

# The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 232

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

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June 1, 2017

## Our Mission

*In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.*

## Adele Rickett

### JLS 1944

#### Expert on Chinese Literature Was Jailed In China

Adele Austin Rickett, 74, professor of Asian language and literature and a former prisoner of communist China, died Wednesday at her home in Medford, N.J., where she had lived for the last two years. She was a former resident of the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia.

In the spring of 1948, after receiving her master's degree in Oriental studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Rickett and her husband, W. Allyn Rickett, were awarded Fulbright Scholarships and left for China - she to study Chinese poetry, he, Chinese history.

At the time, China was torn by civil war. Before their departure, Mr. Rickett was summoned to U.S. naval district headquarters in Seattle, where intelligence officers "asked me to keep my eyes out," he later recalled in a newspaper interview. Himself a former naval intelligence officer, Mr.

Rickett agreed.

While Dr. Rickett studied part time and taught English at a university in Peiping, the communist regime wrested control of China from the Chiang Kai-Shek government.

In 1951, Mr. Rickett was arrested on espionage charges. Dr. Rickett was placed under house arrest for 14 months and later sent to prison.

She was released in February 1954, he was released in September.

It was reported in newspaper articles that Dr. Rickett returned home in "tight-lipped" silence and that family members thought her to be "brainwashed."

She went to work for the American Friends Service Committee and, in 1967, received her Ph.D. in Oriental studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She immediately began teaching Chinese language and literature at Penn.

In 1979 she became chairman of the Hebrew and East Asian Languages and Literature Department at the University of Maryland at College Park.

She retired in 1986.

Born in Yonkers, N.Y., where she attended public school, Dr. Rickett enrolled in Yonkers Community College in 1935. She received a bachelor's degree in English in 1939 and a bachelor's in library science two years later from the University of North Carolina.

During World War II she served as a WAVE in the Navy, and from 1943 to 1944, she attended the Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado.

After the war she attended Stanford for one year.

Dr. Rickett was the author of numerous works on Chinese language and literature.

She and her husband wrote a book, *Prisoners of Liberation*, which was published in 1957 and has since had two more printings.

For 14 years, beginning in the mid-1970s, she led tour groups to China once a year.

"She identified very closely with China and considered it her second country," said her husband. "We gained a lot from the prison experience where only Chinese was spoken."

Both of the Ricketts' adopted children are Chinese.

Dr. Rickett was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Association for Asian Studies, as well as past president of the Oriental Club of Philadelphia. She also was very active in Powelton Village community groups.

She is survived by her husband of 49 years; son, Jonathon Rickett Chen; daughter, Rebecca Anne Rickett; one sister, and four grandchildren.

Barbara J. Richberg,  
Philadelphia Inquirer  
February 19, 1994

## John Ashmead Jr., Inspiring Professor, Master Of Many Arts

John Ashmead Jr., 74, an inspired and inspiring professor of English and film at Haverford College for 41 years and a lecturer who could charm audiences from Shipley School to Osaka, Japan, died Friday at Bryn Mawr Hospital.

A very busy and successful scholar, Dr. Ashmead wrote two novels, won three Fulbrights to teach in Greece, Japan and India, developed computer programs to analyze poetry and made - and played - his own harpsichords and other instruments.

Yet he was proudest, perhaps, of having been in a small way responsible for the death of the man who planned the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto.

He didn't pull the trigger, of course. He was an interpreter with U.S. Naval Intelligence during World War II and was able to get captured Japanese fliers to reveal - not the admiral's itinerary - but simply that the admiral was a punctual man.

That information enabled Navy fliers to ambush the

admiral's plane over Shortland Island in the Solomons on April 18, 1943, and to shoot him down.

## A STORYTELLER

It was a story he loved to tell to family and friends. He was a born storyteller, reveled in being center stage and could spellbind his audience once he got their attention.

Listeners couldn't take all his stories at face value. "He had a way of embellishing things to put them in their best light," said his son, Graham Gaylord Ashmead.

