

GUESTS AT THE FULBRIGHT ICELAND 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, 23 FEBRUARY 2017

Newsletter Iceland-US Fulbright Commission



JUNE 2017

60 years and still going strong!

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault



Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the Fulbright Commission in Iceland. This is an important milestone for the bilateral relationship between Iceland and the U.S. I congratulate all of our 1433 grantees, as well as universities, research institutes and other partners who have made the past 60 years successful.

I think it is important to take a moment when we reach such a milestone to remind ourselves what the Fulbright Program stands for. Fulbright is about diversity, open-mindedness, a willingness to share and an understanding that by doing so we make both ourselves and others stronger. While Fulbright is about academic and scientific excellence, it is of course equally about increasing mutual understanding, building bridges, looking at different perspectives, willingly embracing the contributions of others and openly engaging in academic and scientific debate across borders, cultures and disciplines. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that the values and ideals of Fulbright are always at the forefront of our work. Here at the Commission we strive every day to uphold those values and ideals, though we can only be successful with the support of the many stakeholders who make up our Fulbright family.

On February 23rd, the 60th anniversary of the signing of the agreement between Iceland and the U.S. that launched the Fulbright Program in Iceland, the Commission held a celebration. Approximately 140 people attended the 2 hour event, where we heard from government representatives, grantees and alumni, who put into perspective the value of the Fulbright Program in Iceland. You can find videos of the full event on our YouTube page.

We look forward to maintaining and strengthening Fulbright Iceland over the next 60 years and beyond. To celebrate the occasion of this anniversary year, the Commission has just launched a U.S.-based charitable fund, which is set up for us by IIE. The Fulbright Iceland Fund will allow U.S. residents and companies based in the U.S. to donate to the Fulbright Commission in Iceland. We are grateful for every contribution, whatever the size, because as we say in Icelandic "*margt smátt gerir eitt stórt*". All funds will be used to benefit grantees directly. We hope that this will encourage U.S. alumni and other friends in the U.S. to donate. Please see the side-bar for further information.

Belinda L. Theriault

NEW FULBRIGHT ICELAND FUND



The Commission is pleased to announce the launch of the Fulbright Iceland Fund, a U.S. 501(c)(3) charitable fund, which has been set up through our partner organization in New York, IIE. Through this fund, U.S. residents and U.S. based companies can make charitable donations to Fulbright Iceland and receive tax deductions in accordance with U.S. law. We encourage our friends in the U.S. to seize this opportunity to support the work of Fulbright Iceland.

All funds received will be used directly to benefit our grantees, with funds going towards grants and grant supporting activities. There is no better way to support Fulbright than directly through the Commission, knowing that your funds are going to impact exchanges directly. It is possible to make an annual, monthly or one-time contribution, depending on what suits each donor.

To make a donation online please go to www.iie.org/donate and direct your gift by entering "Iceland Fulbright Commission Donation" in the gift designation field. If you prefer, we will also have a donation form available on the Commission website, which can be filled out and sent to IIE.

60th anniversary of the Fulbright Commission, Iceland 1957-2017



Minister of Education, Science and Culture, Kristján Þór Júlíusson: „It is my pleasure on this occasion to inform you that Iceland's contribution to the Fulbright Commission has been increased substantially in this anniversary year. This is, in my view, very important, not least due to the increased emphasis on the Arctic in Iceland's foreign policy over the past years".



Dr. Albert Vernon Smith: "Over the 60 years of the program there have been 922 Icelanders who have gone to the U.S. on exchange and 511 Americans have come to Iceland ... The Icelandic students and scholars have been hosted by more than 250 different institutions in the U.S. ... from New York to Hawaii, Chicago to Texas, Alaska to Alabama."

Chargé d'Affaires Jill Esposito: "Today is important for the Fulbright Program, important for the relationship between the United States and Iceland and an important reminder of what higher education can do to promote understanding and friendship between our nations."



Hinrik Bjarnason: "This half year, from August 1959 to February 1960, had a dramatic impact on my life, a life devoted to teaching, youth work and a career in mass media. In all my work I enjoyed the invaluable insights I gained through the opportunities I received through the Fulbright Program. It is extremely gratifying and meaningful that the program is still going strong, a unique and powerful tool in international relations."



