

## REMEMBERING ANNE OFSTEDAL: A FAMILY CONVERSATION

*Our dear colleague Anne Ofstedal, the United Board's Director of Fellowship & Scholarship Programs, died suddenly on August 9. We thought her two children, Christina and Dustin, might be curious about the role their mother played in our organization, so we invited them to send us their questions. We hope our responses will give many others in the United Board family a picture of how valuable Anne was during her 17 years of service (1993-2005 and 2007-2012). — Nancy E. Chapman*

### **WHEN DID OUR MOM START WORKING AT THE UNITED BOARD? HOW DID SHE QUALIFY FOR THE JOB?**

A one-hour interview in the baggage claim area of the Minneapolis airport convinced David Vikner, the United Board's president in 1993, that Anne was the right person for the position of China

program coordinator. He recalls that he wanted to hire someone "with strong Chinese language skills and the ability to travel, someone who understood China and could support Chinese scholars — even though I knew it wouldn't be easy to find a person fitting this description." Anne had those skills and qualities, having worked in China from 1986 to 1990 as an English teacher at Chinese universities and then as a coordinator for a U.S. educational tour operator.

"Usually when I hired someone, I would bring them to New York to interview them and introduce them to staff," David Vikner explains, "but Anne was living in Minnesota with her family at the time, and I was traveling on my way to China, so we met in the baggage claim area of the Minneapolis airport. I offered her the job on the spot and she accepted."

### **WHAT WAS HER JOB AT THE UNITED BOARD? WHAT PROGRAMS WAS SHE INVOLVED IN?**

In her early years at the United Board, Anne was largely responsible for our extensive faculty development programs in China. More recently, she took on a broader range of responsibilities, including for the United Board Fellows Program, Faculty Scholarship Program, and Local Knowledge Initiative, all of which serve people and institutions from all over Asia.

The Fellows Program illustrates her exceptional ability to focus on the big



picture while managing many small details. Anne recognized the primary goal of preparing Asian faculty and administrators for leadership at their colleges and universities, but she also understood that the program's success is earned one individual at a time. Our United Board Fellows are future academic leaders, with a great deal of professional experience. Yet as they get ready to leave their homes to spend four months at a college or university either in Asia, the United States or Australia, they must wonder: What will my housing be like? How will I get along with my new colleagues? How can I make the most of my time as a Fellow?

Anne had already taken steps to ensure positive responses to those questions. She interviewed most of the Fellows during the selection process. She chose the best placement for each Fellow — finding host institutions with programs that matched their interests and recruiting coordinators and mentors to

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# REMEMBERING ANNE OFSTEDAL: A FAMILY CONVERSATION

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include Fellows in classes, departmental meetings, social occasions or just informal conversations. She worked with Gloria Godfrey and Amy Weber, her United Board colleagues, to make sure visas, travel, and bank accounts were in order. And she kept in touch with Fellows over the course of their placements to provide encouragement and make sure everything went smoothly.

Anne had had the experience of working in another country, and so she knew it can be a turning point in people's lives. Perhaps that inspired her to do everything she could to create a rewarding and memorable experience for each United Board Fellow. As one Fellow wrote about Anne, "You were not only our Director in the UB Fellows Program, you are a friend, even a sister who always made sure that we are getting the best from our placements."

## WHERE DID OUR MOM TRAVEL FOR WORK?

The United Board works in 13 countries and regions of Asia, and Anne traveled to almost all of them during her years at the United Board: Cambodia, mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The main purpose of a trip might be a conference, but she would create a busy schedule of meetings at our partner universities in order to talk to people about the progress of research projects, invite them to participate in our programs or ask for



their opinions on the future of higher education in Asia.

The schedule for her trip to the Philippines this past July was typical. She spent several days at Silliman University for a wrap-up seminar with United Board Fellows, helping them reflect on what they had learned and how they might apply this new knowledge in their work. She met with Silliman University President Ben Malayang so they could update each other about the ways that the United Board and the university cooperate, and with our trustee, Father Ben Nebres, about plans for the future. She attended a celebratory dinner for the United Board's 90th anniversary. Her days were busy, but we know she also found time for the one-on-one conversations that make a lasting impression on people.