"After a couple of glasses of sherry, he thought the name 'Ashmead' initially came from 'Akmed' and that the family was entitled to wear a green turban as a descendant of the prophet (Muhammad)," he said.

Students at Haverford, where he taught English, creative writing and film from 1947 to 1988, crammed his classrooms. A demanding professor, he gave stiff exams and assigned tough papers early in the semester to purge his class of slouches. But when they dropped out, their places were immediately filled by others.

"His classes kept getting bigger and bigger," said his son. "Some of his last enrollments were over 100."

"He was a tousle-haired, ruffled, inspired teacher," said Alan Armstrong, a banker and lawyer from the Haverford Class of '61. "He gave some of the most inspired readings and lectures about Melville and Hawthorne and the New England School I ever encountered."

He was also a great tease. Armstrong said his older brother once turned in a science-fiction story for a creative writing assignment for Dr. Ashmead. His grade was left in his mailbox - marked on a ray gun.

## ASHMEAD'S LAWS

Students honored him by collecting many of his more trenchant sayings, which they scribbled on walls and called

Ashmead's Laws. For example: "90 percent of your time is spent preparing to pick up crap, shoveling crap from one pile to another and putting crap down."

He once said that the only time his students got the marks they deserved was when a pet cat mistook his desk - covered with his students' papers - for kitty litter.

In school skits, students poked fun at his dress - his tam-o-shanter, scarf, wool coat, plaid pants. One thing was certain - nothing would match.

Living with Dr. Ashmead was clearly not as much fun as having him for a teacher.

"He was cantankerous and difficult," said his daughter, Theodora Wheeler Ashmead. "He was very single-minded and independent and spoke his mind, and was very sure of himself. . . . He listened, but he had very strong opinions and could articulate himself masterfully."

He was "so darn smart," arguing against him was like arguing with a steamroller, she said.

But family members said he had "mellowed" during the last three years as he battled lymphoma. He had taken great joy in the birth of his granddaughter, Alexandra, and had made peace with most of his children.

He was born in New York City and attended Loomis Institute in Windsor, Conn. He earned his bachelor's (1938), master's (1939) and Ph.D. (1950) degrees from Harvard University.

While in college, he worked as a reporter and music critic at the *Hartford Times*, family members said. He told them that to make deadlines, he used to write the review beforehand, leaving blanks for adjectives. After the concert, he filled in the words and filed his story.

His stint in the Navy intelligence fueled his fascination with East Asia and he did his doctoral dissertation on Japan. He returned to Japan in 1955 as a Fulbright lecturer in American Studies at Osaka University.

Throughout his career, he also taught or lectured at schools in India, Taiwan, Korea, Burma, Cambodia, Greece, the

Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia.

#### A PROLIFIC AUTHOR

He wrote dozens of articles, an English textbook and two novels, *The Mountain and the Feather* and *All Who Sleep on Brambles*.

His first novel, a satirical war story set in the Pacific and Japan during World War II, was praised by the *New York Times* as "one of the four brilliant first novels of 1961."

He was active in the Franklin Inn, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the International House of Japan Inc., and the 18th Century Scottish Studies Society.

After retiring from teaching in 1988, he co-edited *The Songs of Robert Burns* with John Davison. The songs have been presented in concert and on public television by the authors and soprano soloist Shoshanna Shay.

Dr. Ashmead was a fine figure skater; a Phi Beta Kappa; a ballroom dancer; a maker and player of harpsichords, clavichords, mountain dulcimers, harps and other instruments; a bibliophile; a cook (who convinced his friends that Scottish and French cooking were quite similar), and a devoted opera- and theater-goer.

His survivors, in addition to his son and daughter, include his former wife, Ann Harnwell Ashmead; two other sons, John III and Gaylord H.; another daughter, Louisa H.; a granddaughter, and two sisters.

Andy Wallace  
Inquirer (Philadelphia)  
February 11, 1992

[Ed. Note: We had never posted John Ashmead's obituary, as he had predeceased our project by 8 years. However, Theodora Wheeler Ashmead has been generous with some of his writings and her communications that we printed in issues #205, #206, #207, #208, and #210, allowing us to flesh out this remarkable JLS/OLSer. One cannot help believing that he would have relished participating in the USN JLS/OLS Archival Project.]

