

“A Gill of All Trades”

GILLIAN JACOT-GUILLARMOD
Foreign Service National employee, Pretoria, 1964-2001

*This interview with Gillian Jacot-Guillarmod—an exemplary Foreign Service national staff member at the US Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa during the apartheid years—was conducted by US Foreign Service officer Dan Whitman on March 5, 2009. We are grateful to him and SUNY Press for allowing us to post this longer interview on our website; a shorter version will appear in Whitman’s book of interviews entitled *Outsmarting Apartheid* (SUNY Press, 2014). Please see the glossary at the end for clarification of acronyms.*

GJG: I was born in Cape Town in 1942, and I joined the embassy there in 1964. And I was there for five years until I left to come to Pretoria to be married.

DW: *Now, you say embassy; in those days...*

GJG: It was USIS. We had an American consulate general [in Cape Town] and I was with the tiny little USIS office.

DW: *Tell me what you can remember of the things you did during those five years and what was it like in Cape Town at that time, with the previous system.*

GJG: Well, it was horrible. I have to say when I joined there I really wasn’t aware of quite how horrible it was. My being with the embassy affected my outlook on life.

I had the great privilege of being a “Gill of all trades.” Because we had a librarian and then there was Gill: I did the press placement and I did the film library. I used to take movies into the townships in a big old station wagon and screen films.

DW: *Sixteen millimeter? The old threading-the-machine and all that?*

GJG: And the sprockets would break and have to stick. There were two movies that were really popular: *The Golden Age of Comedy* and the other one was *Years of Lightning, Day of Drums*.

DW: *Now, when you mention townships, I know there were restrictions.*

GJG: Yes. I went usually to Guguletu.

DW: *Guguletu. Were there restrictions on people classified as whites in going into the townships?*

GJG: Yes, but I was in a “dip” [diplomatic] car and I never, ever had a problem.

I was young and blonde and mini-skirted in those days. The press stuff would all just land up in some news editor’s drop box and not get used. So I used to go up to the *Die Burger* and the *Argus* and the *Cape Times* and then get to meet people.

DW: *The local papers.*

GJG: And it definitely did improve placement [of our announcements]. I’m not saying that was because I was young and blonde; I think it was the personal, actually handing it over to somebody.

DW: *The “Gill of all trades.” Now, at the beginning, Gill, you were saying that it was horrible. In what way? And when did you find out about this?*

GJG: Well, it was just because black people were denied everything.

DW: *You said at the beginning this was something you were not aware of.*

GJG: No, I think I was just blind.

DW: *In your work with the U.S. Consulate, how did this become apparent to you?*

GJG: For the first time, the people that I encountered were black people. Before that, all the black people I had met all had menial jobs. They worked in the streets or in people’s homes.

DW: *What type of black person did you start to meet?*

GJG: Educators and church people.

DW: *So they knew from the beginning that they were welcome in the Center?*

GJG: Yes.

DW: *And as you gradually got to know them, did you have a sense of what their future possibilities were, relative to one other?*

GJG: I can remember David [Wilson] describing to me how he saw South Africa: the white people were at the front of the river, and then there were the colored people, and then there were the Indian people, and then the great big black crocodile at the back.

DW: *Through the eyes of the outsiders seeing this for the first time.*

GJG: Yes, yes. I joined in '64 [in Cape Town], and then I recognized some of the names of people who would come in to the office. I'd see Richard Reeves, a famous person, who went and did a master's in literature at Columbia in 1965, people like that.

DW: *And then you met a person named Jacot.*

GJG: Yes. I met him the same year that I joined the embassy; 1964 was my year.

DW: *Because that's the name you now bear, we have to spend a moment finding out what it was that took you from Cape Town to Pretoria.*

GJG: A wedding ring lured me to the land of the Voortrekker Monument. Nothing else would have. When people used to come into the library and say, “We hear you're leaving; where are you going?” I'd cry and say, “Pretoria.” Because Pretoria had such a reputation for conservatism. When I got there, I found that it deserved its reputation.

DW: *So love and marriage triumphed over your sense of place. Do you remember the day you left Cape Town?*

GJG: Well, I remember the little farewell party that they had for me. I had a lot of friends. I was very happy, and I had had a couple of wonderful experiences when I was there. Bobby Kennedy came to South Africa.

DW: *To the University of Cape Town (UCT).*

GJG: To UCT. We worked for him, and I can remember going into the consul general's office and seeing Bobby's aides sitting with their feet up on the desks. I was appalled to see that.

DW: *Now, you must know this is too historic a moment for us to pass over lightly. You must help us remember the famous visit where he spoke at UCT.*

GJG: He spoke, yes, and we all went up. I had a teeny little car; I had Jacot's little gray Vauxhall. We followed the cavalcade. There were what seemed like thousands of people outside in the grounds, and we just parked in the middle of the road on the UTC campus and went up into the main hall.

DW: *So you heard the speech?*

GJG: Yes, yes, yes, I was there, yes. I was so overwhelmed by the whole occasion and just being there.

DW: *What was overwhelming? Was it him? Was it the group?*

GJG: It was also him. Don't forget we were in the presence of the man who everybody thought would be the next president of the United States of America.

DW: *Was it a big story the next day?*

GJG: Oh huge, huge. Banner headlines. He went to Pretoria after Cape Town, I think, and there were pictures of him walking around Waterkloof shaking hands with domestic workers and gardeners and that, you know.

DW: *So he made a point to...*

GJG: So he made a point of acknowledging the black citizens of South Africa, yes.

DW: *Okay. Well, let's get you to Pretoria. 19...*

GJG: '69. For two years I was the FSN (Foreign Service National) assistant to the administrative counselor, and I didn't have nearly enough to do. I was complaining about that and, after awhile, I would stand in when people were on vacation. It was very valuable. I did a stint in the general services office and I got to appreciate what those good folks do. We tend to complain about them, but they had their schedule for the day, and then the ambassador's wife phones because the loo's broken, and they have to drop everything.

DW: *We complain when things go wrong, but we never notice when things go right.*

GJG: From day one, it was just wonderful.

DW: Can you remember the first day or the first weeks or the first month?

GJG: I remember my first mistake. I had great respect for Mr. Peterson. He was very, very nice. There wasn't a cultural attaché at this stage. Jerry Prillaman was yet to come, so there was me and there was the American secretary and there was the RPMAO.

My mistake was the grant. The IV [International Visitors] grantee was the late Stan Kweyama, who was with the Citrus Exchange. I got a phone call from Mr. Peterson one Saturday morning saying, "Oh, Gill, there's a cable in from Washington, and we haven't said when Stan's arriving." I hadn't sent an ETA cable. I said, "Oh, Mr. Peterson, I'm so sorry; I don't want to get you into trouble." I came rushing in and sent off the cable.

