

Ambassadors Charles E. Cobb and Sue M. Cobb:

*Thank You*

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
GRADUATE SCHOOL



## Message from the Dean

The University of Miami has continually risen in the rankings over the past decade. It is clear that the diversity of our programs domestically and internationally is a distinct feature for any student considering application to the Graduate School at UM. While domestic students can often be sponsored by externally funded projects from the United States' federal government, international students must either be self-funded or funded by discretionary university funds. The university typically has resources that are far more limited with respect to increasing and sustaining the diversity of international students.

With "diversity" and "globalization" being a clear and present "distinction" for The Graduate School, it is the generosity of benefactors such as Ambassadors Chuck and Sue Cobb that has had a direct impact on the prominence of the University. The Cobb Family Fellowship for Icelandic Graduate Students has continually attracted students who have attained phenomenal academic and corporate outcomes.

It is my pleasure to present this booklet as a small token of our appreciation here at the Graduate School. The Cobb Family Fellowship program continues to promote the vision of the Graduate School and the University of Miami as a whole.



M. Brian Blake, PhD.  
Vice Provost of Academic Affairs &  
Dean of the Graduate School

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Hjörtur Bragi Sverrisson  
International Law, Ph.D. International Studies  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 1998-1999 – LL.M.

How the Cobb Family Fellowship helped my professional life.

I remember clearly how honored I felt when I was told that I had been awarded the fellowship. At that time I was already studying at the University of Miami School of Law. I had just been accepted into a doctoral program at UM's School of International Studies. The fellowship allowed me to focus on my studies and worry less about financial issues and it truly made a big difference. I would probably not have continued studying at UM without the fellowship.

Without it I would not have met my wife, who I got to know through mutual friends at UM. I would not have been able to pursue an international career, to have the privilege to work in a multicultural diverse environment with amazingly talented colleagues. I have worked with Ministers and Ambassadors, rebels and displaced persons, peacemakers and peace breakers. The question of whether the Cobb Family Fellowship fundamentally changed the direction of my professional and personal life can obviously only be answered in the positive. As for my current post, I work in Kosovo and head the human rights program of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Mission in Kosovo. It is the biggest human rights program of the organization, employing about 240 people, while the Mission as a whole has 600 staff here in Kosovo. Our aim is to support this Kosovo institution in becoming increasingly compliant with international human rights standards and create an environment that is conducive to a constructive dialogue and reconciliation between the Albanian and Serbian population. Today, 15 years after the conflicts, the road towards success is still just like any other Balkan mountain road, curvy and full of potholes, but we will get there in the end.

Dear Ambassador,

I have fond memories from studying at UM. I had the opportunity to become actively involved in student life, being the president of the student government at the School of International Studies and interacting with a large group of students and faculty. I had the privilege of taking classes with outstanding professors, providing me with insight and inspiration far beyond the text books. All this provided me with the foundations for my current professional life and the contributions that I can and have made. I regret that I never managed to meet you and thank you and your wife in person for honoring me with your fellowship. I hope that one day I will be able to do that. Until then, I wish you and your family the very best.

Sincerely yours,

Hjörtur Bragi Sverrisson





Gudrún Björg Birgisdóttir

LL.M., Comparative Law with focus on corporate finance law and securities law  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 1999-2000

Present - Partner - LL.M. corporate finance. Supreme Court attorney at Logia law office

Board Member at LMFÍ- Icelandic Bar Association

Board of The Gender Equality Complaints Committee- Alternate at Kærufélag jafnréttismála (Gender equality Committee)

I met the Ambassador last summer here in Iceland and told him how my graduate program at UM shaped my life and changed my prospects as a lawyer in Iceland. I also expressed my sincere wish to help others in any way I can and therefore I'm now on the board of Alumni Fulbright students in Iceland.

The grant from the Cobb Fellowship program gave me the opportunity to study abroad; it also inspired me to complete my thesis for the graduate degree at the Law School in Iceland magna cum laude.

Without the grant from the Cobb fellowship program, I would not have an LL.M degree which enabled me to become a successful lawyer in corporate finance law in Iceland and highly regarded in my field. I'm board member of the Icelandic Bar Association, nominated by the Icelandic Supreme Court as representative on its behalf of the Gender Equality Committee. Since I received the scholarship and admission to the Law School I've been inspired to be the best that I can be and prove that I deserved the chance and all the help from the UM prior, during, and after my studies.

