

Foreign correspondence

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS TRAVEL THE GLOBE

By Linda Schmidt

“I remember how I felt the first time I stood across the counter from a woman at the market, mute, because I couldn’t remember how to ask for cucumbers in Bulgarian,” says Elizabeth Setzer ’06. As one of three alumnae selected for the prestigious Fulbright Student Program this year, Setzer is studying at the Academy of Music, Dance, and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Not surprisingly, language has been a consistent challenge in her first few months abroad. Sometimes even the most innocent exchange can lead to surprising results: “Another day, I meant to ask for mushrooms (*gubi*), and by mistake I used the word *gumi*, which is slang for condoms!” Luckily, the consequences of such mistakes are less than dire. Setzer says, “I’ve learned to laugh in these situations. Generally, the people

I’ve encountered appreciate my efforts in learning Bulgarian.”

Her musical fluency, however, is fully acknowledged. “When I first arrived, the Bulgarian musicians were doubtful a bubbly American could sing their folk songs, which require incredible breathing stamina and are full of complex melodic ornaments,” Setzer says. “But the first time I sang for my teacher, Professor Svetla Stanilova, she responded, ‘You have a Bulgarian voice!’ Although I am American, I feel Bulgarian folk music in my soul.” Self-taught in Bulgarian folk music harmonies, rhythms, and dissonance, Setzer now performs regularly with Phillipopoly, a choir of academy singers led by Stanilova.

Setzer’s Fulbright experience has also broadened her world beyond her



Bulgarian friends and teachers. “I’ve made friends with international students from Turkey, Greece, and China. Every day I’m grateful for the opportunity to learn about life in other parts of the world, to understand the peculiar contexts of each culture and society, and to see connections between these—this blows my mind!”

To hear Setzer’s music and find links to Svetla Stanilova and the Phillipopoly choir, check out www.myspace.com/elizabethsetzer.

TWELVE HUNDRED MILES NORTH, Phoebe Connell is working with Sweden’s Center for Health Equity Studies of Stockholm University (CHESS) and the Karolinska Institute. The risk of venturing to an unknown destination in a foreign country has paid off well for her: “Everyone here has been very welcoming and warm. I had not met my primary advisor, Ilona Koupil, or anyone at CHESS for that matter, before coming here. I feel incredibly lucky that I ended up at this wonderful place with such an open, generous, and encouraging adviser.” A 2007 graduate of the post-baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program at Mills, Connell is working with her adviser on a study of the effects of the severe starvation that occurred during the siege of Leningrad in World War II on later risk for cancer.

But all work and no play leads to a dull year, and Connell has taken advantage of her situation. “All of the U.S. Fulbright grantees in Sweden got to attend the Nobel Prize ceremony,” she reports. “Sadly, we did not get to see Al Gore, but the ceremony



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—Phoebe Connell, Sweden



was incredibly lavish and formal, with the king and queen presenting the prizes. It's truly the Academy Awards of Sweden."

Local cuisine has been another pleasant discovery, she says. "The food here is incredible and fresh. I eat way too much salmon—my favorite dish is *rimmad lax*—and I'm not a huge herring fan, but I'm working on trying to appreciate the huge variety of preparations that are offered: salted, pickled, marinated, anything you can think of, really."

"THE MOST BASIC WAY TO PUT IT is that I study rocks," says Charis Boke '06, who is spending the year in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley conducting anthropological research on the practice of aniconic worship, in which an object or area, as opposed to a figurative image, is venerated as a deity. "The majority of shrines I'm looking at are, in fact, rocks, although there are other kinds of anicon, such as spots on the ground or holes in a wall," she explains. Temples of all sorts include mounds of *prasad*—food that has been offered to the gods by previous worshippers. "In Dakshinkali, I spent my days sitting in the temple there—and being fed *prasad*. *Prasad* represents a way to take the divine into your innermost self. All day, I ate apples, coconuts, bananas," Boke says. "If that's any measure of faith, I'm truly holy now."

