

Life After Foreign Service

This document brings together the experiences of U.S. Foreign Service officers, from USAID and other foreign affairs agencies, after they retired from government service.

Post-Government Service Life

Retirement from the Foreign Service or USAID rarely meant slowing down. For many officers, it became a second chapter full of reinvention, mentoring, community building, and sometimes unexpected humor.

Some found themselves busier than ever. Norma Parker had multiple “retirements” after being recalled for missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nicaragua long after her official 1999 retirement. Similarly, Denise Rollins retired in 2014 only to be tapped almost immediately to lead the Africa Ebola Response Unit. Nancy Tumavick spent more than twenty years as an independent consultant after retiring in 1995, seemingly busier than when she was on staff. Stephen Wingert saw even more of the world - having completed 125 assignments in 29 countries after leaving USAID. Tassew Zewdie’s retirement was on paper only as he continued to lead major literacy programs into his seventies.

Others used retirement to build and strengthen communities. John Lovaas started the Reston Farmers Market in Virginia, transforming a parking lot into what he called a ‘village for the day.’ Alexi Panehal settled on Kelley’s Island in Lake Erie, enjoying a life where, in his words, ‘neighbors care more about whether your boat motor works than what you did in government.’ Charles Uphaus retired to Winchester, Virginia, where he farmed and mentored younger agricultural officers. Ambassador James Zumwalt continues to be involved in foreign policy – he works with two organizations that promote strong U.S.-Japan relations.

Teaching and scholarship became central for many. Morton Holbrook, after a career in diplomacy, spent nearly five years teaching in China and Hong Kong. He recalled that his Chinese students really enjoyed a U.S.-style mock trial. Holly Wise found new purpose teaching at Georgetown, inspired by her students’ impatience to change the world. John Westley started teaching in Rome, the location of his last assignment, focusing on economics, the subject of his PhD.

For others, retirement meant reinvention. David Harden entered venture capital in Ramallah. Ken Dekleva, once a psychiatrist analyzing world leaders, reinvented himself as a novelist. Michael Cleverley took pride in his books, one about Larry Thorne, a Finnish-born soldier in WWII that fled to the U.S. and became one of the first Green Berets. John Beed transitioned into executive coaching, diplomacy of a different kind.

Ambassador James Zumwalt continues to be involved in foreign policy – he works with two organizations that promote strong U.S.-Japan relations.

Careers After Government Service

Morton Abramowitz

Post-Government Service: Think tank and advocacy roles; joked about 'getting Bosnia instead of golf'.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 126.

Paige Alexander

Post-Government Service: CEO of The Carter Center (2020–present)

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 37.

Frank Almaguer

Retired: 2002

Post-Government Service: Worked with USAID's Iraq Taskforce, led Sierra Leone evaluation, served on UN Human Rights Commission, studied civilian agencies in conflict

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 227.

Todd Amani

Post-Government Service: Executive Director of Safe Passage in Guatemala (2014–2017); IREX Chief of Party (2017–2019)

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 23.

David Atwood

Post-Government Service: Food Policy Advisor (2011–2019), then volunteer with Bread for the World (2020–2021).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 80.

J. Brian Atwood

Dean, University of Minnesota (2002–2010); Chair, OECD DAC (2010–2012); Senior Fellow at Watson Institute (2015–present).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 112.

Frederick “Rick” Barton

Lecturer at Princeton (2001), senior fellow at CSIS (2002–2009), Ambassador to the UN Economic and Social Council (2009), Assistant Secretary for State's CSO bureau (2011–2014).

Later: published Peace Works (2018), supported development initiatives in Haiti, and worked with CRED Foundation in Chicago.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 90.

John Beed

Post-Government Service: Moved into tech sector; international business roles

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 102.

Robert J. Berg

After leaving USAID (1981), became a senior fellow at the Overseas Development Council, taught at Michigan State, and worked with UNESCO, UNICEF, and UN Economic Commission for Africa.

Leadership roles in the Society for International Development, Alliance for Peacebuilding, and the World Academy of Art and Science.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 103.

Margaret Bonner

Post-Government Service: worked with nonprofits and education-focused programs.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 93.

Gerald Britan

Became independent consultant in anthropology, evaluation, and education.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 48.

Stephen Callahan

Continued as consultant for USAID and Peace Corps.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 155.

Charles Stuart Callison

Worked on major economic reform projects as Chief of Party (Egypt, Indonesia, Philippines). Later Senior Economist in USAID's EGAT Bureau (2008–2015).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page XXX.

Katherine Canavan

Post-Government Service: Senior Mentor in military exercises, board member (Cox Foundation, AAD, NWC Alumni), and local history museum docent.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 158.

Dennis Carroll

Founded and led the Global Virome Project, continued as global health consultant.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 39.