I was the first law student to receive the scholarship during my studies in Iceland and the first to complete the LL.M. degree from the Law School of UM. I was also the first student from abroad who completed the Corporate Finance program either in the LL.M. program or JD which I received an A for.

I believe I was the first student in the LL.M. program at the Law School who was a single mother with a 4-year-old son and no relatives nearby. For sure I was the first student with the Cobb scholarship who was a single parent to enroll in the LL.M. program with the scholarship.

I remain grateful for the patience and help I received from UM after I passed the requirements for enrolling in the LL.M. program at the Law School and as a grantee of the Cobb Scholarship with different needs and challenges than other students before me. The help of the personnel of the UM Graduate School and excellent advisors, such as Professor Manning, Professor Bradley, and others I managed to complete my studies and go back to Iceland and start my career with confidence.

Since graduation from the UM Law School I've worked as a corporate finance lawyer. From 2005 I taught at law school; and from 2002, I have been involved in the Icelandic Bar review. With the scholarship I was able to complete my law studies in Iceland, where before I lost focus and since graduation from UM in 2000, I have become a successful lawyer. The fact that I gained a scholarship to study at UM meant that I worked harder and in 2011 qualified as a Supreme Court Attorney before the Icelandic Supreme Court by arguing four cases before five panels. I still remain the only Supreme Court Attorney to qualify as such.





Einar Ólafsson  
Architecture  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2000-2001

It is with great pleasure that I write about how the fellowship helped me finish my studies in the field of Architecture.

Before receiving the scholarship I was working in a regular architectural office in Reykjavik. I had been working for six years after my undergraduate studies, which I did at Arizona State University. I had my family, and life was quite normal in the sense that I had my bills to pay every month and I was not thinking so much of finishing my studies. After receiving the scholarship I saw that I was able to finish my studies at the University of Miami. Finally at the age of 38 I started my graduate program at UM and finished in 1 1/2 years. The funny thing was that on the same day, just half hour in between, my wife and I found out that we were expecting our first child and that I got the scholarship.

We had a very good time in Miami and it was a dream come true for us, since my wife had her maternity leave at the same time I was doing my graduate work. I was lucky enough to have excellent professors and good a program to follow. At that time we also met Mr. Cobb once at his beautiful house for dinner. That was really nice. We have since then been back to Miami and the school where we met some of my former professors. I also met Mr. Cobb last year when he was in Reykjavik. We are also trying to create some kind of cooperative endeavor between my hometown and his skiing resort in Durango Colorado. Hopefully, that will come true next year.

Today I have my own architectural office, Arkiteo ([www.arkiteo.is](http://www.arkiteo.is)) in Reykjavík. I have been running the office for ten years now and we are doing quite well. We have received several awards and won several architectural competitions in all scales, both urban projects and architectural.

For further information about my architectural work, please visit the website, [www.arkiteo.is](http://www.arkiteo.is)

Finally, please make sure to give Ambassador Cobb my best regards.







Heiðar Ásberg Atlason  
LL.M. in Comparative Law  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2001-2002

From 2000 – 2001 Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Since 2002 Heiðar has worked at LOGOS legal services, Partner since 2009

I can assure you and Ambassador Cobb that the fellowship meant a lot to me. It had been my dream for years to study law in the US – and that is something that dates back decades according to my sources (mainly my mother). After I graduated with a law degree from the University of Iceland (with part time done at the University of Copenhagen) in 2000, I started looking for US schools and scholarships. Coming from the Scandinavian model where education is more or less free of charge, it is a huge investment to study in the US. That is why most people choose Europe as their destination for post-graduate studies in law. The Cobb Fellowship is a very generous grant which enabled me to make my dream come true and study law in the great environment at UM. For that I will always be extremely grateful to Ambassador Cobb.

When I returned to Iceland in June 2002, I started working as an associate at LOGOS legal services in Reykavík (see [www.logos.is](http://www.logos.is)). I became partner with LOGOS in 2009 and my main field of work relates to the financial collapse of the Icelandic banking sector in the fall of 2008. My main clientele is composed of foreign banks and institutions who have an interest in winding up the process of failed banks. Hence, it goes without saying that I do mainly bankruptcy / administration work and litigation relating thereto. I also focus on other areas, but that is my main field at the moment. This is a very busy and complicated field at the moment.