DW: Rushing in?

GJG: Yes, I often rushed in on weekends.

DW. Well, that doesn't sound like a mortal sin.

GJG: I was quite conscientious.

DW: I see you looking at a list...

GJG: These are some of the IVs I [suggested be sent to the U.S.] that year.

DW: Do any names leap off the page?

GJG: Oh yes, Sheena Duncan, national president of the Black Sash. Wilki, who's still a huge name promoting mathematics. He was really the black expert in the field of mathematics, and you know from your experience here there's a shortage of qualified black and white mathematicians that got much worse.

DW: And scientists.

GJG: Sam Motsuenyane, the head of NAFCOC, was a lovely man. He brings back lots of happy memories for me because he used to come into USIS, even though he didn't have an office or anything. I would make phone calls for him for appointments. He ultimately got an honorary doctorate; he is Dr. Motsuenyane. I sort of acted as his...

DW: You were the intermediary.

GJG: He was a wonderful, wonderful man, yes.

DW: Okay. Now, at what point did you meet these folks? In some cases, were these people that you brought to the attention of your American colleagues?

GJG: Occasionally, but only after I'd been there for a while. I give great credit to my colleagues in the embassy for spotting "comers," to use an American expression. So many people who are running South Africa today were identified when they were only ready to be junior staff.

DW: What types of people were spotting these "comers"? Were they South Africans and Americans alike?

GJG: It was more the Americans, because in the State Department there weren't too many FSNs in the political section.

DW: *So the political section people were out and seeing things?*

GJG: They were seeing things. Exposure.

DW: *From what you just said, your preference, your greater pleasure, was in sending those who did not have the established credentials of being in the government, but who were thinking about the country's future. Now, the famous F. W. de Klerk visit to the U.S....*

GJG: Yes, 1976. He was a member of parliament for Vereeniging in those days when he went.

DW: *Okay. Now, because of his trip to the U.S., he said something like, "Now I understand race relations."*

GJG: Yes, yes. Who knew that he would be the person to release Nelson Mandela?

DW: *So 35 visitors per year were sent to the U.S.; did you notice a gradual shift in demographics from '79 to the '80s and the '90s?*

GJG: It was an unwritten rule that it had to be two-thirds black.

DW: *Whose rule? The U.S.?*

GJG: Very definitely yes, yes. I think it was during the Carter Administration that we started using a policy of two-thirds black, although this was an unwritten law.

DW: *Tell me the role of Operation Crossroads Africa (OCA).*

GJG: OCA was the only racial program that we presented.

DW: *What do you mean by that?*

GJG: It was not possible for a white person to go on an OCA program, but people of all other colors could go.

DW: *We have to mention Bart Rousseve, our late friend from New Orleans, who administered these programs. He came here every year recruiting.*

GJG: In 1973, he sent for Franklin Sonn, who ended up being...

DW: *Franklin Sonn, later ambassador [to the U.S. from South Africa].*

GJG: Yes.

DW: *Was he an IV?*

GJG: No, he was OCA. In 1973. There were four people who went that year. He was the principal of the Peninsula Technikon in those days.

DW: *And then the first ambassador under the Mandela regime.*

GJG: In '94.

DW: *Bart, an African American traveling to South Africa during the apartheid era, once showed me his visa. It said, "Honorary white."*

GJG: Ridiculous.

DW: *That's what it said. Tell me about what you remember of Bart Rousseve and his visits here.*

GJG: I just worshipped the ground he walked on. After he'd been coming for a few years, it was just wonderful; he always used to let me have a party for him when he was visiting. I always got 100 percent acceptance for that because everybody would just come for Bart.

DW: *He came once a year, I think.*

GJG: He came once a year, yes. There's an illness called narcolepsy. He clearly had that, because I used to sit with him on interviews. I ended up doing it with Fulbright, I did it with OCA, and I used to do the program suggestions for IVs. He met with the grantees.

DW: *And the narcolepsy?*

GJG: Bart would nod off in interviews, and I would take over.

DW: *We should mention that Bart died in a car accident when he was driving at night on the Taconic Freeway in New York State. We think he fell asleep; he was driving to Boston.*

GJG: Yes. He'd been to a farewell party that they were having for him before he went off to join the cloth.

DW: *Yes, 1994, the year that Mandela became president.*

GJG: When he left OCA, he went to work for IIE.

DW: *Yes. And also for African American Institute at some point; AFGRAD something.*

GJG: AFGRAD, yes.

DW: *So he kept coming here. He changed his position in the States, but he kept coming here and working with you as he changed from one organization to the next.*

GJG: Yes. He was very kind, because he used to say to me, "Oh Gill, what can I do to repay you? And in 1988, I said, "There is something you can do." I had a whole lot of South Africans studying in New York at that stage, and he let me cook them a meal in his apartment on 121st Street in Harlem. I walked from 42nd Street to 121st Street, and then I went and did shopping and cooking. They all came along. It was a most marvelous evening.

DW: *So you cooked a meal for South African visitors in Bart's home.*

GJG: A chicken dinner in Bart's home, yes. And many of those, the Fulbrighters and the OCAs and the AFGRADs, became friends also. People met who hadn't met other than that. Bart was such a catalyst in bringing people together.

DW: *At times, South Africans were greeted with suspicion by the other participants.*

GJG: I experienced it myself.

DW: *Gill, tell us what you remember of the difficulty in integrating black South African participants into African programs in the U.S.*

GJG: When I went on my FSN orientation program in 1979, I was on the same program as Deva [Govindsamy] and Ron Hendrickse. It was for all cultural assistants across Africa. We were a group of about 30, and I was the only white. The rest made it very difficult for Deva and Ron, because the rest of the group was very unhappy that I was there.

DW: *Why?*

GJG: Because I was white.

DW: *It may seem obvious, but...*

GJG: No, because I was white. The guy from Kano, Nigeria, said, "If my government had known you were going to be here, I wouldn't have been allowed to come." And the lady from Liberia, with her Diane von Furstenberg luggage... Ron and I had been in Miami for three days beforehand, and I'd had my hair permed and curly. I'd been in the sun, so I was quite brown, probably browner than Ron. She asked me if I was classified as colored, and I said I was very sorry to tell her, but I was classified white. So they really resented me at first. But by the end of the trip, the same Kano man patted me on my head and told me I was a good woman. And Gilbert from Togo said he was going to take me home to be his South African souvenir.

