

PORTUGAL USG-ALUMNI News

A quarterly newsletter for alumni of U.S. government (USG)-sponsored Portugal-USA exchange programs

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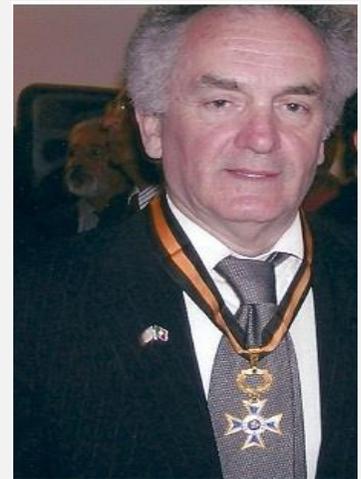
FEATURE STORIES

History Professor Reflects on 1961-62 Fulbright Exchange Experience to Portugal

As a doctoral research student from Boston University in the 1960s, Douglas Wheeler was one of the first American students to participate in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Portugal in 1961-1962.

On a recent visit to Lisbon in May, Wheeler, a professor of history emeritus at University of New Hampshire, shared his Fulbright exchange experience with U.S. Embassy Lisbon.

Wheeler said that during the program selection, “there were six American students in the first Fulbright student exchange group



Douglas Wheeler

for the academic year of 1961-62 and two of us, including myself, were graduate students, at Boston University's African Studies Program, I was doing my doctoral dissertation research on Angolan history.”

Professor Wheeler continued, “there were seven slots for American students but only six places were filled. This was because the seventh student candidate was not approved by the Fulbright binational committee: his contentious study topic-the economy of the Estado Novo dictatorship-was not approved. We were all enrolled in University of Lisbon classes and most of our cohort was studying Portuguese literature and language.”

As an exchange student to Portugal in the early 1960s, one had to be careful about discussing politics. As Professor Wheeler said, “in the orientation week before classes began, the American Ambassador welcomed us but observed that given the somewhat tense relations between the government of Portugal and the United States in the United Nations regarding the question of Portugal's African territories and other issues, that as guests of Portugal, in effect, we should refrain from any discussion of politics at the university.”

Since he returned to the United States after the program, Professor Wheeler has had a distinguished career in academia specializing in Lusophone history. He said that the Fulbright exchange experience affected him greatly. “Overall, we had a wonderful learning and living experience and the Portuguese people were friendly and welcoming. In my case, my year in Portugal, my first experience in Europe, was a key foundation stone for my later academic career as a scholar of Lusophone historical studies.”

For his distinguished scholarship and teaching on Portuguese history, the Portuguese government awarded Wheeler with the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1993 and the Order of Merit in 2004.

Alumnus Leads Efforts in Making Lisbon Pedestrian Friendly

Although beautiful and unique, Lisbon’s famous limestone sidewalks can be dangerous when slippery, especially for the elderly and for persons with disabilities. Lisbon’s sidewalks are among the key issues affecting pedestrian safety and access that city officials want to address through the long-term *Pedestrian Accessibility Plan*, which establishes guidelines and specific actions for enhancing pedestrian safety, comfort, and access in all of Lisbon’s neighborhoods.



Pedro Homem de Gouveia

Pedro Homem de Gouveia (Fulbright, 2002), architect for the Municipality of Lisbon, is leading the *Pedestrian Accessibility Plan*. “This is a strategic plan that has five operational areas. In each of these areas we identified a number of key issues, and for each key issue there is a diagnosis and a proposal for city action,” Pedro said. Key access issues exist in public space (pedestrian crosswalks, streets, sidewalks, etc.), city buildings (schools, libraries, museums, etc.), public transport network, construction, and other areas.

Pedro’s U.S. exchange experience has proven invaluable for the plan. As he said, “most of this work was deeply inspired by what I learned in the U.S. during my 2002-2003 Fulbright exchange.”

Richard Skaff, then the Deputy Director at San Francisco Mayor’s Office on Disability, was especially helpful to Pedro during the exchange. “Richard taught me all I needed to learn—from the principles—accessibility is, first and foremost, a question of human rights—to the tactics—how to get things done and move forward within a city administration, which is my kind of professional habitat. When I came back I was fired up and ready to go,” said Pedro.

Learn more at <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/viver/mobilidade/modos-suaves/mobilidade-pedonal/plano-de-acessibilidade-pedonal>

Alumni Collect nearly 3,000 Books for Mozambican School

Several alumni that are teachers (E-Teacher and SUSI programs), together with their colleagues, have helped the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon collect nearly 3,000 new and used Portuguese language textbooks in a variety of subjects from their local schools around Portugal, including from Madeira, where alumni collected the greatest number of books for the project. In coordination with the U.S. Peace Corps and the U.S. Embassy in Maputo, the books will be donated to Escola Secundária Samuel Graciano, a school located in Insaca—a small, rural, and impoverished town in Mozambique’s northern Niassa province.



