they could bring this knowledge and these techniques into their communities as well as use the skills personally. So that was Myanmar, my last foreign project at the end of 2018. I told David Phillips that I'm still open to international projects after the pandemic ends. I don't know if anything will materialize, but we'll see if there are other opportunities in the future.

In July of 2019, I retired after five years of supervising graduate social work students at their internships as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Maryland. I was going down to Florida a lot to be a caregiver for my mother who was rapidly declining. I wasn't taking on any professional projects. 2020 was going to be our year of big travels: Tom's

board meetings in Europe and taking our daughter and her family to Greece. We had planned a spring cruise from Singapore to Dubai. Tom signed on to be a lecturer on Viking for two Mediterranean cruises in the fall, and we were busy writing up the Viking lecture PowerPoints, which was intellectually stimulating. But of course, all travel has been cancelled due to Covid-19, and we hope we can take some of those trips in 2021. Not being able to travel has been a big disappointment because I love going to new places, and my hobby is photography. I love taking photos of the people and beautiful places on our trips and also of our cute grandkids.

Now we are working wholeheartedly on the Biden campaign. Tom has been on the Biden foreign policy advisory committee, working mostly on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, since before Biden was even the definite candidate. I didn't know what I could do to help, but then this high-power couple, Bruce and Vicki Heyman, contacted us and many former ambassadors. Bruce was a political ambassador to Canada under Obama. Their initiative was Ambassadors4Joe. They were saying, "If you think you have any influence on people in the countries where you were posted, make sure that we get out the American vote. You would act as Biden surrogates."

The statistic from the State Department for the 2016 election was that there were 6.5 million eligible voters, American citizens living overseas, and only 7 percent of them voted in 2016. We could have had a very different outcome in 2016 and changed the trajectory of history and would not be in the disastrous situation that our country is in today. So with our countries, Greece and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tom and I could be nonpartisan and just get out the vote, encourage people to register and vote because most of them, particularly Bosnian Muslims but also Greek-Americans, will vote for Biden.

Q: How do you actually do that from here? How do you try to, you know, encourage people to get their ballots and send them in?

MILLER: Disseminating voter information and working with the embassies on informing voters how to register and about the deadlines. Now the post office is so politically motivated and holding up the mail as well as all the other shenanigans that the GOP are pulling. So it's crucial to get out information through Zooms and the media: "You're an American citizen, so exercise your right to vote." We have a really good committee on the ground in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Democrats Abroad in Greece is very well-organized. So Tom especially, and I am participating somewhat, have been doing interviews and outreach to the Greek-Americans and Bosnian-Americans in those countries and also to the large Greek and Bosnian diasporas in the U.S. The Biden campaign put up a huge billboard in Des Moines, where a lot of Bosnians live, with a photo of Biden and a quote from Tom saying that Biden supported Bosnia before, during and after the war.

We have heard that the eligible Bosnian-American community in America numbers 250,000, and they're all over the U.S. We are working on a strategy for how religious leaders can mobilize their communities because only 25 percent of those eligible people voted in the last election. Bosnian Muslims should be supportive of Joe Biden, who was against Milosevic from 1992 at the beginning of the war, because he defended Bosniaks

in many ways. Biden was always against the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims by the Serbs. Serbian-Americans obviously do not like him; they will vote for Trump. For Greece, the strategy is that Biden has been a long-time friend and supporter of Greece and to emphasize his positive efforts on NATO and Greece and how he will support Greece, especially vis-à-vis Turkey.

So that's our current project, especially being locked down under Covid-19. Our country has suffered so much during the past four years, and we have to create a better world for our grandchildren. We need to start by defeating the virus that has affected everyday life for everyone for most of this year. Values matter, and it is crucial to replace hatred, meanness, and bigotry with decency, honesty, and kindness, to restore dignity for all people, to address racial injustice and social inequality, to regain respect in the world and forge positive ties with our allies, and to turn around the damage the current administration has done to our environment.

We're running around on playgrounds with our grandchildren; it's so much fun watching them grow. We're fortunate to be living within an hour of all of them. And we're reconnecting and Zooming with friends, especially those in other parts of the U.S. We're being very careful regarding Covid-19. A very close friend of ours, a doctor in Florida, contracted the virus and was in the ICU for three weeks on a ventilator [He died September 10 at age 71]. We know of other friends and family who have recovered from this deadly disease, but it has taken months, and there may be residual effects. So we are cautious, and we are going to get through this. And we will move to our beautiful new home in November, and that's something fun to look forward to. Did I tell you we're moving across the street?

Q: You did, but I have one kind of naughty question, which is, okay, you have grandkids now. Can you resist giving instructions to your children on how they should—

MILLER: Raise their children? Totally resist, never do it. We ask questions, we are interested in their lives, and we support them. And they're going through so much in their adjustment to the pandemic. Peyton, our oldest grandson, is a freshman at George Mason University, and I'm thrilled that he's happy on campus, but he's online for all of his classes for the year. We feel bad for our 10th grader, Mitchell, our sports fanatic, who can't participate in basketball or cross-country because he's online for the whole year at home. Olivia started school in second grade in person in a terrific private school. I'm so glad she's with other children, but she is on a laptop all day doing the Loudoun County curriculum virtually. Elliot, our kindergartner who has a lot of energy, is online for the next few months at least. And his brother Nathan, age three, is in a three-kid preschool three mornings a week at home with a teacher.