When she was in the United States, Anne stayed connected to the work taking place in Asia through phone, Skype or email. You probably overheard some of her early morning or late night conversations with Betty Cernol-McCann and Avron Boretz in the United Board's Hong Kong office. They kept the wheels turning for our current programs by reviewing grant applications, working on budgets, or planning their visits to the Asian colleges and universities in our network. They began laying the foundation for future programs by talking about what they were learning from our Asian partners.

Anne knew the importance of being present in Asia in order to better understand what was taking place there. You may remember living in Beijing from August 2003 to August 2004. Anne used that time to visit our partners in China and ask for their insights and ideas about higher education. That firsthand information helped us to strengthen our China program and reinforced our commitment to having a vibrant program staff in the United Board's Hong Kong office.

## HOW DID SHE DO SUCH A GOOD JOB AT HER WORK?

There are at least a hundred answers to this question! Her colleague Avron Boretz describes a few reasons: "Anne listened, but never passively — she always thought deeply about what she heard, and always came up with perceptive and often very creative feedback. She always followed up and acted on her commitments. We all know how modest and quiet she was, never injecting her ego into the situation or trying to dominate a conversation, but her voice was always heard because when she spoke (or emailed, or wrote a report) she always had something meaningful to contribute, always helpful, always sensitive to others' needs and aimed at the situation at hand, never self-serving."

"To me, Anne has always been a heart representing the United Board spirit," wrote Kano Yamamoto, a former United Board trustee. It is a lovely way to be remembered. **UB**

## ANNE E. OFSTEDAL FUND

*To honor and continue the work of our esteemed colleague, Anne E. Ofstedal, the United Board has established a fund with initial contributions from the United Board, the Japan ICU Foundation, and Anne's friends, colleagues, and family members.*

*The Fund will be used to support professional development at overseas universities for young Chinese scholars and university leaders whose work helps to further the values of excellence, compassion, and service that Anne exemplified during her nearly two decades at the United Board.*

*We invite all those who would like to honor Anne in this way to contribute to the Fund with the enclosed envelope, or contact Wendy Abraham at [wabraham@unitedboard.org](mailto:wabraham@unitedboard.org).*

## PARTNERS

### NANJING UNIVERSITY: DEVELOPING AGENTS OF PEACE



**WHEN** Dr. Liu Cheng attended a graduate course on peace studies at Coventry University's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies in 2003, the field of peace studies was still relatively unknown in China. But as he learned more about it, he became convinced it was important to introduce peace studies in China. "So I started the peace studies course at Nanjing University in 2004, after I returned from Coventry," he said in an interview.

Nanjing University's experience shows one way that academic communities can nurture agents of peace, one of the goals of the United Board's Interreligious Understanding and Peacebuilding Initiative. Dr. Liu's commitment is clear but he has faced challenges in building a new field. When he was first getting started, peace studies was not offered as a major at Chinese universities, so he had no model to follow. Some academics remain skeptical because, he explains, they believe "peace studies only reveals itself as an ideal, instead of a reality to be achieved." And, in China's fast-changing economy, students need to keep their eyes on what he terms the "savage realities of the job market," which favors graduates with degrees in economics, computer science and engineering.

Still, Dr. Liu thinks it's important for Chinese universities to offer peace studies. "Peace studies programs on college campuses provide powerful testimony for the desire of human beings to avoid Armageddon by studying peaceful ways to resolve conflicts," he said. And, a focus on practice as well as theory can appeal to students. "What draws people to peace studies is more than an intellectual interest," he points out. "It is a genuine concern for problems of violence and injustice, and a desire to find ways to act on these concerns." Peace studies can offer students a way to address issues related to "the pursuit of peace, social and economic justice, ecological security, and democratic participation." Student interest at Nanjing University has been strong: to date, more than 1,600 students from the departments of arts and science have taken the peace studies course.

With support from the United Board, Dr. Liu is now encouraging other Chinese universities to offer courses in peace studies. In April, Dr. Liu and Shaanxi Normal University conducted several activities designed to raise awareness of peace studies and build academic expertise in the field in northwest China. A conference with Chinese and international scholars as well as lectures to undergraduate and postgraduate students were well attended, and Shaanxi Normal University is now offering its first course on peace studies.

Dr. Liu hopes these steps will spread interest in peace studies even further in China. "I think peace studies can help China deal with its historical legacy and contribute to the building of a peaceful world." In this way, as his Nanjing University students have indicated, a peace studies course can serve as "a little spark which can kindle a great fire." **UB**

#### Go Online

Go to [unitedboard.org](http://unitedboard.org) for more information on the Interreligious Understanding and Peacebuilding Initiative.

