



Nelson Mandela's Fulbright Prize Address

Oct. 1 1993, Washington DC.

The following are excerpts from a transcript of Mr. Mandela's address.

In July I turned 75. And a day or two before that, I met a young lady of about four or five years, and she asked me some pointed questions. She asked, "How old are you?" I said, "Well, I can't remember but I was born long, long ago." She said, "A year ago?" I said, "No, more than that." "Two years ago?" I said, "No longer than that." "But when were you born?" I said, "Well I've told you I can't remember, but it was a long time ago."

Then she suddenly switched and said, "Why did you go to jail?" I said, "I didn't go there because I liked it, some people sent me there." "Who?" I said, "People who don't like me." "And how long did you remain there?" I said, "Again I can't remember but it was a long time ago." She again repeated, "One year, two years?" And I said, "No, I can't remember."

Then there came a very devastating comment on her part which will put into context the glowing remarks which have been made here. When I couldn't tell her exactly when I was born, she said, "You are a foolish old man, aren't you?"

If any of us is credited with a vision, you must remember the remarks of that young lady. And if my remarks here confirm what the young lady said, I hope you'll not be as frank. I consider it a great honor to be standing before you today to receive the J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding. I count it also a great privilege to be with you on the occasion of the Fulbright Association's 16th annual conference. In expressing my heartfelt appreciation of the accolade bestowed on me, I am not unmindful of the responsibilities one assumes.

Significance of the prize

And it is against the background that awards of this nature go to strengthen the democratic forces in our country, to strengthen men and women of vision. There are thousands of them in our country, and that is part of the significance of us getting this Fulbright Award. We accept it not as a gesture to an individual. It is a source of tremendous inspiration, and courage, and hope, for one to be associated with such a prestigious award. But we know that the gesture is in support of the men and women over the decades who have elected to stand on their feet to fight back. And for those of us, who have spent a number of years behind bars - you have to be behind bars to appreciate the policy of a country because it is there that the cruelty of men to men emerges - the knowledge that

the ideas for which you had fought were alive, that our people outside prison were on their feet and fighting back, that the national community had mobilized itself to isolate a regime which had through apartheid committed a crime against humanity - those were glorious moments. When we went through those harsh experiences in a prison where all the wardens were white and where all blacks were prisoners, a place of indescribable brutality, it was through gestures of this nature that we always knew that one day we would be back.

Generations of the World

And this prize, this award, is a source of tremendous inspiration, not only to an individual, but to the men and women right across the length and breadth of our country who decided



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Alumni of the Month



>> Allen Taylor

Dr. Allen Taylor has traveled the globe giving scientific lectures about the biochemical processes that contribute to age-related eye diseases. But when he visited the new Al Quds University campus in Abu Dis, the West Bank, he had more in mind than lecturing. Dr. Taylor was also there to foster the organization he started and directs, STEP-GTP (Science Training Encouraging Peace – Graduate Training Program).

Dr. Taylor conceived of STEP-GTP while a Fulbright scholar in Israel. Deeply disturbed by the inability of governments to create a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Taylor knew he had to act to create change on the ground. What was needed, he concluded, were interpersonal contact and dialogue, not closure and isolation. After meeting with Israelis and Palestinians to see how he could help, Taylor decided to start with what he knew best: science. "Science knows no borders," he said. "I have seen how people from different cultures and worlds come together and bond when confronting a common scientific challenge." And so, Scientific Training Encouraging Peace -- Graduate Training Program, or STEP-GTP, was born. When he returned home, he secured the support of then Tufts University President, Larry Bacow, and then proceeded to get Ben Gurion (Israeli) and Al Quds (Palestinian) universities on board as well. These three academic facilities are STEP-GTP's guiding institutions.

STEP-GTP is a unique person-to-person, cross-border science-training program that will provide pairs of student fellows (one Israeli, one Palestinian from the West Bank or Gaza) with advanced, critical medical and health science education. In addition to enhancing their scientific expertise, the program is designed to encourage the partners to become professional colleagues. Beyond academic training, STEP-GTP will also assist the fellows with job searches at home in the Middle East, while encouraging them to remain mutually supportive after they complete their STEP-fellowship period and as they build their professional lives as teachers, clinicians, or creators of new enterprises.

Growing STEP-GTP has been difficult in the current political climate. But this year, STEP is proud to announce several accomplishments:

- *We have leveraged donations so that, beginning this semester, for every dollar we raise, participating academic institutions are contributing a dollar amount that is equal or more.*
- *A pair of STEP-GTP fellows has been accepted to Ben Gurion University to improve skills for diabetes care. Diabetes is in epidemic proportions in the region.*
- *Two pairs of STEP-GTP students have been accepted into the dental program at Hebrew University, Jerusalem and are beginning their studies this semester.*

- *Another pair of STEP-GTP students is already engaged in their training at Ben Gurion University's public health program.*

Taylor's wife, Kim Kronenberg, has joined the endeavor as Associate Director. The Steering committee has the three presidents of universities, two Nobel Laureates, and other luminaries. Dr. Taylor will be returning with his wife to the region this year to advance STEP-GTP. For further information, please visit the website at: www.step-gtp.org



>> Stephen Cottrell

On June 13, 1966 I was introduced to war about 30 clicks south of Danang, Vietnam. For the nearly half century since, my life has been profoundly influenced by that introduction. The English novelist George Orwell best captured my young "bush" marine experience with his penetrating words: "If the war didn't kill you it was bound to start you thinking."

In 2006, I learned that an Arkansas senator had provided me a vehicle to put my "thinking" into action through the U.S. Department of State Fulbright Scholarship program. Senator J. William Fulbright's philosophy of beating the swords of war into the plowshares of peace through international education exchange was the perfect goodness-of-fit for both my past life and present career at Mississippi State University. Subsequently, I applied and was awarded my first Fulbright grant.

In late 2007 my scholarship took me to Mae Jo University (MJU) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. In some surreal way it was a type of homecoming since I had spent months in that city as a Peace Corps language trainee in 1972. My first impression was how much Chiang Mai had grown. In large part, the city's expansion was the underlying reason for my returning 35 years on. My Fulbright project included providing lectures on the geography of urbanization and exploring with MJU faculty core issues pertaining to Thai urban migration. Specifically, we collaborated on sustainability models that could enhance the quality of life for both the local Thai and surrounding hill tribe communities.

As an agricultural institution, MJU has had a long exchange history with MSU. During my brief tenure, I was introduced to several Thai administrators and faculty who hold MSU degrees and a few students who had spent short stays at MSU studying horticulture. Both faculty and students were very patient with my long forgotten Thai language skills and seemed very impressed that I could remember anything after so long a hiatus. Many of our breaks were spent helping me refresh my vocabulary. The students' eagerness to learn English and my struggle to remember Thai placed this gray-haired "farang" (Thai for foreigner) and his students on a somewhat level playing field as we taught and learned from one another. Some of the students that MSU has hosted since my visit were faces whom I had met during those informal breaks.

In preparing this article many remembrances were stirred by jottings from my well-worn journal. Through dog-eared pages and penciled notes I was warmly reminded of late night chats over cool drinks with Thai colleagues about our different beliefs and how we acquired them. We often ended our evenings agreeing that believing is a lot easier than thinking... but not as much fun! Mr. Orwell and Senator Fulbright would be proud.