

The Lois Roth Endowment Keeps Me in the Cultural Exchanges Game

The following is an excerpt from an article that Anne Barbaro published in the newsletter of the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association in 2014.

Many PDAA members will remember Lois Roth, a legend in cultural diplomacy, and someone who continues to be a model for the energetic, creative, passionate officer who brings that full measure of humanity to cultural diplomacy. When I joined USIA in 1983, Lois was widely admired for the work she did in Centers Management and later as head of Arts America, but also for her professional activism in AFSA and the Women's Action Organization. She worked to deepen the impact of cultural programs as well as to contribute to the professional development of the people who conducted them.

In the last year I have had the privilege to serve the cause that bears her name, the Lois Roth Endowment. In 1987, the year after Lois succumbed to breast cancer in the prime of her life, her husband, Dick Arndt, also a prominent USIA cultural diplomat, established this endowment, thanks to the generous contributions of many people who knew and loved Lois.

I became aware of the endowment through my dear friend, and former boss (as CAO Paris), Mary Gawronski. Mary mentioned that the endowment was looking for a new Board Secretary, and, by the way, for new perspectives on how to keep the endowment fresh and relevant to cultural diplomats today. The LRE exists to deepen cultural exchanges through a network of partners to help fund academic research, encourage translations to and from English, and, in collaboration with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State to recognize outstanding cultural diplomats.

After my 24-year run, first as a USIA Officer and later in Public Diplomacy at State, working with the Lois Roth Endowment has allowed me to continue to be involved with cultural exchanges and to support some of the many wonderful people who make them happen. For those of you who knew Lois, and for those of you who may only have known *of* her, I would encourage all PDAA members to have a look at our website and our wide range of projects and consider becoming involved as well.