I'm married to Aleksandra Kojic, who I was fortunate enough to have while at UM. She did an exchange program at the UM College level where she studied social sciences. We have three boys - 2, 6 and 10 years – only the two older ones have visited UM with us.







Erna Hjaltested  
LL.M  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2005-2006

Since 2002 Erna has worked at the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Brussels, Belgium where she holds a Senior Legal Officer/ Head of Legal Services position

The Cobb Scholarship provided me with the experience of a lifetime, both professionally and privately. I was working at the biggest law firm in Iceland when the Cobb Fellowship provided me with the opportunity to make an old dream come true to go and study law in the United States at the University of Miami School of Law.

The LL.M. degree was also a turning point for me in my career as shortly thereafter I got a senior legal position with an international organization, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), in Brussels, Belgium, where I have now worked for the last six years. Since receiving the Cobb Fellowship I have almost exclusively been working with International/European law.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest thanks to Ambassador Cobb and his family for the great honor of receiving the extremely generous Cobb scholarship. Also to the University of Miami School of Law and its amazing people. The year in Miami changed my life and my husband and I cherish every memory we have of our timethere.

I hope I can return one day for a visit!







Bjarni Már Magnússon  
LL.M., Ocean and Coastal Law  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2006-2007

Currently an Assistant Professor at Reykjavik University School of Law

The generous scholarship from the Cobb Family and my studies in the LL.M. program in Ocean and Coastal Law at the University of Miami have impacted my career in various ways. During my studies I decided that I wanted to become a specialist in the international law of the sea; a decision which I have followed. After my studies in Miami I did a Ph.D. in the field at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Professor Bernard Oxman recommended me and that was the selling point for my Supervisor in Edinburgh, who is like Professor Oxman, one of the leading figures in international law. During my studies I was involved in a few litigations before the International Courts and Tribunals, including one which Professor Oxman presided as an ad-hoc judge!

Currently, I live in Reykjavik where I work as an assistant professor at Reykjavik University School of Law. I teach international law and especially the international law of the sea. I am writing a book that will be published internationally on a subject which Professor Oxman asked about on the law of the sea exam. At the moment I am in Brussels writing a report for the Icelandic industry about EU's Common Fisheries Policy and the suspended accession negotiations with Iceland. You can say that my task for the Icelandic industry is a direct consequence of the path I chose while studying in Miami. Last December the US State Department invited me to visit various institutions that deal with Arctic issues in Washington D.C., Anchorage and Fairbanks and give a lecture about a topic I became interested as a student in Professor Oxman's law of the sea class that concerns US issues. I can assure you that the temperature in December in Fairbanks is a bit different from Miami.

The time I spent in Miami was not only good for my career but it also opened my eyes to a different culture and way of living. I have many friends from the University which I keep in contact with and occasionally meet. If possible I would like to strengthen my ties with the School of Law.







Liney Arnorsdottir  
Master of Arts, Public Relations  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2007-2008 & 2008-2009

From June 2009 – May 2012 Liney was a Project Manager at Ketchum, NYC (a leading global communications firm with operations in more than 70 countries across six continents).

Since April 2012, Liney has been a Project Manager at Promote Iceland (governmental body established to improve the competitiveness of Icelandic companies in foreign markets).

I received an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Iceland, knowing I wanted a graduate degree in communications from an American university (which is not taught in Iceland). I had lived in the US for many years due to my parents' work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I wanted to return to gain experience and eventually bring what I learned back to Iceland. A US college degree, however, would not have been possible without the Cobb Fellowship.

I remember the Cobb Fellowship interview in detail. I distinctly recall telling the interviewer my future goals. They were to work on Iceland's image internationally, to return to Iceland and use the skills I learned at University of Miami to help generate revenue for Icelandic industries.

Absolutely everything that I said in that interview came true. Immediately after graduation, I moved to New York City where I lived and worked for three years, gaining experience at Ketchum, a leading corporate PR agency. In the interim, the financial crash happened and a volcanic eruption. In 2012, the Icelandic government called me back for action and I am now heading Iceland's marketing, under the "Inspired by Iceland" campaign. Tourism is seeing 20% year-over-year growth and has, for the first time, overtaken fishing as Iceland's number one revenue generating industry. I now work closely with ministers and other politicians in crafting Iceland's nation brand. If you see Iceland in the news a lot these days, it probably has something to do with my team.

