

China Jessup Shares her Enthusiasm for Cultural Exchange

By: Selby McPhee

China Jessup, who has been a member of the ISH Board of Directors for 37 years (two of those as president) remembers her "aha" moment. As a new bride, she was with her husband, a Foreign Service officer, in post-war Germany on assignment. While there, she was asked to participate on a committee selecting German students for Fulbright Scholarships to the United States. Jessup realized then that this kind of exchange could impact inter-cultural relations and bring about positive change in the world.

She feels the same way about the International Student House. So, years later in 1975 when a Foreign Service friend suggested she consider joining the ISH board, she said, "I was skipping with enthusiasm!" Over the years, China has participated in many events to raise awareness and funds for the House. She recalls some of the antique auctions that used to take place, "We emptied our attics until our children were crying for mercy." She also participated in ISH strategic planning initiatives. Along with Jerry Scoutt, another ISH Board Member, China arranged embassy events to further engage ISH with the Washington diplomatic community. These relationships are still strong today. "The board is so full of energy now," China says, noting that she appreciates all of the exciting activities the current Board and staff are taking on today.

Born in Minneapolis, China graduated from the University of Minnesota with a major in psychometrics. At the end of World War II, she took the first train east to New York City. There she joined the staff of *Look Magazine* as editorial researcher and photo editor. A German speaker, China later moved onto the German language magazine *HEUTE* (sent to post-war Germany by the U.S. Army Reeducation Program) and to U.S.I.S. to work on *Amerika Illustrated*, a publication distributed in the Soviet Union. While there, she met her husband, Peter Jessup. During Peter's Foreign Service career, the Jessups were twice posted to Tel Aviv, Israel, where China studied archeology at Tel Aviv University. She conducted students from the American International School in Tel Aviv on archeological digs in Jerusalem, and she became involved with the Friends School in Ramallah, Palestine, an organization she still supports as a member of the Friends International Center in Ramallah.

Returning to Washington, D.C. in 1979 China joined the staff of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, an organization concerned with legislation on women and families. China has four children and five grandchildren.