Boke is affiliated with Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu and spends some of her time in the country's villages, where, since the Maoist rebellion, people have been scraping along with

the bare minimum. "Maoist cadres passing through villages demanded money, food, and shelter—or even made villagers carry wires for bombs. Sometimes they threatened harm, and sometimes they killed people for disobeying. Many men have moved to Kathmandu, away from their families, homes, and fields, to find work," says Boke. She would like to spend more of her time in rural areas but, because of ongoing political tensions, embassy permission is required for Fulbright scholars to travel outside the Kathmandu Valley.

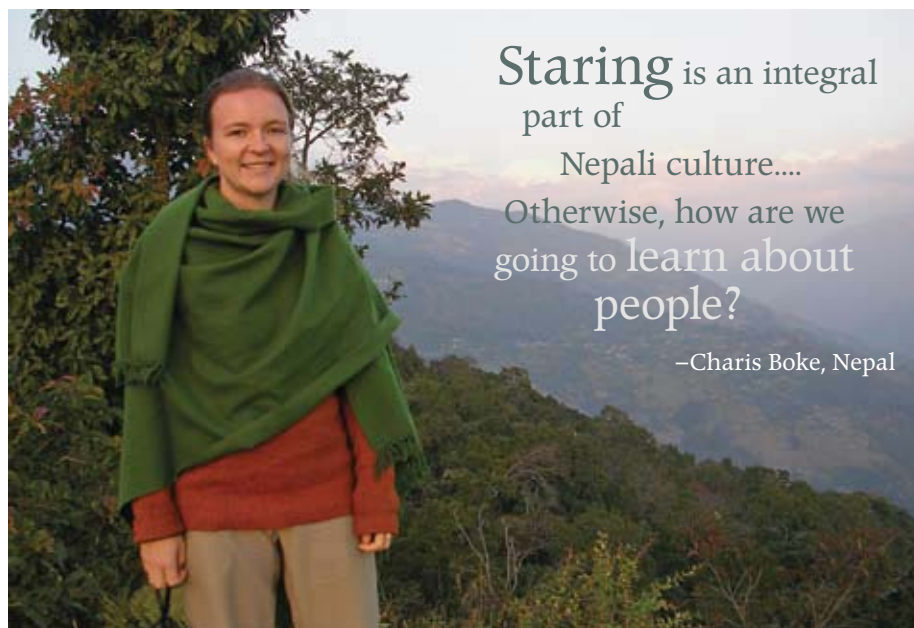
The country's political situation has been difficult, but life in Nepal also has brought less risky cultural adjustments. "Staring is an integral part of Nepali culture. In villages in particular, when anyone walks by it is an occasion to stop work in the field, stand up, and look for as long as desired. Otherwise, my Nepali friends reason, how are we going to learn about people?" Boke says. "I still find myself occasionally disconcerted by

being stared at—there are some aspects of our own internal cultures that we can never get away from."

THE FULBRIGHT STUDENT PROGRAM, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, selects recipients based on academic merit and leadership potential. Mills has been recognized for two years in a row by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as a leading producer of Fulbright scholars; Boke, Connell, and Setzer are among approximately 1,500 award recipients chosen for 2007–08.

These three scholars are unanimous in their praise for the College and its Fulbright committee: David Bernstein, professor of music; Wah Cheng, associate professor of history; Anne-Marie Choup, associate professor of government; and chair Christian Marouby, professor of French and francophone studies.

"The Fulbright has been a huge and meaningful experience for me," says Connell. "I'm grateful to J. William Fulbright (whose wife, still alive, we wrote a Christmas card to at our post-Nobel dinner) and especially to Christian Marouby and the other Fulbright advisors at Mills who helped make this possible."



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—Charis Boke, Nepal

Alumnae awards recognize **STRONG, PROUD WOMEN**

The sun shone brightly on the honorees at the first Alumnae Awards ceremony, presented by the Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) on October 13 during Reunion weekend. Following a rainy Friday, which moved the event from a flooded Toyon Meadow to the garden setting of Reinhardt Alumnae House, some 170 alumnae gathered for lunch to laud three exemplary women who have provided extraordinary service to the world and to the College.