60th anniversary of the Fulbright Commission, Iceland 1957-2017

~60th Anniversary Celebration Program held on 23 February 2017~

<p>Welcome by Belinda Theriault, Executive Director, Fulbright Commission</p> <p>Address by Kristján Þór Júlíusson, Minister of Education, Science and Culture</p> <p>Address by Jill Esposito, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires</p> <p>Address by Dr. Albert Vernon Smith, Chairman of the Fulbright Board</p> <p>Hinrik Bjarnason, Fulbright 1959, shares his memories</p> <p>Dr. Heiða María Sigurðardóttir, Fulbright 2007, discusses her studies and research</p> <p>Fulbright violinists – premiere of an Icelandic-American medley arranged especially for the anniversary</p> <p>Chrissie Guðmundsdóttir, Guðný Guðmundsdóttir, Geirprúður Ása Guðjónsdóttir, Gunnhildur Daðadóttir and Olga Björk Ólafsdóttir</p>	<p>Anniversary cake served & break</p> <p>What Fulbright means to me - U.S. grantees 2016-2017</p> <p>Alexandra Yingst, Kathryn Catlin, Megan Matich and Dr. Stephanie Grocke</p> <p>Icelandic alumni panel - Paying It Forward</p> <p>Agla Friðjónsdóttir, Anna Gyða Sigurgísladóttir, Friðrik Ársælsson, Hólmfríður Arnalds, Vigdís Bergsdóttir and Þorleifur Örn Gunnarsson</p> <p>Giving back: The work of Fulbright Alumni in Iceland (FFSÍ)</p> <p>Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, Chairman, and Íris Björk Hreinsdóttir, Vice Chairman</p> <p>Final words by the Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission</p> <p>Final performance by the Fulbright violinists</p>
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Þorleifur Örn Gunnarsson: "I never (before) had to think about race and my relations to it and that was extremely valuable and it made me a better teacher, because I had to adapt my pedagogy to kids with a completely different social background than I had. Teaching is a lot about making connections and connecting dots for different students. Their social background made it so that I had to adapt a lot of what I thought teaching was about. So I learned a lot from it and that is the opportunity Fulbright gave me."



The Fulbright Alumni Association in Iceland, which is a staunch supporter of the Commission, announced that it would provide funding for one grant in 2017.

My life changing experience at Louisiana Tech

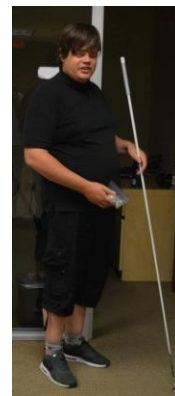
By Eyþór Kamban Þrastarson, 2015 Fulbright Fellow, who is now completing his post-academic training at SAAVI Services for the Blind in Phoenix, Arizona

Ruston, Louisiana is a small town in the south. It is the home of Louisiana Tech University, the school in which I enrolled with the help of my Fulbright scholarship. Ruston is just like every other college town except for one thing. On the town's streets, you will see more people using white canes while walking and going about their business than anywhere else in the world.

When I applied to Louisiana Tech to study industrial and organizational psychology with a concentration in orientation and mobility for the blind, I thought I was going to learn how to teach blind people to navigate their environment and hopefully, develop academically. I soon learned that while this was certainly part of my experience, this was only the tip of the iceberg.

Ruston is home to the Louisiana Center for the Blind, which is highly regarded worldwide for its approach to teaching the alternative skills that blind people use in their daily lives, to live the lives they want as well as to be able to compete on an equal footing with their sighted peers for employment. In my program, most of my practical training came from teaching students at the Louisiana Center under the guidance of its instructors. This meant that my fellow students at Tech and I were exposed to the unique approach the center has developed to unleash the abilities of blind people. This experience is what truly made it worthwhile for me to spend countless hours in the Louisiana sun, first learning myself and then learning to teach others how to safely cross complex streets, locate businesses, and so much more.

Before I went to Louisiana, I never truly believed that a blind person could travel unaccompanied by a sighted assistant to a completely unfamiliar city and get around with as much ease as any other newcomer, or go to the mall and browse the stores for Christmas presents on his or her own. At the Louisiana Center and in Ruston in general, blind people are not seen as being inferior or helpless, as they are in so many other places. Rather, they are a part of the community, going to work or school and doing anything else that people do. It is this mentality that I hold the most precious of everything I learned while there and I hope to be able to spread it to my own country and beyond. I want to live in a world where all disabled people see themselves as equal to others, and do not let their disabilities define what they can or cannot be.



U.S. FULBRIGHT GRANTEES 2017-2018

Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholars

- Dr. Bradley Barr, Affiliate Professor, School of Marine Sciences and Ocean Engineering, University of New Hampshire, hosted by the Stefansson Arctic Institute
- Dr. John Bodinger, Chair and Associate Professor of Anthropology, Susquehanna University, hosted by the University of Iceland
- Dr. Janette Boughman, Associate Professor of Biology, Michigan State University, hosted by Hólar University College
- Dr. Gregory Keller, Professor of Biology, Gordon College, hosted by the University of Iceland
- Dr. Michelle Koutnik, Assistant Professor of Geology, University of Washington, hosted by the University of Iceland
- Dr. Virginia Vitzthum, Professor of Anthropology, Indiana University, hosted by the University of Iceland

Fulbright-Ministry for Foreign Affairs Arctic Scholar

- Dr. Charles Norchi, Professor of Law, University of Maine, hosted by the University of Akureyri and the University of Iceland