DW: *Well, let's give you some credit for making people feel at ease. This is something that you've always done supremely well. At that time, black South African IVs were met with extreme suspicion.*

GJG: Because their people thought that they were sellouts.

DW: *Or spies or what have you. They had to prove at a very early stage that they were not. It was quite tense, quite tense.*

GJG: I know that, and let me tell you another little issue. There was a time during the Carter era that the South African government introduced the homeland situation, Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu, etc. Nine times out of ten, they would insist that anybody, if we invited them, travel on their homeland passport.

I found that quite interesting when I listened to my counterparts in other countries. The South African government never dictated to us who we had to invite, unlike in many of the other countries, where you had to go through the ministry of this, that and the other, and there was quite a bit of nepotism.

The South African government never did that, but, on the other hand, they had control by denying an invitee a passport. Then, when the homeland [system] came into being and they insisted that people travel on homeland passports, several blacks refused to travel on these dummy passports.

There were others, like Sej Motau, who coincidentally is now standing as a DA candidate in Pretoria. He went on OCA and he also went and did a Master's in journalism at Berkeley. He was a senior journalist on the *Pretoria News* and he occupied big positions with De Beers in Canada and London, everything. But when we invited him for the first time on OCA, he was told that he could only have a Bophuthatswana homelands passport.

DW: Which was not recognized anywhere outside South Africa.

GJG: Nowhere else in the world, no, no.

DW: So he could not have arrived. He could not have been admitted into the U.S.

GJG: But we gave a special document that the consulate general would then stamp so that the person could get in.

DW: A travel permit.

GJG: A travel permit, yes. Sej said, "I know what I am. I'm not going to be deprived of realizing a dream by somebody giving me a fake document. I will accept it to go." And he went.

DW: So others did refuse.

GJG: A few did. Some said no. They wouldn't travel on it.

DW: It's their loss, perhaps.

GJG: I would think that it was. I did find also that many people who'd been very vehement and said they'd never go to the land of the imperialists were able to come to terms with the decision once they actually had an invitation in their hand. We sent people over for the mutual exchange of ideas, so they were going to influence Americans and Americans were going to influence them.

DW: You mention a phrase which is a very potent and emotional one—"mutual understanding"—which is a phrase used in the Fulbright Hays Act of 1948.

GJG: And which was always part of the letter of invitation.

DW: Injecting myself just for a second, I think that this mutual understanding aspect has taken a secondary place in our exchanges. Share with us your feeling of the importance of "mutual." I mean, it's a leading question now that we're sending text messages and all forms of electronic communication for which there's no real face-to-face feedback. But do you have any reflections on this notion of mutual understanding?

GJG: I mentioned earlier we didn't only send those who liked us; we also sent those who didn't, people like Adriaan Vlok and Jimmy Krueger. If a person had a really narrow mind, there was enough going on in America that was disappointing that they would find it. If they wanted to, they could come back saying, "Oh, you see, it's exactly the same over there." But most times, I think that

people's persuasions were changed. I really do. Maybe not immediately, but I think that it impacted n people, that they were able to see that there was a different way to do this.

DW: I guess it was never codified in a particular policy, but I know the U.S. government tried to show everything and not to conceal anything while visitors were in the U.S., hoping for the best. And as you say, some people had their prejudices and their stereotypes confirmed. Others found some surprises. Would you recommend this to any large country, to have unfettered access? Again, I ask a leading question.

GJG: Yes. Yes, absolutely.

DW: Now, we've talked about OCA, we've talked about International Visitors, writ large; we haven't talked about Fulbright yet.

GJG: No. Let's stick onto short-term ones first, so let's do the CIP.

DW: The Cleveland International Program.

GJG: Oh, just phenomenal, phenomenal. People would go for four months. They were all social workers initially. They'd go for four months, they lived with American host families, and they worked under the guidance of a mentor. It was an internship, but a practical hands-on experience.

And I think why it was so amazing was because in those days, particularly I'm talking about the black social worker, they weren't just social workers. They occupied every single position in the townships that they could. They were fundraisers, they were guidance counselors, they were *in loco parentis*. And their doors were open 24 hours a day to people. They were trained at Fort Hare; that's where the only black school of social work was. That was wonderful, to be able to give people like that an opportunity to go.

DW: What's your sense of how this transformed people, to go off from a township, be in a city in the U.S. for months, and come back?

GJG: That's one of the reasons that the job was so meaningful to me, because I was able to witness people return with a greater sense of their own self worth. I can remember a woman who [came to South Africa on] the OCA program, Dorothy. She was the chairperson of the American Council of Negro Women, I think. We had a multipurpose room, which had all sorts of wonderful things. We had a group of women come together talking, and Miss Dorothy was the keynote address. To be honest, she was no great shakes, but she was the most marvelous catalyst at bringing all these women together.

DW: This was an American who had traveled...

GJG: An African American woman who came as our guest speaker. I didn't do only the outgoing exchanges; I did all the incoming exchanges as well. It was wonderful because I could get the two to mesh together. You'd meet somebody and send them on an exchange program, then you could program with them again when they came back. It worked so well.

That particular day, I can remember an African woman getting up. A white woman had spoken in a rather patronizing way, and the black woman got up and said, "You know, don't you tell me that." And she just spoke, and I was so proud of her.

DW: So what you remember of the value of CIP was that it increased people's self-confidence.

GJG: Yes, but—don't forget the lady that I'm talking about—Joyce was an OCA grantee. I'm saying that all our exchange programs did that; they enabled people to get a sense of their own self worth.

DW: *So that's something you could say generically for all the exchanges?*

GJG: Absolutely, absolutely, yes.

DW: *Before we go on to the Fulbright program, do you have any other comments, other recollections of the short-term visits?*

GJG: Well, CIP closed, and then we had the South African internship program.

DW: *I remember when CIP was put to rest; it would have been in 1993 or '94. I was there at that time, and the comment was, "We've supported them all of these years. Let's give someone else a chance." That was the argument. I was in the room. A truly idiotic decision.*

GJG: And how! And how, because they did wonderful work. I happened to be at a CIP conference in Cleveland and was flying from Cleveland to San Francisco when P.W. Botha made his "Cross the Rubicon" speech. The South African exchange rate and the rand plummeted, never to return.

DW: *Please explain this speech, "Cross the Rubicon."*

GJG: Everybody was expecting him to give some nice enlightened remarks, and he didn't. He just said, "Nobody's going to dictate to us; we'll do whatever we want to do."