Books collected by teachers from Madeira on their way to the Embassy

Escola Secundária Samuel Graciano is the only secondary public school in Insaca. With over 3,000 students, there are only 60 teachers and 15 classrooms, and a normal class size is 65 students. Textbooks in Portuguese are scarce in Insaca, which makes it difficult for students to learn.

After we have completed an inventory all of the donated books, the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon will begin shipping the books to Mozambique over the next several weeks. A special thanks to all the alumni around Portugal for their great efforts to support this project—we certainly could not have reached this number without your contributions!

ABC Justice Program Educates Youth about Criminal Justice System

After a few months of planning, the ABC Justice Program, an alumni project that won the 2013 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund grant, started pilot information sessions in May 2014, in order to promote the transparency of Portugal’s criminal justice system to youth audiences throughout the country, including the Azores and Madeira.



Information session in Beja

The sessions provide youngsters with simple but accurate information on how the criminal justice system works, presented in a friendly and engaging way, so that youth are better informed about their rights, less reluctant to report criminal acts, and more likely to participate in judicial proceedings.

Local partners of the program include the Association to Support Victims of Crime (APAV), local law enforcement, local bar and legal associations, and local schools and community organizers.

The project's team members fully represent Portugal's diverse alumni community—Fulbright scholars, IVLP, SUSI, E-teachers, and Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship participants—with their backgrounds and ages ranging from an 18-year old student to teachers, government officials and lawyers.

With the end of the successful pilot information sessions, the program will now continue on a wider scale, launch an informative website and the program will be shared with other organizations across Europe.

Alumni among Guest Speakers at English Teachers Conference in Porto

Alumni of various programs presented on several topics at the 28th annual Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Inglês (APPI) conference in Porto on May 1-3. APPI is the largest organization of teachers who teach the language and culture of English-speaking countries throughout Portugal and includes a large number of alumni among its staff and members.

The alumni presenters included Rómulo Neves (SUSI, 2011), Celeste Simões (E-teacher, 2011; IVLP, 2014), Helena Oliveira (E-teacher, 2012), Maria Castro (E-teacher, 2011), Maria de Fátima Silva (E-teacher, 2012), and Anthony Otey (Fulbright, 2013).

The U.S. Embassy invited Professor Patricia Szasz, Assistant Dean for Language & Professional Programs at Monterey Institute of International Studies, to speak at the conference. She presented a well-attended opening plenary entitled “Empowering Students to Become Global Citizens” and a follow-up workshop on “Intercultural Competence: Strategies for Teachers and Students.”

Learn more at <http://www.appi.pt/>

Fulbrighters Share Insights at ‘Fórum Fulbright Portugal 2014’



Susan Mann (center) speaks at Fórum

The Fulbright Commission held their annual Fórum on June 7, 2014 at Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon where Fulbright and SUSI alumni talked about their various professional and personal development insights as well as their exchange experiences in the U.S., all within the context of leadership, entrepreneurship, and personal enrichment.

Susan Mann, Global Director of Learning and Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (in Portugal under the Fulbright Specialists Program) opened the forum which was then moderated by the U.S. Embassy Lisbon's Assistant Public Affairs Officer.

The presenters included Rómulo Neves, Isabel Torres de Noronha, Julieta Almeida Rodrigues, Luís Valente, Paula Videira, Mário Vale, Isabel Conceição, António Palavra, and Jorge Ferreira.

Alum Attends European Youth Conference in Bratislava

Joana Larsen (Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship, 2013), currently a student majoring in communication and journalism at Nova University in Lisbon, was among the twenty-two young people selected across Europe to participate in Young Leaders for Tomorrow's Europe (YLTE) on August 11-14 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The YLTE program is aimed at European youth who wish to take a leading position in their communities.

The four-day conference included sessions that enhance leadership skills, national identity and intercultural awareness of the youth. In addition, the conference sought to encourage creative thinking about current events, with invited speakers talking about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, Syrian uprising, the crisis in Ukraine and EU membership.

Joana exemplifies youth activism—she is an active member of the alumni-led project ABC Justice, a fellow of the youth group at the local museum, a volunteer for AIESEC (an international NGO), and a writer for a Portuguese student website.



Joana Larsen

Fulbright Program Awarded Prince of Asturias Award



The Fulbright Program was awarded on June 12, 2014 with the 2014 Prince of Asturias Award for International Cooperation. The prestigious award honors more than 360,000 Fulbright alumni, current students and scholars involved with the Fulbright Program all over the world.

The program was recognized for furthering the Prince of Asturias Foundation's mission of "encouraging and promoting the scientific, cultural and humanistic values that form part of mankind's universal heritage."

Prince of Asturias Felipe de Borbon y Grecia, the honorary president of the Prince of Asturias Foundation, was an honorary Fulbright alumnus who studied at Georgetown University in 1995.