Q: I think, in nearly everything, you explained it very well. I think it's great. All of the subsequent questions that I might ask are just more in general about spousal employment and being a spouse in Foreign Service and so on. That is really not part of this particular oral history.

MILLER: The other thing about that is that I was really fortunate to have a portable

career. The mental health, social work, and teaching skills were assets that I could take abroad and adapt for the local contexts and needs. There are many careers that you really have to do in person and are not adaptable to a foreign environment, but I was creative and would go to a country and ask, “How can I use my skills to help in this particular place?” As long as I figured that I would get paid pennies or nothing at all, my question was, “What can I do that will be interesting for me and can be beneficial to the community?”

Having a portable career was great, being flexible and open to learning about the culture and seeing where I could best fit in and help. And then opportunities came up in Bosnia. The university teaching, the adoption home studies, the connection with all the NGOs, being invited to the IOM shelter for survivors of trafficking, being kind of an anomaly as the American ambassador's wife so the media was interested, and I had a megaphone to raise awareness about trafficking. I was doing interviews all the time and speaking at conferences. Trafficking in persons became a hot topic that people wanted to learn about. With learning disabilities, I was already an expert, so that was pretty easy to get into and create materials and give the educational seminars in many languages using my PowerPoints, videos and manuals. It's been a really incredible life. And it's not nearly over. I expect new opportunities may arise in the future.

So as I said, things pop up, and I was giving a speech on human trafficking for a World Affairs Council meeting. There was an American named Peter McFarren, who spent most of his life in Bolivia and he had just written a book about the Nazi Klaus Barbie, who was the Butcher of Lyon [France] during World War II, and who wound up in Bolivia being protected by the government. The book was originally written in Spanish and translated into English. Peter asked me to edit it and transform it into better English. That was an interesting project that took months. *The Devil’s Agent: Life, Times, and Crimes of Nazi Klaus Barbie* was published in 2013.

So fast forward, it’s April 2020, and here comes David Phillips again, saying, “I'm locked down at home during the pandemic, and most of what I usually do is either traveling or lecturing, and now I'm on Zoom and I'm not traveling and am stuck in my house. So I'm writing my autobiography because I’ve had a pretty interesting life.” David is a Track Two expert who gets civil society groups together to foster reconciliation and social harmony, and his book is called *Peacebuilding*. He started as a young idealist having met the Dalai Lama and helping Chinese dissidents in the U.S. His work continued in Bosnia, Greece, Macedonia, Burma, Darfur and especially in Kurdistan. Each chapter describes a different era of his life, a different time in a different location, and there was a lot to edit. So I spent a few months going through that, and Tom went over it for the big picture, especially for places that he knew like Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Bosnia. It is getting published this October. I'll look forward to editing my own words for this oral history because I know some things were not clear or could have been articulated better. I can always come up with a better way of describing things so that the reader will understand.

Q: Ah, so there are different audiences. There will certainly be people in the Foreign Service or people who are thinking of the Foreign Services as a career or spouses. So

that would be sort of the immediate initial group. Then there will be people in your fields who will be interested simply because of the experience that you share and how they might approach opportunities or organizations, to hear about how you're doing it. Finally, there will be historians who will be interested simply because of the unique nature of you and Tom as a couple in the Foreign Service. Not many couples are like you in that you both have very active careers and you've managed to be active in every country with the skill sets that you could bring. And then there are finally just people in the countries where you have worked, who have heard of you or have worked with you or who want to know. They would probably be interested in that as well.

MILLER: Thank you for letting me tell my story. It's been an interesting journey from my roots in Chicago and my secure, loving and somewhat boring upbringing in Glencoe. Travel, new places and new adventures have always been my passions, and our twenty-nine years in the Foreign Service and the fifteen years afterwards, through Plan and many international projects, have offered lots of opportunities for meeting new people and experiencing diverse perspectives. I've also been lucky that my profession and skills could be utilized to help children, women, and survivors of human trafficking and war. I'm pleased that I was able to mentor young people and support their education so that they could maximize their talents and potential. It's gratifying to see how well they are doing now.

And along the way, I've developed many treasured friendships with people all over the world. And I cherish the relationships with our kids and especially our terrific, smart, affectionate, and fun grandkids; I love seeing them grow and develop. And the core is Tom, my husband of fifty-one years, my best friend, travel partner, and soulmate. It has been a great seventy-two years, and I look forward to the next chapter.

End of interview

ADDENDUM

Hageman, Allison. "Tying the Knot: Embracing the unexpected." *Alexandria Times*, February 18, 2021. https://alextimes.com/2021/02/tying-the-knot-embracing-the-unexpected/.

Podcast 4-30-20, "Stay Home and Pour the Tea," American Diplomat https://amdipstories.org/stay-home-and-pour-the-tea/