DW: *So did it feel as if: on a micro level, things were advancing very nicely partly because of your programs; but on the macro level, you were frustrated?*

GJG: Very, yes, very frustrated. Strange things were happening. During that time, they also changed the laws about the Group Areas Act and the passports. [When it was announced] that people were no longer going to have to abide by the Group Areas Act, I can remember seeing Sheena Duncan, who was the head of the Black Sash, being interviewed on CNN, and her eyes just filled with tears. She said, "Well, if it is true, it's the most marvelous news." And it was true.

DW: *Some of the readers are not familiar with Black Sash. Could you explain Black Sash?*

GJG: It was an organization founded by a bunch of women at the time when the South African government was about to remove the so-called colored people from the voter's roll. These women got up to protest and formed the group. They chained themselves to the fences of the houses of parliament, and they wore a black sash as a sign of mourning. That's how they got their name.

Then they continued; they had branches around the country. They had advice offices, where their members would volunteer their services, and people would come in. It was usually for things like people having been evicted because they [they didn't have a pass] for the Group Areas Act.

DW: *With these small exchange programs, we're talking about five people per year.*

GJG: Yes.

DW: *Tell me, how can you change a society of 40 million people with five people?*

GJG: Each person has a multiplier effect. Each person reaches somebody else and goes on with the group, and they're an inspiration to the people in the community with them.

DW: Did you think that South Africa got an increased share of IVs because of its special circumstances?

GJG: Yes. I think also that we were quite on the ball. We would always send a number of alternates. Then, toward the end of the year, when other posts hadn't used up their funds, we had the people there already: the application was in, and the person was able to go.

DW: So some of your 47 [placements] were by dint of your own cleverness?

GJG: Yes, I think probably. We once got going with AID money; it was all secret. We weren't allowed to know that the money came from AID. I think it was about in 1978. It was the only time we had an undergraduate program, and we sent undergrad students, about 18 of them, to get bachelor degrees.

DW: You weren't allowed to know that AID...

GJG: We didn't want anybody to know that it was. We didn't want the South African government to know that AID money was being spent in South Africa.

DW: But it's the U.S. government. To the South African government, what difference would it make if it was the embassy or AID?

GJG: I don't know. They just called it CU/AF. After Mandela was released, etc., the U.S. government threw money at us. We had all sorts of money, and all sorts of different categories. DES: I loved that. It enabled us to send people for short periods, countless people who today hold very senior government positions.

DW: Dire Emergency. We should explain, I think, that they called it "Dire Emergency" because the situation was changing so rapidly. The idea was not to avoid catastrophe, but to benefit from the changes. "Urgency" they might have called it, rather than "emergency."

GJG: Yes, and that was followed by COLD. Community Outreach and Leadership Development.

DW: Similar money for similar purpose.

GJG: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Also helping to address the imbalance and level the playing field for the historically disadvantaged.

DW: Right. Between 1992 and '94, was there any question that there would be a major political change? Was it a given that the change was coming?

GJG: Yes. But don't forget there was a lot of violence going on as well.

DW: Yes. So that must have been a very important period, '92 to '94. And this was the time when these Dire Emergency, COLD...

GJG: And then followed by the TSF, Transitional Support Fund.

DW: Yes. So they changed the name of it, but the gist of it was similar. It was to accelerate the exposure of future leaders to the United States.

GJG: Yes. We sent people in all different groups. We sent people from the Institute for Multiparty Democracy; there'd be a group from there. We'd send people from a safety and security provincial legislature group. We sent a group of eight military folk, four from the South African military and four from the MK (the military wing of the ANC).

DW: Now, that was dramatic, because it was very risky. You had people in the same room at a period where the outcome was unknown.

GJG: Who had guns against one another.

DW: Spending their efforts trying to kill each other.

GJG: Yes.

DW: So this was enormous conflict resolution. What was your recollection of selecting that group? Did you sense any risk in putting these people together? Was there any apprehension? These were enemies trying to kill each other, put in the same group.

GJG: I always think everything is going to turn out right.

DW: And it did.

GJG: And it did. Yes. But we had all sorts of different programs on constitutional reform and federalism, housing projects, and conflict resolution.

DW: What's the group in Durban?

GJG: ACCORD. One of my Fulbrighters was the founder of ACCORD, and he came back. He went in about '85, I think. Vasu Gounden.

DW: Vasu Gounden. I remember the name. So he was a Fulbrighter.

GJG: Yes.

DW: He created ACCORD, the main conflict resolution NGO, not only for this country, but for this part of the world.

GJG: Yes, yes.

DW: Shifting to Fulbrights: were these grants intended for people focusing on American content, American studies? Fulbrights were sometimes used for different purposes.

GJG: No, you could justify anything, because the black student was going to be a role model, so it didn't matter. Even if it was areas that perhaps weren't of a high priority, like business, this was going to be the first person in the whole of South Africa. Jacob Mohlamme became the first black South African to get Ph.D. in history.

DW: *Was that through your program? Where was he, Columbia?*

GJG: He went to Wisconsin. And I'll tell you why I'm proud of him: we had already made our selections for the year, and he came in to see me absolutely desperate. Reverend Buti from Alexandria had made him a promise that he was going to get him a scholarship. He got his admission to Wisconsin and everything, and then Reverend Buti let him down.

Here was this man who was just about on the plane, and all of a sudden there was nothing. I think there was extra money in Jackie Cotton's shop in ECA, and I think they were able to then give us an extra grant.

DW: *In other words, he was intending to go, but not on a Fulbright.*

GJG: We had in South Africa a category that I don't think any other country had. We called it "placement only," and we would send vast numbers. The man who got me to the Center for Human Rights, Christof Heyns, was a placement only. We didn't give them any money, but we would facilitate. They would go through the whole process, and I used to say to them, "You're perfectly entitled to put 'Fulbright scholar' on your application—even though you didn't get any money from us—because you went through [the process]." We paid for them to do the GRE and the TOEFL, and we paid their entrance fees, etc. The IIE treated them just as though they were funded scholars.

DW: *How were they funded?*

GJG: They were always so stellar that they either had their own wherewithal, or else the universities gave them general fellowships. Christof, for example, got a full tuition waiver from Yale.

DW: *So do we mention anything about Christof's father?*

GJG: He was an IV and I'd worked with him and his wife. Christof's father was the moderator of the NHK, which is the Dutch Reform Church. Most of the government people were members of the Dutch Reform Church. He was regarded as very enlightened for his position. He saw the error, I think, of the policies that the country was following. He clearly was too moderate for some because one night, when playing cards with his grandchildren, he was shot and killed by an unknown assassin. The assassin has never been found. This was in 1994-95.