The Cobb Fellowship made all of this possible. Without it, I think that the message of Iceland's economic recovery and image of the country as a desirable travel destination would not be as strong as it is today. The skills I acquired at UM are highly specialized and few Icelandic people have in depth knowledge of PR, marketing, media, the US, and politics. These are areas that I developed during my graduate studies. It was almost as if it were aligned in the stars all along for me to take this path from Miami to New York and back to Iceland again. For these priceless experiences, I will always be grateful to Ambassador Cobb. The impact his generosity has made certainly a ripple effect, touching national issues and ultimately, improving Iceland.





Helga Kristin Audunsdottir  
LL.M., International Law  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2009-2010.

From May 2011 – January 2012 Helga was a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Miami, teaching JD and LLM students at the School of Law.

Since January 2012, Helga has been the Head of the Department of Law at Bifröst University in Iceland.

Helga graduated with a BS.c degree in Business and Law in the year 2004 and an ML degree in law from Bifrost University in the year 2005. Helga received the Cobb Fellowship and graduated with a LL.M. degree in U.S. & Transnational Law from the University of Miami School of Law in the year 2010. After graduation she worked as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Miami School of Law, where she taught European competition law and European company law. Before receiving her LL.M. degree she worked as a legal director in an international investment company in Iceland.

Nína Margrét Rolfsdóttir  
M.S. in Management of Technology  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2012-2013



I finished my bachelor degree in Industrial Engineering at the University of Iceland in 2008 and worked as a Project Manager in R&D for a global prosthetic company developing new prosthesis and supportive braces before starting my studies at UM.

I graduated in December of 2013 and will be staying in Miami until summer when my husband will graduate from his program in law. We are growing our family and are expecting a little baby boy in May. I plan to move back to Europe and hope to work for an international company where I can continue working across borders which is what I enjoy doing.

The Cobb Fellowship was a great honor and helped me pursue my dream of studying for my master's degree in the United States. Without it and the scholarship that the Department of Engineering offered me following this path wouldn't have been available to me. I am deeply grateful. My time here at the University of Miami has been wonderful and I've experienced and learned a lot of new things, both in school as well as in daily life as the environment, people and culture here are very different from back home in Iceland.





Íris Björk Hreinsdóttir  
LL.M., International Law  
Cobb Fellowship recipient AY 2012-2013

It is difficult to find the right words to thank someone for the opportunity of a lifetime. The Cobb Fellowship was one of those rare opportunities in my life. As Ambassadors Cobb know, after their stay in Iceland, the most common way to do it here is to say one simple thing: TAKK. This one TAKK means the world to me and more than I can ever express. Thank you!

I received the Cobb Fellowship for the school year 2012-2013. I left Iceland in July 2012 to take my LL.M. at the University of Miami School of Law and I enjoyed every minute of my stay in Miami. Even the minutes when I had a doubt if I could finish my tasks at school, the seconds I could not find the right words in English to express myself and the moments I had to stand up and express my feelings and knowledge to my classmates and professors. Why? Because I knew I was accomplishing something that meant the world to me and Miami is definitely the most interesting place on earth and a wonderful place to live.

I cannot fully express my gratitude to Ambassador Cobb for this wonderful opportunity, the opportunity to be a student at the University of Miami and to be a part of the “UM Family”. I will always be grateful for this adventure and experience. It strengthened me as a human being and as a lawyer. My experience has been a wonderful opportunity and an adventure. I will always be deeply thankful in my heart! What I gained from my year in Miami is something that will always be with me.

Miami certainly touched my heart. Ambassadors Cobb also touched my heart with their support. I enjoyed meeting them in Miami for a lunch at the University and it was also a great pleasure to meet Ambassador Cobb in Iceland last summer at the Cobb awards reception. They are amazing people that give their time and effort to support others to let their dream come true. They really care about others. To meet them has surely inspired me to do the same in life, in one way or another. They have also taught me and informed me why it is important to keep the relationship between Iceland and the USA.

I believe my experience at UM Law has made me stronger in my field of profession. Today I work as an Attorney at Law for Arion Bank in Iceland. My main duties are to give legal advice and service to the board of directors and the senior management of the bank.

My family and I really enjoyed and gained so much from our stay in Miami. My little son tells me few times every week how much he misses Miami, I agree with him! Without the Cobb family support I could not have done this! All my best and warm regards to Ambassadors Cobb. I hope to meet them again one day, either in Miami or in Iceland.



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