Deborah Santana '97 (above), recipient of the Distinguished Alumna Award, has contributed significantly to improving the human condition and serving society. An effective and dynamic philanthropist and humanitarian, Santana is a founder of the Milagro Foundation, which since 1998 has provided more than \$2 million in grants to organizations serving children and youth in the areas of health, education, and the arts. Through her work with Artists for a New South Africa, she helps those who are battling the AIDS pandemic in Africa. In addition, Santana has demonstrated a strong commitment to mentoring young girls and women, preventing youth from dropping out of school, and advocating for those citizens whose lives were devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

"Mills College offered me a strength and fire for life that has propelled me forward," said Santana. "The desire to give back is really a selfish one. What could

be more fulfilling than to wake up each morning knowing that I have an opportunity to reach out and hold hands with those in need?"

In recognition of 65 years of tireless service, **Jane Cudlip King '42** received the inaugural Outstanding Alumna Volunteer Award. Many know King as the host of her legendary walking tour of campus, presented each year during Reunion, but this outstanding Mills woman has served on campus and in several AAMC branches for more years and in more positions than any other living alumna. King has been a key organizer of the Palo Alto Area Mills College Club's successful house tour fundraisers, has been a member of the Board of Governors for much of the past four decades, and has served as Alumna Trustee from 1975 to 1983. She has been active in student recruitment, a guiding force in the development of the AAMC bylaws, and a valued contributor to the *Quarterly*.

With typical sparkling wit, King noted the irony of her achievement. As an undergraduate, she and her classmates spied on the AAMC Board of Governors meetings in Mills Hall. "They were at least 35 years old—and you know that's an old woman—they all wore brown suits, and we could see that they wore sensible shoes," King recounted. "We all took solemn oaths that we would never, no never, have anything to do with these women with their deplorable fashion sense; we would never be active alumnae. It was a solemn oath—and I betrayed it."



Alumna Trustee Susan Brown Penrod '71 and Jane Cudlip King '42

Thomasina Woida '80 was also honored with an Outstanding Alumna Volunteer Award. A resumer and English major at Mills, Woida went on to law school and became a civil litigator. She first began her service to the College as a phone-a-thon caller, then became class agent. Soon she was invited to become a member of the Reunion Committee, a role she has ably filled for nearly a decade. Woida also provided solid leadership during her 2004–2007 term as AAMC president. Woida was unable to attend the ceremony; speaking on her behalf, Ramona Lisa Smith '01, MBA '02, said, "I am honored and humbled to receive this award for what I really enjoy doing: volunteering."

Save September 18–21, 2008, for this year's Reunion, which celebrates class years ending in three and eight. Alumnae from all years are invited!

Call for 2008 Award Nominations

The Alumnae Association is seeking candidates for the following awards:

- The **Distinguished Achievement Award** for distinction in professional fields, arts, sciences, and public affairs;
- The **Outstanding Volunteer Award** for extraordinary commitment and service in promoting the goals of the AAMC and the College;
- The **Recent Graduate Award** for volunteer efforts that exemplify a spirit of caring and community to the AAMC and the College. Alumnae/i within 15 years of graduation may be considered for this award.

Candidates must be able to attend the award ceremony at Reunion, September 18–21, 2008. Mills alumnae/i may nominate candidates, and alumnae/i who attended Mills as degree candidates are eligible for consideration. Nominations may not include current Board of Governors members, current members of the Mills Board of Trustees, or members of the current Awards Committee.

Please send nominations with information about each candidate's achievements and qualifications to: Chair, AAMC Awards Program, Alumnae Association of Mills College, P.O. Box 9998, Oakland, CA 94613. Also, please include your name, phone number, address, and email address.

Nominations must be received no later than May 19, 2008.

For more information, email the AAMC at aamc@mills.edu or AAMC President Anita Aragon Bowers at AnitaAragonBowers@alumnae.mills.edu. Details are also available on the web at www.mills.edu/alumnae or by calling 510.430.2110.

NINE LADIES DANCING



A Reunion gathering celebrated Mills' deep connection with dance pioneer Katherine Dunham and honored several alumnae who have studied or performed with Dunham troupe members and who continue to teach Dunham Technique.