DW: *Oh, that late. The son, Christof Heyns, now runs the Center for Human Rights...*

GJG: Christof was the director of the Center for Human Rights. He was the driving force behind the creation of many of the programs that we present at the Center. The Center was awarded the 2006 UNESCO prize for human rights education for two of its programs. It was the first institution in Africa to get that award; 39 nominations in that year, and we got it.

DW: *We should explain. The Center is...*

GJG: The Center is a non-academic department in the faculty of law at the University of Pretoria. Christof is now the dean of the faculty of law; he's moved upstairs, literally.

DW: *Now, we haven't talked about IDASA.*

GJG: It was the Institute for Democratic Alternatives for South Africa, and it's now the Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

DW: You were mentioning ACCORD and other groups that did provide a steady stream of visitors, and that were cooperative in doing programs.

GJG: Well, there's Institute of Race Relations, the Urban Foundation, South African Institute of International Affairs, IDASA, lots of organizations.

DW: Yes. Now, in that sense, this has been a very developed country for a long time.

GJG: Yes. Pretty much first and third world.

DW: In what sense first, and in what sense third?

GJG: Well, the first heart transplant took place in this country, and we have Nobel Peace Prize winners. We've had Nobel literature winners, and in scientific strides we've done a great deal, where some of our universities are competitive around the world.

On the other hand, you have a huge discrepancy between the rich and the poor. The gap between rich and poor is greater in South Africa than anywhere else in the world. We've got a huge unemployment rate, we have vast illiteracy, and a lot of people are homeless.

DW: In the last 10 years, the whole country has been trying to grapple with this discrepancy between first and third world. How has this been working?

GJG: Well, you can read in the press and that. I think so much has happened, and nobody would go back to the old days at all. More people have access to water, more people have access to electricity, and more people have access to free healthcare and to education. There's been an extraordinary amount of black wealth as well. But the complaint seems to be that it really has been limited to a few. There are a few black billionaires now, but there are an awful lot of people whose situation hasn't changed.

DW: So there are examples that you can point to where there's been great material progress. Are you saying that this is not enough, that it's more the exception than the norm?

GJG: I think that it is. But I think also a whole lot of the people who are in public service haven't had the training, so a lot of the money isn't well spent. Sadly, there has been a lot of corruption. We've got the best finance minister in the world, Trevor Manuel. We've been shielded from economic recession by the policies that he put in place, he and Mbeki. Without Mbeki's approval, he wouldn't have been able to apply those policies. I don't know how long we're going to remain protected.

DW: The crisis is worldwide.

GJG: It's worldwide, yes.

DW: Now, you said a minute ago that those who were fortunate to benefit from our exchange programs had had some training or exposure.

GJG: Yes.

DW: *Do you wish we could have had 10 times more?*

GJG: Oh, of course. Yes.

DW: *Would it have made the difference, do you think?*

GJG: Who could say?

DW: *When you were in the heat of this tremendous volume and tempo of exchanges, did you feel that there were enough people to make this happen within the embassy? There was a lot of work. You, Gill, were often at that office until 7:00, 8:00 at night.*

GJG: Oh, no, no! Until 10:00, 11:00, 12:00 at night. John Dickson used to say to me, "I'm going home now. Get out of here." And he was our desk officer.

DW: *And this would be our desk officer in Washington, with a six, sometimes seven-hour difference.*

GJG: Yes, yes, yes. I did it and every moment gave me great, great joy. But I did feel troubled when, for no reason, they took away the money for the South African internship program. I used to think of it as a wonderful thing. It was based on the same format that CIP had followed. We would send people to the States for two months, and they would live with American families and work under the guidance of a mentor. You didn't have to have a tertiary qualification to get it; you could be working in the driver's license thing.

I used to think of the Fulbright program as the American government's long-term fix for South Africa and the internship program as our short-term fix. You'd have somebody who perhaps worked in a drug counseling section, somebody else in the social work department, other people in business, some on university campuses, all sorts of areas. They'd have these two months and come back; it'd just give them a crash course in whatever it is they were doing.

[Cancelling that program] was one of the reasons I left. I'd heard [about it], and when I'd come home, I'd said, "What difference am I making to anybody else's life?"

DW: *Because of the reduction of funds for these programs?*

GJG: Yes, yes. But it seems to be better now, and I've talked to my colleagues. They've introduced a whole lot of pretty super programs that they're doing, really nice.

DW: *Why do countries do this? What's in it for Singapore and Japan and Israel?*

GJG: Well, let's be charitable and say it's for mutual understanding. They want to promote a good relationship and then thereby increase trade and educational exchange.

DW: *Okay. Trade. It is now March 2009, and we're in a worldwide economic crisis. Yes, you're quite right that legislators and members of parliament justify the use of money to develop these programs by saying this will create a market. Where's this going now? Trevor Manuel has his hands full, doesn't he?*

GJG: I don't know. When you've got an unemployment rate that's increasing, are the American people going to want to put money into other countries, no matter how deserving they might be? I don't know.

DW: Existential questions. Maybe there's a new sense of the finite quantity of money; we never had that before. We must make some tough decisions.

GJG: I think it must be harder to work with USIS now than it was when you and I were there [...] because of that good guy/bad guy thing. Just because we have a democratically elected government in power doesn't mean to say that they're doing everything that's right.

DW: Why would this make it harder to work at USIS?

GJG: I just think it was so easy to say you wanted to put the bulk of your grants into the good guys, but now...

DW: We're not sure who the good guys are?

GJG: Actually not so sure who they are, yes.

DW: The good guys previously could be defined as the ones who were not in government.

GJG: Yes. Well, yes.

DW: So you did bloody everything. You sent Fulbrights, IVs, Humphreys, interns, CIPs.

GJG: I did all the exchanges.

DW: How could one person do all of that?

GJG: With luck and a nice typist assistant, it worked well.

DW: When you did this, you were a South African working for the government of another country, the U.S.

GJG: Yes. When I was in Cape Town, the guy from the South African Information Service came over to see me one day, and asked me if I would come work for them. I smiled and I said, "You know, that's really very tempting because South Africa can only really go to nice countries, I know that." I said, "But if you were asking me to sell Pepsi Cola and I really liked Coca Cola, I might be able to do it. But you're going to ask me to do something that I really wouldn't want to sell." And he still continued to come and visit.

DW: Now, working in between two countries, there was a certain antagonism between the two regimes. Where did you find yourself in this personally?

GJG: I used to get my "we" and "they" mixed up.

DW: Explain.

GJG: I would say "we," and I even still do. The other day I answered the phone and I said, "Cultural office, good morning."