Peter & Lucille Chaveas

Post-retirement: lectures, advisory roles, and civic engagement; Lucille won the Avis Bohlen Award.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 159.

Cynthia Clapp-Wincek

Worked as an independent consultant (MSI and evaluation projects), Director of USAID's Office of Evaluation (2011–2015), and later returned to consulting (2015–present).

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 81.

Donald Clark

Continued short-term USAID assignments and analysis work.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 49.

Douglas Clark

Retired in 1994, then continued consulting for Gore-Mubarak Commission in Egypt and supporting Water User Associations.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 118.

Michael Cleverley

Post-Government Service: Authored book available on Kindle

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 291.

Charles Cobb

Businessman and philanthropist; served on numerous boards (Wilson Center, Hoover Institution, CFR, etc.).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 59.

Sue McCourt Cobb

Practiced law at Greenberg Traurig; later served as Florida Secretary of State and earlier as Ambassador to Jamaica (2001–2005). Also held leadership roles in finance, law, and Disney.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 77.

Daniel Crocker

Post-retirement, became Director of the Dean Rusk International Studies Program at Davidson College (2022–).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 16.

Owen Cylke

Post-Government Service: President of the Association of Big Eight Universities, Deputy Director of US-Asia Environmental Partnership, work with Tata Energy Research Institute.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 90.

Thomas Davis

Post-Government Service: writing, historical reflection, family pursuits.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 94.

Ken Dekleva

Post-Government Service: Became a novelist after career as psychiatrist

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 29.

Paul De Lay

Retired in 2013, then worked as a global health consultant, continuing HIV/AIDS policy and program work.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 20.

Dirk Dijkerman

Post-Government Service: OECD Special Advisor, USAID Ebola Coordinator, and board member, Korean International Cooperation Agency.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 75.

David Eckerson

Retired in 1998, then consulted on program design and evaluation in Africa, later settled in Chapel Hill, NC.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 107.

Stephen Engelken

Retired after senior postings; remained engaged in academic, policy, and community activities.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 161.

Lloyd Feinberg

Post-Government Service: advocacy, humanitarian causes, and volunteerism.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 41.

Mark Feldman

Became a partner at Bingham McCutchen LLP in Washington, DC, focusing on international law; also taught and wrote extensively.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 141.

Susan Fine

Retired in 2019 but helped set up USAID's new mission in Uzbekistan and continued advisory work.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 128.

Lauri Fitz-Pegado

Worked in public relations and strategic communications with Hill & Knowlton, then as a partner at Livingston Group. Active in arts and philanthropy.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 83.

Edward Gabriel

After serving as U.S. Ambassador to Morocco (1997–2001), Gabriel entered private business in 2001. He had previously founded and led lobbying and consulting ventures such as the Madison Public Affairs Group and the Concord Company, and post-Foreign Service he continued in similar private-sector roles, particularly involving international business and energy.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 72.

Paula Goddard

Retired from USAID in 2000 and became an anti-corruption consultant (2000–2003), working in Armenia and other countries.

Later became Vice President at ARD/TetraTech (2003–2018), managing major international development projects, including work in Colombia, and focusing on change management and localization.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 45.

David Harden

Post-Government Service: Venture capital in Ramallah; mentoring startups

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 67.

Morton Holbrook

Post-Government Service: Taught in China and Hong Kong after career in diplomacy

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 106.

Thomas Hull

Post-Government Service: Warburg Professor of International Relations at Simmons College.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 206.

Scott Kilner

Retired in Palo Alto, active in academic/policy writing and community activities.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 106.

Irene Koek

Post-Government Service (2022–): independent consultant in global health, serving on non-profit boards.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 41.

James Kunder

Founded consulting firm Kunder/Reali Associates, VP at Save the Children, senior fellow at GMF, then returned to USAID as senior leader. Post-2007: consultant and advisor on development policy.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 53.

John Lovaas

Post-Government Service: Founded Reston Farmers Market; hosted public access TV show

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 78.

Benjamin Martin

After his labor attaché work abroad, Martin returned to the U.S. labor movement.

He worked as a field representative for the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) in the Midwest until around 1960.

Later, he pursued academic and policy training through a Ford Foundation fellowship, specializing in Japan and India, and stayed active in labor affairs and international labor relations

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 30.

Andrew Maxey

Retired in 2007, then returned for PSC assignments (Iraq, Gaza, Yemen, Honduras). Worked as FSI instructor (2015–2020). Since 2019: Executive Director, Marie Maxey Foundation.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 116.

Richard Miles

Retired: 2005 after ambassadorships in Georgia, Bulgaria, and Azerbaijan.

Post-Government Service: Consulting, speaking, and writing.

A striking anecdote: on the very day he retired, he went to buy a vacuum cleaner part, impressed the shopkeeper with his knowledge, and was offered a job as a vacuum cleaner repairman — he joked it was a satisfying alternative career he might have taken

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 290.