The following alumnae (pictured left to right in the photo above) were honored for their work in carrying forward the Dunham legacy: **Linda Goodrich**, who became Mills' first MFA graduate in dance in 1982 and now chairs the Theatre and Dance Department at California State University, Sacramento; **Naima Gwen Lewis**, MA '68, who applies Dunham's interests in healing and spirituality in her work to prevent substance abuse and obesity in Atlanta; **Carolyn Himes** '75, MFA '01, a dance educator at Laney College who works with the

Northern California Katherine Dunham Legacy project; **Mary Lois Hudson Sweatt** '60, MA '62, who has been an artistic and educational resource in Dallas, Texas, for more than 40 years. She recently received the Dallas Dance Council Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Also recognized were **Shirley Brown**, MA '72, a former professor and chair of dance at Sacramento City College; **Deborah Brooks Vaughan**, MA '71, artistic director of Dimensions Theater; **Albirda Rose**, MA '73, a teacher at San Francisco State University who has traveled to Brazil as demonstrator and assistant to Katherine Dunham; and **Linda Tregle** '70, MA '74, who teaches dance at several universities and is the founder of the International Dance Studio in Stockton, California.

Elendar Barnes, MA '71, who was unable to attend, is a founder of the Imani Dance and Drum Ensemble; she also serves as chair of the Department of Mass Communication, Creative, Performing Arts and Speech at Medger Evers College in New York City.

The weekend-long festivities further explored the lasting influence of Dunham tradition through a performance of choreographic excerpts on Friday night, October 12 (photo below), and an afternoon of film clips and roundtable discussion.



Elect Your Alumna Trustee

One of the three women described on these pages will be your next Alumna Trustee. Help determine who it will be by casting your ballot—on the inside back cover of this *Quarterly*—now, so that the Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) receives it **by May 9, 2008**.

Serving for three years (July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011) as a full member of both the Mills College Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of the AAMC, this Alumna Trustee will help ensure that alumnae are well represented in the leadership of the College by conveying the views of the AAMC board to the College board. She will join two current Alumnae Trustees—Susan Brown Penrod '71 and Gayle Rothrock '68—and will replace Sharon K. Tatai '80, whose term will end on June 30. The AAMC and College boards are deeply thankful to Ms. Tatai for her committed leadership and look forward to welcoming their newest member.



Lyn Flanigan '65

Lyn Flanigan

Current residence: Honolulu, Hawaii

Mills major: Religion/Asian Studies

Additional education: MA, Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, 1968; JD, William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawaii, 1981.

Student activities: ASMC Judicial Board chair; ASMC social chair; Mary Morse Hall social chair; various other committees and activities.

Employment: Executive director, Hawaii State Bar Association, present; vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary, Hawaiian Airlines, Inc., 1997–2003; senior counsel, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate, 1991–1997; law firm of Goodsell Anderson Quinn & Stifle, 1985–1991; clerkships with U.S. District Court and bankruptcy court judges, 1982–1985; East-West Center program officer, 1968–1982.

Volunteer experience: East-West Center Foundation board of directors, 2003–present; Friends of William S. Richardson School of Law, 2003–present; East-West Center alumni board of directors, 2001–present; YWCA of Oahu board of directors, 2000–present; Red Cross of Hawaii board of directors, 2001–2007; East-West Center board of governors, 1992–2001.

AAMC involvement: Mills alumnae admissions representative; Hawaii Mills Club.

How Mills affected my life: Mills brought diversity into my life, from a small Midwestern town to a multicultural, multiethnic international community. At Mills, I studied Japanese language at UC Berkeley and in Japan. After Mills, I continued cross-cultural studies in Hawaii and in Japan through the federally funded East-West Center (EWC). I married into a Japanese family in Hawaii and had two daughters, who were two and three years of age when I entered law school while continuing to work at the EWC. My lead-

ership experiences at Mills forged my firm belief that I as a woman could be a leader, a parent, an educator, an administrator, a lawyer, a lobbyist, or a community activist. I'm proud that my daughters—now both lawyers—have grown up in a multicultural environment where women are accepted as leaders.