DW: Really?

GJG: Yes. The other person said, “My God, you’ve been gone eight years!”

DW: Now, if your subconscious was talking when you said “we,” who was “we”? South Africa or the United States?

GJG: Very often it was America. I saw a lot of changes, you know. I went through the time during the Carter Administration; the South African government wanted nothing to do with us. They avoided coming to Fourth of July functions for the most part. Then Ronald Reagan came in and with him, the constructive engagement policy, which saw a reversal of those who liked us and those who didn’t. But we continued to invite South Africans of all colors and political persuasions. And though many blacks spoke out vehemently against the capitalist supporters of apartheid, when they were actually presented with the letter then they were able to accommodate their principles.

DW: Are you suggesting that constructive engagement under Reagan actually created a greater friendship with the apartheid regime and a greater alienation of the majority population?

GJG: Yes, I do think that.

DW: Looking back, was it pragmatically the right thing or the wrong thing to do?

GJG: Well, I think maybe it wasn’t such a bad idea to try it, because we’d achieved absolutely nothing under the previous administration.

I struck up a relationship with a guy in the passport office. I would phone him and then say, “Oh, come on, won’t you tell me: is he going to get this? Just tell me; is he going to get the passport or isn’t he? Because if he’s not, then at least we know. But if you think he’s going to get it, even at the last minute, I can be planning for his trip.” And then one day when I phoned him, he said, “Gill, I’m sorry, but I’ve been told I’m not allowed to give you any information.”

DW: So this person you dealt with cordially was getting orders from above. [...] Now, constructive engagement.

GJG: I think that’s why people like Sheena Duncan were so happy when Ambassador Perkins came to visit. Here was an American who was going to listen.

DW: 1987, I think. And Perkins had a decision to make, as an African American, whether to accept or not accept to be America’s representative in a country whose policies I think he differed with. But he did come, and did you feel that he was able to achieve anything?

GJG: Yes, I think he did. You know, baby steps.

DW: Baby steps. Is that what it’s all about in our business?

GJG: Well, isn’t it?

DW. What is it about the exchanges programs, which are revered by so many people? The Fulbright inspiration—what about it works so well?

GJG: Oh, I don’t know. I mean, I bump into people now who went 20 years ago and say, “Oh, you’ve no idea what that did for me, that program.” Dikgang Moseneke is the deputy chief justice of the constitutional court. We had our moot court competition here in South Africa last year because it

was the University of Pretoria's centenary. We had a very prestigious bunch of international jurists serve on the final panel, and I had a dinner at the Pretoria Country Club. Dikgang arrived early. He was with my boss and assistant director, and I was very, very proud at the way he said, "You have no idea what this lady did for me." You know, he made it. To all of them and to all his colleagues. He was a Robben Island "graduate."

So they remember their experiences.

DW: So the people remember the program, but they also remember you as the personal contact. You said so; you said so. You personalized it.

GJG: I was really lucky. I was able to be Lady Bountiful. It was me in particular, even more so with the Fulbright program than of any of the other programs, because with the IVs, CIP, etc., the branches connected more with the grantees. But with Fulbright, once they had gone through the interview and come to Pretoria, I dealt with them directly until it was time for them to be going. I would be the one who would phone them. I had a policy that even if [their acceptance] came through at 9:00, as I was going out the door, I wouldn't go out the door until I let the person know. I would be as excited as they were when I could say, "How does University of Los Angeles sound?" It was lovely, wonderful.

DW: Where else in the world is there someone who takes this job so personally? It's more effective in dealing with these programs to either pretend or genuinely feel respect for the people you deal with. How do people learn this?

GJG: I don't know. I just feel that I was so blessed. I must have done something very good in a previous life because it was so wonderful. On the other hand, in my speech at Tom Hull's party, I said that in all those years, I never had a single day when I didn't want to go to work, even with the worst of hangovers—and I had many of those and continue to have them.

DW: So, could you say you gave your liver for your country?

GJG: Yes, I can say that. Or for the United States.

DW: I mean, your country, their country; we, us.

GJG: For your country.

DW: Now, the mayor, one of the mayors...

GJG: Mkhathswa. And the other mayor was Joyce Ngele.

DW: Let's remember Joyce for a minute. Joyce was our colleague in USIS.

GJG: The admin clerk.

DW: Until 1994, I think.

GJG: Yes. She became the mayor of Pretoria. She was a very gracious mayor. She was very nice. She did a very nice job when I would take visitors to her there. I was very proud of her; she was very dignified and warm. She did a good job.

DW: I remember we told her, "We expect you to remember us," and evidently she did.

GJG: And it was Richard Goldstone who got her out of jail.

DW: Jail?

GJG: She was imprisoned for a good six weeks or so. We were still downtown, so that would have been about 1989.

DW: Jail for what? For being there after dark?

GJG: No, for her political activities. She and a whole bunch of women.

DW: Goldstone? The International Court of Justice?

GJG: He was an IV in '84.

DW: And he—of the organization that indicted President Bashir yesterday—an IV, was instrumental in getting Joyce Ngele out of jail?

GJG: Having Joyce released from prison.

DW: Wow.

GJG: Yes. It's always so nice when I see him. He's a true gentleman. I just remember that. There are a few who I do remember, you know.

DW: Well, a person who's taken so much personally does not leave a working position lightly. But you say the reduction in resources was one factor in your leaving.

GJG: A huge factor, huge. Because the Fulbright program was now with the Fulbright Commission, I wasn't doing the Fulbright anymore. I sent 60-odd people a year on the internship program, so that was very time-consuming. So when that was going to be going, leaving me, I just didn't know what else.

When I eventually went to speak to Tom [Hull], he said, "I've watched the diminishing of your position with concern. I wondered what you were going to do." He said, "I don't know that I would have said this if it was the start of my tour, but seeing how I'm leaving, I think if you are going to go anywhere, you could go to no finer place than the Center for Human Rights."

Nick Mele's another one. He was JOT. He was one. He took Gaby Magomola to the airport in the boot of his car. Gaby was going on a Fulbright, and the security were after him. I wanted to get him out of there, so we took him.

DW: Well, how did he make it onto the plane?

GJG: They weren't that smart to know that we were getting him there.

DW: He must have lacked the documents.

GJG: No, he had a passport.

DW: *He had a passport?*

GJG: Yes. Gaby Magomola was at my farewell party also, and they did a wonderful book. People who were there wrote messages in it, and it's very nice. Gaby wrote, "You took me, a jailbird, those days." And I kept his passport for him until it was time for him to go.