Ambassador Richard Moose

After leaving the State Department in 1981, Moose worked in the private sector, first at Shearson-Lehman Brothers and later as a Senior Vice President at American Express, focusing on international debt rescheduling and infrastructure issues.

He returned to government in the 1990s as Under Secretary of State for Management (1993–1996).

After his final resignation in 1996, he joined the Center for Naval Analysis, working on government efficiency studies

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 145.

Gary Newton

Retired from USAID in 2011 after serving as Mission Director in Namibia.

Post-retirement, he became Senior Advisor at Save the Children (2013–2014), Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service (2015–2017), and later Senior Director for Policy at Whole Child International (2017–2019).

He also held multiple board memberships and volunteer positions, including with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute and Retrak (supporting street children).

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 83.

Wayne Nilsestuen

Retired in 2013, briefly recalled in 2018 to Paraguay. Post-retirement: community and personal projects.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 57.

Walter North

Retired in 2016 after ambassadorships. Post-retirement: active in teaching, mentoring, and community service in Massachusetts.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 118.

Alexi Panehal

Post-Government Service: Settled on Kelley's Island in Lake Erie; community and family life focus

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 115.

Norma Parker

Retired: 1999

Post-Government Service: Recalled for missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nicaragua after official retirement

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life discussions start on page 21 and 33.

Laurie Phipps

Began in the Foreign Service, later transferred to Civil Service, and retired from the State Department after serving at the United Nations and in multilateral affairs.

Post-retirement, she continued working as a consultant and trainer in multilateral negotiations, especially on UN issues.

She also engaged in academic guest lecturing and volunteer work

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 64.

Cecilia Pitas

Retired 2008, continued contract work until 2016. Post-2016: mentoring and HR reflections.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 43.

Donald L. Pressley

After retiring from USAID in 2006, Donald Pressley worked for Deloitte Consulting, where he helped build their international development practice. He later joined the board of directors for Fintrac, an agricultural development firm, and engaged in consulting assignments for USAID, including time in Afghanistan

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 43.

Curt Reintsma

Curt Reintsma retired from the USAID Foreign Service in 2012 but continued working extensively afterward. From 2013 to 2022, he served with USAID's Bureau for Food Security, leading initiatives such as public-private partnerships (including with Starbucks), innovative procurement actions, and agricultural/climate programs. His second career focused on advancing Feed the Future and public-private partnership strategies.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 98.

Timothy Resch

After retirement, Tim Resch remained deeply involved in development and conservation. He co-founded and led professional associations, including the USAID Alumni Association and the Society for International Development–Washington. He continued to work on forestry and natural resource management issues and advised on community-based natural resources programs

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 32.

Denise Rollins

Retired: 2014

Post-Government Service: Led Africa Ebola Response Unit after retirement; later advisory/mentoring roles

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 105.

Michael Schneider

Post-Government Service: Teaching at American University; academic consulting

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 112.

Gerald W. Scott

Retired ambassador; Post-Government Service life focused on writing, speaking, and community engagement.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 76.

Andrew Sisson

Retired 2022; now focused on mentoring and outdoor/community activities in North Carolina.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 128.

Peter Tomsen

Wrote The Wars of Afghanistan, and active as a lecturer, commentator, and policy advisor on South and Central Asia.

Read more in his oral history: Part 1 [here](#) and part 2 [here](#). Unfortunately, there is little discussion of his post-foreign service life.

Nancy Tumavick

Retired from USAID in 1995 but continued to work in international development.

From 1995–2018, she worked as an independent consultant, specializing in program evaluation, monitoring, and social science research.

She also held assignments with organizations such as World Bank, UN agencies, and NGOs, extending her USAID expertise well into her retirement years.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 58.

Charles Uphaus

Retired from USAID in 2000s.

Afterward, he moved to Winchester, Virginia, and worked with the USAID New Entry Program, mentoring and training new agricultural specialists.

His retirement activities also included farming and community engagement in Virginia.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 42.

Paul Wackerbarth

Post-Government Service: teaching, mentoring, writing, and community engagement.

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 177.

John Westley

Post-Government Service: Research at IFPRI and publishing on development economics

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 45.

Stephen Wingert

Retired: 1995

Post-Government Service: Consulting practice; 125 assignments in 29 countries

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 44.

Holly Wise

Post-Government Service: Teaching at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service.

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 68.

Tassew Zewdie

Retired: 2002

Post-Government Service: CARE, Creative Associates; literacy program leadership

Read more in her oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 18.

Ambassador James Zumwalt

Retired: 2017

Post-Government Service: Non-resident senior fellow, writer on U.S.-Asia relations, consulting, speaking

Read more in his oral history [here](#). Post-retirement life begins on page 327.