Future of the Alumnae Association and its relationship to the College: Alumni associations serve a critical role in the lives of institutions, as historians and cultural monitors, and in providing informed leadership shaped by shared institutional experiences as well as differing educational and cultural perspectives. As an alumna whose career has focused on international as well as local issues, I bring the vision to students and alumnae to effect positive change at Mills and in their local, national, and international arenas. I know through my experience with alumni associations at the EWC and law school (both of which I attended in the “early” years of the institution) and my service on many boards, that empowered alumni associations, like institutions, grow and change, but continue to provide leadership and vision for the institution.

The future of Mills College: Women are leaders, quietly or overtly. Leadership is critical in our troubled local, national, and global society. In spite of advances by women, we know that we have not achieved parity in our society, and many other societies are far behind. But we also know that alumnae of women's colleges excel in the ranks of women leaders. Mills College must continue to develop professional and leadership programs for women, built on a liberal arts foundation, to develop women who can and do make a difference on every level. Mills College has an exciting mandate and opportunity to develop women leaders for tomorrow.



**Lynette Williams
Williamson '72, MA '74**

Lynette Williams Williamson

Current residence: Suisun City, California

Mills major: English

Additional education: Secondary teaching credential; chartered property casualty underwriter (CPCU), associate degree in management, American Institute for CPCU; diploma in risk and insurance, College of Insurance.

Employment: Over 30 years in property/casualty insurance, including underwriting and internal audit. Current position: director of marketing administration, CSE Insurance Group, Walnut Creek, California, responsible for the marketing division budget, corporate communications, public web site, event planning, and leadership on marketing-involved projects.

Volunteer experience: Calvary Chapel, Solano, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher, 1993–2000 (substitute teacher currently); greeter.

AAMC involvement: *Quarterly* Editorial Board, early 1990s through June 2007; class secretary, 1992–1997; Board of Governors, 2003–June 2007.

How Mills affected my life: Mills taught me to think critically and write well. Equally as important, because of my Mills experience, I am confi-

dent interacting with anyone. Mills reinforced my upbringing that everyone deserves to be treated with respect. In a world that in some ways still says that black people are second-class citizens, Mills professors, College executives, and brilliant students from all over the world treated me with dignity and respect. Being a Mills College graduate has opened many doors, but more importantly, it has given me the courage to walk through them.

Future of the Alumnae Association and its relationship to the College: While this transition period is challenging and sometimes difficult because both the College and AAMC are still assessing and adjusting to a completely new set of rules, I believe that the partnership will be successful. A very simple view of the two organizations is that the College represents the head or the brains, while the AAMC represents the heart; neither can thrive without the other.

The future of Mills College: I expect Mills to continue to offer and maintain programs that foster and educate our future leaders, such as my niece, Amber Williams '10, majoring in political, legal, and economic analysis (PLEA).



Sheryl Wooldridge '77

Sheryl Wooldridge

Current residence: San Leandro, California

Mills major: Sociology

Additional education: MBA 1994, University of Phoenix.

Employment: Senior underwriting officer, Chubb Insurance, 2000–present; part-time instructor in the Business Department, Western Career College, 2005–2006; held several positions, including underwriting specialist and marketing manager, Kemper Insurance, 1985–1998 and 1999–2000; director of product management, CalFarm Insurance, 1998–1999; held underwriting and marketing positions at Hartford Insurance and Transamerica Insurance, 1977–1985.

Volunteer experience: Mentor at-risk teenagers, Big Sisters; tutor, Second Start Literacy Program.

AAMC involvement: I have been involved with the Diversity Committee since its inception and served as chair for one year. I served two terms as a member of the Board of Governors, two terms as a member of the nominating committee, and was part of the search team to hire an executive director for the Alumnae Association. I participated in the 2007 Reunion activities by facilitating a networking workshop.

How Mills affected my life: The environment at Mills was crucial to my development and self-confidence. I don't think a co-educational college would have allowed for the same level of personal development.

Future of the Alumnae Association and its relationship to the College: The Alumnae Association has undergone some structural changes. These changes should be viewed as a positive step towards increasing the fundraising base of both entities. This new structure will improve the programs the Association is able to offer. The combined goal is to attract new students while serving the needs of the alumnae.