DW: *What was the importance of your keeping his passport?*

GJG: Well, just that it was on diplomatic territory. They couldn't come and take it away from him. It was precautionary.

DW: *So he had had it previously.*

GJG: He had it, but you know it was a precautionary measure. He'd been released from jail. They might have just—in a moment of spite—wanted to deprive him of this opportunity.

DW: *Was there a warrant for his arrest or something like that? Or they just wanted to intimidate him?*

GJG: We went out and got stopped in a roadblock. He's written a book.

DW: *My gosh. Oh my gosh.*

GJG: Yes. Because he was in the States for a number of years. He went on the Fulbright to do an MBA at Ball State University. Then he stayed on and did another degree.

DW: *But he did come back?*

GJG: He's back now; he's a successful businessman. [...] I'm not sure what you're hoping to get at the end of the day. Do you want to get the juicy things, the awful things that the South African government did? Or the wonderful things that we did? I'm not sure.

DW: *I'll tell you the name I gave to this project: Outsmarting Apartheid. It's you, Gill, who gave me that idea—not the words, but you gave me the idea because I know that's what you did during those 20 years. You outsmarted them many times. The project has no trick agenda. We're talking about lessons learned and how diplomacy—and public diplomacy in this case—can be used.*

GJG: You absolutely must speak to Brooks [Spector], because Brooks was the one who was the driving force behind the Dance Theater of Harlem, which broke the cultural boycott. Your government was very mean and awful to him. They took him out of here just before the Theater arrived, and Rosemary Crockett was here and got all the credit. Now, that wasn't Rosemary's fault, but poor Brooks wasn't here to get all the glory and kudos that he deserved.

DW: *Took him out? Did he leave prematurely?*

GJG: They ended his tour. They could have easily let him stay.

DW: *The cultural boycott. The intention was to put pressure on the regime, both economic... Cultural, sporting and economic. At one point, there was an arms embargo under Reagan. It was a well-intentioned thing; did it work?*

GJG: Yes. Oh, I do think so.

DW: *So the boycott in every form was indeed a surgical, effective policy?*

GJG: Yes, I think it was. It wasn't nice. Let me tell you, to travel as a South African was just horrible, horrible. I can remember in '85, I took a cab. I was actually going to John Hicks's place for dinner and a big guy from Sierra Leone was driving. He volunteered that he was a doctoral student from Sierra Leone and couldn't wait to get his degree so that he could get back home. He wanted to man an army to drive those whites of South Africa into the sea.

DW: *Is that one of those days that you were a Canadian?*

GJG: So he said, "Where are you from?" And I said, "Australia." I wasn't going to take him on. So I said, "Australia."

DW: *And he fell for it? He thought you were Australian?*

GJG: Yes.

DW: *Now, so the boycott was effective. Were Brooks Spector's choice and efforts in breaking the boycott well timed?*

GJG: Yes. It took him years. He worked on it for years. He's better connected than anybody in the arts world, and I sing his praises. I think he was certainly the most creative, imaginative CAO that I ever worked with. He and [Ambassador] Bill Swing were just the right people to be together, because Bill Swing wanted to meet with everybody. We had Paul Simon, and we had Whoopi Goldberg. We had them all at the Ambassador's residence. We had the whole cast of *Ain't Misbehavin'* do a performance. Abdullah Ibrahim played. And Brooks was responsible for it all, all in the results.

Brooks and I together, we organized what I think was the best thing the embassy ever did, and everybody around said it was also. Brooks came back as cultural attaché. We had worked together in '76 when he was ABPAO in Johannesburg, and we worked well together on the exchanges program. When he came again to be cultural attaché, he said to me, "What can we do?" He was always looking for something new to do. I said, "You know, we haven't done anything with the grantees; we really haven't done anything with them. We've got a brand new ambassador. Why don't we start?"

We brainstormed between the two of us, and we ended up having a dinner at the Carlton Hotel. We had entertainment, and we used people who had been on our exchange programs. We got them to do it. Siphos Sepamla, now in heaven, read his poetry. Mary Jane Mohodiela told a story that she rambled on, unfortunately. Christof's father said the grace at the dinner. Let me just think who else. Sean Reddy played the piano, and we ended with Evita, who sang "Free Start" and "God Bless America."

DW: *Was this a certain individual depicting Evita Bezuidenhout?*

GJG: It was Pieter-Dirk Uys as himself, playing Evita.

DW: *He was an IV?*

GJG: He was an IV; that's why I asked him. He went on the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and he cut the program short. I was at one of his performances afterwards, and he said being in Iowa was like being in Vrystaat. "And Vrystaat... I was *born* in Vrystaat!" I found it particularly funny.

There were a few hundred people there. We had everybody who'd been in the '80s. We had tables of 10, and somebody from the embassy who hosted each table. Ambassador Swing was so taken up that he said he wanted to do it in Cape Town also. So we did it in Cape Town, and there we had everybody from the '70s and the '80s. We followed the same format: you know, poetry, reading, music, etc., all donated. Then we did it in Durban, and we did with everybody who'd ever been on an exchange program at all. Brooks and I went to Cape Town, and we went to Durban. I think that was really the best thing.

DW: *So this was something you and Brooks thought up together.*

GJG: We did together, yes.

DW: *And this was what? There's now an active alumni program that tries to do this systematically, but I think it was...*

GJG: I think that what they should have done at the embassy last year, when it was the University of Pretoria's centenary, I think they should have done a University of Pretoria alumni thing. You wouldn't have done it 10, 15 years ago, when this was such a conservative place, but it's not like that anymore. It's the most progressive university in the country.

DW: *When did it become progressive? Because in the '90s, it was thought of as very conservative.*

GJG: In about '96. I was at a function at the PAO residence. The former principal, Johann Van Zyl, a very charismatic, dynamic guy, was there. I'd had a couple of glasses of wine and was in my cups myself, and I said to him, "You know, if anybody had ever asked me which would be the very last campus to transform, I would have had no hesitation in saying this one. But," I said, "it's such a pleasure to be able to say to you how good it is to have you."

DW: *Much was said about Wits being transformed, but it wasn't done very harmoniously.*

GJG: No. Also, there was less need for transformation at UCT and Wits, etc. This [here in Pretoria] was a bastion. I couldn't bring Mary J. Barnett, the black belly dancer, here because they didn't want to have a black dancer.

DW: *Why did they [change]?*

GJG: Again, pragmatism.

DW: *Did they think it was inevitable? Might as well just get on with it?*

GJG: Yes, I think so.