Fulbright Scholars

- Dr. Merrie Kaas, Professor of Medical Sciences, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, hosted by the University of Akureyri
- Dr. Alissa Mello, Director, Inkfish, Puppet Theatre, hosted by Iceland Academy of the Arts
- Mr. Demian Schane, Attorney at Law, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, hosted by the University of Akureyri

Fulbright Global Scholar Award

- Dr. Gertraud Maskarinec, Professor of Medical Sciences, University of Hawaii, hosted by the University of Iceland

Additional scholars are expected through the Fulbright Specialist Program and Inter-Country Travel Grant Program

Fulbright Fellows

- Katerina De Vito, Columbia University, PhD research in Public Health, Reykjavik University
- Christian DiBari, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, MS Environmental Studies, University of Iceland
- Tasha O'Hara, At-large, MS Coastal and Marine Management, University Centre of the Westfjords
- Hannah Hethmon, At-large, Icelandic as a Second Language, University of Iceland, Fulbright/Icelandic Ministry of Education and Culture Grant

Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Fellows

- Christina Anaya, Oklahoma State University, PhD research in Biology, Hólar University College
- David Prieto, Columbia University, research in Interdisciplinary Studies, Stefansson Arctic Institute

Fulbright Specialists in Iceland



Fulbright Specialist Dr. Larry Anderson from the University of Colorado, Denver, pictured above with host Dr. Hrund Ólöf Andradóttir, made two visits to the University of Iceland, one in the fall of 2016 and another in the spring of 2017. Dr. Anderson was hosted by the University of Iceland Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Dr. Anderson's project was focused on air quality. He took part in teaching, but also conducted data analysis and consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders. In cooperation with his host, a public meeting was held where Larry presented his findings and made recommendations on future monitoring and necessary improvements. His findings gained the attention of the media, with Larry appearing on the evening news. Further collaboration is foreseen.

Fulbright Specialist Dr. Kathleen Andereck from Arizona State University was hosted by Hólar University College in North Iceland. Dr. Andereck assisted with the development of the Rural Tourism Program at Hólar. The visit sparked interest in further cooperation, which will hopefully lead to study abroad options for students from both countries.

Dr. Sara Veblen-Mortenson was hosted by the Faculty of Sport, Leisure Studies and Social Education at the University of Iceland's School of Education, where she presented lectures and consulted on faculty development in the area of obesity prevention and other health developments.

The Commission looks forward to visits from a number of Fulbright Specialists this summer and fall:

Dr. Barry Costa-Pierce from the Marine Science Center of the University of New England will be hosted by the University of Akureyri this summer to build partnerships and collaboration in fisheries sciences.

The School of Education at the University of Iceland will receive two Fulbright Specialists in different fields in August. Dr. Barbara Laster, Professor at Towson University, will visit to help design and conduct literacy programs. Dr. Mariana Souto-Manning, Associate Professor at Columbia University's Teachers College, will lend her expertise in multi-cultural education.

Two Fulbright Specialists will arrive in September. Dr. Richard Gaskins, Proskauer Chair in Law and Social Welfare at Brandeis University, will be hosted by the Departments of History and Philosophy at the University of Iceland. Dr. Angelea Panos is a migration specialist who will be hosted by the Ministry of Welfare. Dr. Panos will be working with government agencies, local municipalities, universities and other stakeholders involved in the resettling of refugees in Iceland.

U.S. FULBRIGHT GRANTEE PRESENTATIONS

This spring semester we held two events where U.S. Fulbright grantees presented their projects and discussed their experiences in Iceland.



In January, two scholars completed their grant period, Dr. Robert Zierenberg (above) and Ms. Anita Parlow, Esq. (below).



In May, US Fulbright scholars: Dr. Tracey Boisseau, Dr. Scott Erickson, Dr. Stephanie Grocke and fellows Megan Matich, Alexandra Yingst and Kathryn Catlin presented their projects.



ICELANDIC FULBRIGHT GRANTEES 2017-2018

Fulbright Fellows

- Fannar Freyr Ívarsson, University of Iceland, LLM, Law, University of California, Berkeley (grant funded by Fulbright Alumni in Iceland)
- Gunnlaugur Geirsson, University of Iceland, LLM, Law, University of Miami, as well receives the Cobb Family Fellowship
- Júlia Arnardóttir, University of Iceland, MSc Mechanical Engineering, Stanford University
- Kristófer Måson, University of Iceland, MSc Software Engineering, Drexel University
- Ólafur Darri Björnsson, University of Iceland, MA/PhD International Relations, University of Chicago

Summer Institute 2017

- Jón Atli Tómasson, Reykjavik University, U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Civic Engagement at the University of South Carolina

This newsletter is published by the Fulbright Commission in Iceland and is available online at www.fulbright.is

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