Learn more at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227510.htm>

Reception Honors the 2014/2015 Fulbright Portuguese Grantees

Following the pre-departure orientation, the U.S Embassy in Lisbon and the Fulbright Commission Portugal organized a reception at the embassy on July 18, 2014 to honor the Fulbright grantees that will be starting their programs in the U.S. this summer.

In addition to the grantees, key officers from the U.S. Embassy Lisbon and Fulbright Commission, members of the Fulbright Commission Board of Directors, Fulbright



Ambassador Sherman addresses the new grantees

partners, and alumni members of the selection committees attended the event. Ambassador Robert Sherman provided remarks and congratulated the new grantees on their accomplishments and wished them continued success.

Since the program began in Portugal, over 2,200 grantees (both Portuguese and American) have participated.

Alumni in the news

Sandra Correia (IVLP, 2013) was featured in the July 1, 2014 issue of *Neon Notebook: A Gen-Y Girl's Guide to World Domination*. Correia, CEO of Pelcor, a cork fashion accessories brand, talks about “three things I wish I had known in my 20s” — maintaining balance, being open to change, and giving respect. *Neon Notebook* is an online magazine for the next generation of women entrepreneurs.

Eduardo Castro Fonseca (Fulbright, 2011) was featured in the May 7, 2014 issue of *Destak*. Fonseca was nominated to receive the prestigious American Emmy Awards (Pacific Southwest Chapter), in the category of student programming, editing and producing, for “The Sumner Redaction,” a film about a small-town lawyer who returns to his hometown to wrap up his father’s old cases. Fonseca, who was born in Lisbon, currently lives in San Diego, California. He received his master’s degree in filmmaking from San Diego State University in 2013.

Since the article was published in May, Fonseca won the award at the ceremony held on June 14 in Carlsbad, California.

Nuno Rogeiro (NATO Tour, 1987; Fulbright, 1990), Senior Editor and Political Analyst at SIC Noticias, interviewed Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland on the Ukraine crisis, as well as on U.S.-Portuguese relations, during her visit to Lisbon on April 28.

On June 23, he and co-host Martim Cabral interviewed the new U.S. Ambassador to Portugal, Robert Sherman, for the Sociedade das Nações television program. Among the topics discussed at the interview were the trade relations between the U.S. and Portugal, and the future of Lajes air base in the Azores.

Watch the interviews: <http://www.youtube.com/user/usembassyportugal>

Carlos Miguel de Almeida Coelho (NATO Tour, 1987) and **José Manuel Fernandes** (American Council of Young Political Leaders, 1988) were elected to the European Parliament as members (MEPs) for the term 2014-2019. The elections took place on May 22-25 and the elected members will begin their term on July 1, 2014.

Find out more at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/search.html?country=PT>

Alumni authors

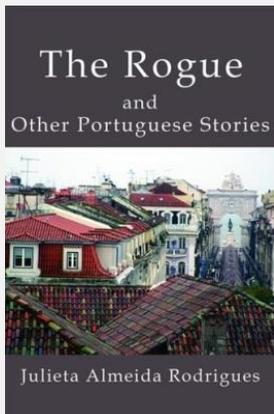


Pedro Letria (Fulbright, 2010) wrote *The Club* (Pierre von Kleist Editions, 2014).

The book gives insight into the Portuguese-American community in Providence, Rhode Island through the author's photographs and texts.

More info: <http://www.pedroletria.com/books.html>

Pedro Letria is a photographer who has authored six other books. He received his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design and BFA from the School of The Art Institute of Chicago.



Julieta Almeida Rodrigues (Fulbright, 1979) wrote *The Rogue and Other Portuguese Stories* (New Academia Publishing/Scarith Books, 2014).

The book is a collection of short stories about various aspects of contemporary Portuguese life. More info: <http://www.newacademia.com/featured-fiction-memoirs-books/the-rogue-and-other-portuguese-stories-2>

Professor Rodrigues has taught at Georgetown University and the University of Lisbon. Her previous book, *On the Way to Red Square* (New Academia Publishing/Scarith Books, 2006), is a collection of short stories set in Soviet Moscow in the 1980's.

DID YOU KNOW?

As USG-exchange programs alumni ...

You can access for **free** high quality information from research databases such as EBSCOHost, Gale, and ProQuest on [International Exchange Alumni](#).

The databases provide full-text articles from **20,000** academic journals and popular magazines/newspapers like the Economist, New York Times, The New Yorker, Science News, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal!

Register at <https://alumni.state.gov/user/register> to gain access to site resources.



Have your say, alumni!

How have you used your exchange experience to help others?

Let us, and your fellow alumni, know!

E-mail: alumniportugal@state.gov

We will feature your answers in the next issues of *PORTUGAL* USG-Alumni News.

PORTUGAL USG-Alumni News is a publication of the U.S. Embassy Lisbon, Office of Public Affairs. Alumni office team: Scott Hartmann, Assistant Public Affairs Officer; Michael Sarmiento; Alumni Programs Coordinator; Madalena Veloso, Cultural Affairs Assistant.

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