## UNITED BOARD FRIENDS DR. CHARLIE HUH AND YONSEI UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1962: A KEY TO THEIR FUTURE



*Dr. Charlie Huh, second left at the back, and his Yonsei classmates*

**"WE** were poor, we were proud and we had dreams."

That is how Dr. Charlie Jung Huh, an orthopedic surgeon, recalls his days as a student at Yonsei University. When he and his classmates began their studies, South Korea was still experiencing harsh deprivation in the aftermath of the Korean Conflict. Still, the Yonsei Class of 1962 counted it blessings. "We were among those lucky to have survived the war," Dr. Huh reflects. "We had living parents and homes — though some of us lived in shanties — and we had the opportunity to get a good education."

They knew Yonsei was a key to their future. "We felt proud and privileged because Yonsei had dedicated, excellent professors," he says. "We had dreams and were not discouraged, even though some of us wore army khaki that had been dyed black or skipped lunches once in a while. Some of us worked as live-in tutors, so we couldn't open our own books before 10 p.m."

Dr. Huh describes his classmates as "confident we could contribute to society." That spirit was still apparent years later, when he was living in the United States and his daughter was applying to college. Amazed to see all the class scholarships listed in the brochures of major American universities, he was inspired to contact his classmates in 1993 about establishing the

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## UNITED BOARD EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

### STUDY VISIT ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH IN PHILIPPINES

October 21-November 1, 2012

Institutions visited: Miriam College (Manila), Trinity University of Asia (Manila), Silliman University (Dumaguete), Pilgrim Christian College (Cagayan)

### UNITED BOARD 90TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

December 1, 2012

The Yale Club of New York City (United States)

### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON “ENHANCING THE LOCALITY IN THE GLOBAL ERA THROUGH SERVICE LEARNING”

December 6-8, 2012

Duta Wacana Christian University (Indonesia)

### ASIAN UNIVERSITY LEADERS PROGRAM

January 28-February 1, 2013

Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Shatin (Hong Kong)

Class of 1962 Yonsei Scholarship Fund. “Yonsei made us what we are now. We wanted to make even one student be able to concentrate on his study and not worry about tuition costs like we did.” Through their generosity, one medical student has received a full tuition scholarship (\$11,000 for 2012) each year since 1994.

Earlier this year, he and his classmates attended their 50th class reunion and received recognition for their generosity. The school honored them with a citation and plaque and, most importantly, some of the past Class of 1962 Scholarship recipients were there to express their appreciation.

The United Board administers this scholarship fund on behalf of the Yonsei Class of 1962. Working with United Board staff has made Dr. Huh realize that “the United Board is not simply an institution but close friends.” **UB**

### Go Online

Go to [unitedboard.org](http://unitedboard.org) for more information on ways to establish scholarships at the United Board.

## DID YOU KNOW?



“**IN** Chinese, an introduction to any subject is usually called ‘entering the gate,’ or ‘entering the door,’ former United Board Trustee Julia Ching wrote in her 2000 book, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*. Dr. Ching’s intercession at a pivotal moment helped the United Board re-enter the door to mainland China and start a new chapter of cooperation with Chinese colleges and universities.

Dr. Ching’s research focused on the neo-Confucian philosophy and religion of the Song and Ming dynasties, but she was well attuned to the changing currents in Sino-American relations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1979, she opened the door for Paul Lauby, then general secretary of the United Board, to

attend a Beijing conference on contemporary ethics sponsored by Georgetown University’s Institute of Ethics. During the conference, she arranged for Dr. Lauby to meet with China’s Deputy Minister of Education. That conversation, in turn, led the Minister of Education to invite representatives of the United Board to visit China and discuss prospects for cooperation. When trustees and counselors — including Julia Ching — visited China in 1980, and began to discuss shared interests in education with government officials and university leaders, the United Board entered the gate to a new era of building partnerships in China.

Dr. Ching was born in Shanghai and educated in Hong Kong, the United States and Australia. At the time of her death in 2001, she was on the faculty of the University of Toronto. She served as a United Board trustee from 1978 to 1986. **UB**

#### MISSION

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia works to support a Christian presence in colleges and universities in Asia.

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