DW: *Do you think that your South African colleagues on this campus are proud of TUKS (Witwatersrand University) for having done this?*

GJG: Yes, I think so.

DW: Apparently without compromising academic standards.

GJG: I think not; I really do. [...] I went to a wonderful thing on Saturday with Bishop Tutu.

DW: So Bishop Tutu came to this campus?

GJG: Yes. He's got an honorary doctorate from here too.

DW: Ah.

GJG: Whenever I was asked to make a presentation on the Fulbright program, I gave them all the statistics and then I said: "Can I just give a little bit of a personal thing about why I think this is such a wonderful program?" I said, "There have been so many magnificent Fulbrighters that one or two stand out in my mind, never to be forgotten." And I always tell the story of Johnny Mekwa, the trumpeter.

I'm sure I've told you this story also. We interviewed him in Durban, and he was an older student. He was the first black student to get a Bachelor's in jazz studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal under Darius Brubeck. His uncle was the embassy DCM's driver, Johannes Mekwa. That's just coincidental. He got his bachelor's when he was over 40.

We asked him, as we do everybody, "Why should we send you? Why do you want to go?" He said, "Because I want to go and I want to learn things that will help me to come back and get my kids off the street." He went to Indiana and he was very successful. He got his Master's in jazz studies in two years, made all sorts of connections in the music world in America, and he came back.

He hadn't been back weeks, and he went to Daveyton. He went to the city council, and he talked them into giving him a building, an unused building. Then he went knocking on corporate doors. He's very persuasive. He's a huge man; I worry about him desperately as heart attack material. He went knocking on doors and got generous money. All sorts of other people got funding, and he went to fellow musicians to get them to agree to give up their time to give classes. Then he went into the streets, and he got his pupils. They came from the streets and, 18 months later, they won the jazz competition in Chicago.

Then he came here, about three years ago, and the University of Pretoria awarded him an honorary doctorate. I was sitting in the third row as his guest. And a year and a half later, UNISA (the University of South Africa) did exactly the same thing. In his remarks—he broke down crying and couldn't finish—he dedicated his award to many of the other musicians who had gone before. Obviously when he thought about them, it just made him cry. He wept. Isn't that a wonderful story? Then he got an honorary doctorate at UNISA, and I was his guest there too.

I sat with Professor James Khumalo, who was an IV in 1974 and was the person who put together our South Africa national anthem. When Professor Khumalo went in '74, it was on a very strange program. We sent three Zulu students to the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale to teach. While they were studying, they were teaching Zulu to American students, and I think Professor Khumalo ended up as a lecturer. He was sort of their warden, going with them. His claim to fame now is that he put together our national anthem. You know, the combining of the two: *Nkosa Sikelel' iAfrika* and *Die Stem*.

DW: Now, before we get to what you're doing presently, Gill, looking back at the times you spent in the U.S., do any particular individuals stand out in your memory?

GJG: Well, we sent Maki Mandela, who was former President Mandela's daughter from his first marriage. I happened to be on my three-month senior FSN program in '85 when she was there. I

had a photograph of her, me and Mickey Morgan, who's subsequently become a vice chancellor himself. There were three of us. The photograph was taken in the grounds of Gallaudet University.

DW: Yes, the school for the deaf in Washington.

GJG: Yes, the school for the deaf; we were there on a program. I came back, and then when things got really hot in South Africa, I would have this photograph. I used to say that if there was a horde coming towards me, people with sabers and things, I would...

DW: Hold up the picture.

GJG: "This is me with Mandela's daughter." And she was very good; she came to my farewell party, which was very nice of her. I haven't met President Mandela. If I could meet him, then I could die happy. I haven't met him.

DW: How could he fail to seek you out? Does he not understand what you did?

GJG: When Ambassador Lyman was here, as he was leaving, he came to me. He said he wanted a favor. President Mandela had only made three phone calls to him during his duration, and two of them had concerned a young man called Tanda Bantu Kwandawala. He was a chief from the area where President Mandela had grown up, and Mandela wanted him to get a postgraduate degree. I really thought, "Oh, this is my chance to be doing something." And Tanda Bantu and I spoke often on the phone. I really bent all the rules, because I rewrote his application. We got two scholarships for him from Massachusetts; he wasn't a stellar student.

DW: What was Mandela's interest in this man?

GJG: He was a chief from Mandela's part of the world. Then Tanda Bantu phoned me one day and said that he couldn't go anymore. He said that his people, the chiefs around, were begging him to stay. At that time, I was in touch with President Mandela's assistant, a lady who has since died, and I said to her, "He's a man. We can't make him go if he doesn't want to. The only person who might be able to persuade him is the president himself." But obviously he couldn't. I got a very nice letter from him thanking me for that.

DW: So he went back to his village?

GJG: And stayed, yes.

DW: For today, Gill, this is your life. Before we shut off the mic, give me the sense that you've had of things that happened in the last 20 years in this country. You've been right in the middle of it. What does it feel like? What do you think you were able to accomplish? And what does it feel like when you look back at what you did during that period?

GJG: Oh, just a feeling of such gratitude, really, that I could be part of history. I was so lucky that I just landed in a job where I could help make opportunities possible for people to realize their own worth. Now, the continuation with the Human Rights Center really is an absolute follow-on from what we did at the embassy. I've gotten to travel throughout my continent; I'm going to Nigeria in August.

DW: Where you used to be persona non grata, and where you're now very grata.

GJG: Yes, absolutely.

DW: *Gill, I want to thank you for sharing these brief episodes in a remarkable career.*

GJG: Lovely. I've enjoyed it. I like looking down and, when my eye falls upon somebody's name, thinking, "Oh, yes," and it brings back a memory. There are so many wonderful, wonderful memories. Sadly, the more recent ones, I'm afraid, are not that good.

Just a lovely little story: Obed was a blind man, and we sent him to Boston College, where he did a Master's in education. He came back to South Africa, and obviously I was at the airport to meet him with Serena, my counterpart at the IIE. She met Obed on arrival, and had put him on the plane to Boston and everything. Then when he came back, I got a phone call from him. He said he wanted to pay me a visit and he came down. Obviously somebody brought him. We had a lovely session in my office.

Then he said, "Oh Gill, I've got a few things for you in the car." So I went out to the car, and they opened the boot—you'd say the trunk. He came from the northeastern part of the country where things grow very prolifically, and his boot was filled with pineapples, mangos, avocado and pears. I said, "Oh, Obed, I don't want you spending your money on me." And he said, drawing himself up and looking down his face, "We do grow things, you know, Gill" ... putting me in my place completely!

DW: *A perfect note; a perfect final note.*