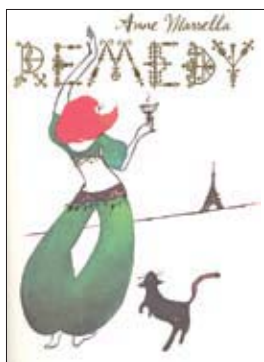
The future of Mills College: My hopes and expectations are that Mills will remain a women's college. Mills will continue to produce leaders. Hillary Clinton is a graduate of a women's college and may be the first female president. Regardless of your political affiliation, this has to be seen as an argument for the necessity of female-only educational institutions. This is an environment that allows women to thrive and enables them to become world leaders.

Bookshelf

From the Ground Up: Grassroots Organizations Making Social Change

Carol Chetkovich and Frances Kunreuther
Cornell University Press, 2006

Mills Public Policy Program Director Carol Chetkovich and Frances Kunreuther, director of the Building Movement Project, began work on *From the Ground Up* while they were colleagues at Harvard University. The book looks at 16 grassroots social change organizations, many of them run by women and people of color, in order to assess the opportunities and challenges of building a progressive social movement around the work these groups are already doing to provide direct services and advocacy in their communities. —PW



Remedy

Anne Marsella '86
Portobello Books, 2007

Mix a heaping helping of *Bridget Jones' Diary* with a dose of the *Lives of the Saints*, throw in a dollop of *Cinderella*, and you might end up with *Remedy*, the story of a young fashion journalist, devoted Catholic, and hopeless romantic living in modern-day Paris. This is Marsella's debut novel, and the author clearly enjoys playing with language to challenge the reader's vocabulary, introduce a host of quirky characters, and pursue the goal of True Love. —LS

Homelands: Women's Journeys across Race, Place, and Time

Patricia Justine Tumang, MFA '06, and
Jenesha de Rivera, MFA '07 (eds.)
Seal Press, 2006

Twenty-eight women examine taken-for-granted notions of American life and their—or their ancestors'—real or imagined homelands, including the Philippines, India, Korea, the tribal land of the Dakota, Norway, the American South, Tonga, and even homelessness. In the process, they celebrate their unique identities while negotiating complicated questions of belonging, memory, race, class, gender, culture, language, religion, exile, and authenticity. Stories by five Mills alumnae are represented: Tumang and de Rivera as well as Leila Abu-Saba, MFA '07, Meeta Kaur, MFA '06, and Erika Martinez, MFA '07. —PW

Together Again: A Creative Guide to Successful Multigenerational Living

Sharon Graham Niederhaus '63 and John L. Graham
M. Evans, 2007

Informed by interviews with more than 100 people living in multigenerational households, this book argues in favor of extended family living and provides practical solutions to many common problems. Chapters devoted to caregiving benefits for both young and old, design and remodeling considerations for privacy and accessibility, financial and legal planning, and how to communicate successfully are useful for the growing number of families incorporating twenty-somethings returning to the nest, aging parents, or others outside the nuclear family definition.



Niederhaus presented the book to Congresswoman Barbara Lee '73 (above) in July 2007 when she was in Washington, D.C., to speak at a conference on multigenerational living. —LS

Tough Little Beauties: Selected Essays and Other Writings of Stephanie Mills

Stephanie Mills '69
Ice Cube Press, 2007

Stephanie Mills rocked the boat when she spoke out against having children in her 1969 graduation address. This collection of essays repeats her concerns regarding overpopulation and human impact on the environment but also discusses spirituality, activism, politics, and the art of living fully within your own space and time. Mills' writing is simultaneously transcendent and grounded, thoughtful and funny, decisive yet questioning—and definitely worth reading. —LS

Letters Home to San Francisco from Occupied Germany, 1945–1946

Helga Wolski Dudman '42
Carta Jerusalem, 2007

Shortly after graduating from Mills, Helga Wolski landed a job with the U.S. Treasury Department. Being fluent in German, she was sent as an interpreter assigned to a "denazification" unit and to the work of preparing evidence for the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. These letters to her parents and grandparents combine the intrigue of investigating the financial misdeeds of German banks with first-hand observations of a war-ravaged country—all presented with the insights and enthusiasm of youth. —LS