#### Sensei ID Card

I was hoping the ID would be of some interest. I was going to tell you that when your newsletter

was about the musicians among the students that Sam King spent many weekends at our house as our rental house had a piano and he played very well. He and my parents were very close and even though I was 7 or 8 years old I remember him. He and my mother corresponded until she passed away in 1968.

Sincerely  
Yo Shinoda

[Grace K. Yokouchi's USN JLS ID card ID card is very rare. It is interesting that the card was not issued by the US Navy, or the US Navy Japanese Language School, but by the University of Colorado and signed by the President, Robert L. Stearns.]

#### ROLAND GELATT 66, A MUSIC CRITIC AND AN EDITOR

Roland Gelatt, an American music critic and editor, died of cancer Wednesday morning in Philadelphia. He was 66 years old and lived in Philadelphia.

Mr. Gelatt was best known for his book "The Fabulous Phonograph," an urbane, informative history of recorded sound from the days of the wax cylinder through the long-playing album. It was published in 1955, and updated in 1965 to include the innovation of stereophonic sound, and updated again in 1977 for the 100th anniversary of the invention of the phonograph.

Mr. Gelatt was born in Kansas City, Mo., on July 24, 1920, and graduated from Swarthmore College in 1941. After serving in the Navy from 1942 to 1946, he joined Musical Digest as an associate editor. He began writing for Saturday Review in 1947, becoming the features editor the next year.

In 1954, Mr. Gelatt was appointed the music editor of High Fidelity; in 1958, he was named the magazine's editor in chief, a position he held until 1968. From 1969 to 1971, he was the managing editor of Saturday Review and continued his association with the magazine over the next decade.

For several years, he lived in London, where he was on the editorial board of the publishing house Thames and Hudson.

In addition to "The Fabulous Phonograph," he wrote "Music-Makers: Some Outstanding Musical Performers of Our Day" (1952), edited several volumes of the High Fidelity annual, "Records in Review," and published many articles on travel, opera, theater and the arts.

He is survived by his wife, the former Lois Haberland Smith, of Philadelphia, and his son, Timothy Arthur Gelatt, of Manhattan. An earlier marriage ended in divorce.

TIM PAGE  
New York Times  
December 5, 1986

#### Reprise William O. Anderson



Diplomatic Passport Picture, 1955,  
Courtesy M. Anderson

The partial quote from the posting of "'William Otto Anderson, USNR", from *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. 4, 1961-1968: has always left me puzzled. He never talked about his experiences in the war nor of any aspect of it.

He completed the US Naval Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado in 1943 and he was commissioned as a Naval Intelligence Officer and classified as a "Naval Agent" that same year.

If any of the puzzling terms or duties could be explained to me I would be most grateful - even though both of my parents are deceased and even though I am the next of kin I cannot have his military records sent to me...and this is seventy years after the conflict!

Suggestions?!

Cheers!  
Mark Anderson

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Dear Mr. Anderson:

I direct the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/archives/collections/jlsp/index.htm> at the Archives, University of Colorado Boulder Libraries <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/archives/index.htm>. I think I may be able to answer some of the questions you posted last year on WWII Forum:

First, he entered the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School at the University of Colorado from Shelbyville, Indiana, on February 22, 1943. Those entering the USN JLS/OLS during that time were designated Naval Agents, for the purpose of going to the school, the expectation being that they would be commissioned following the course. However, that designation was not full proof enough to stop the JLS/OLS student/agents from being harassed about their draft status while they were away from the school or in transit, so the Naval Agents were all enlisted as Yeomen 2nd Class, and the term and status of naval agent was dropped. Later in 1944, everyone at the school was commissioned after passing a certain portion of their training. I do not have any information regarding his graduation, and there seems to be an indication that he may have washed out of the CU course and reentered later to finish up when the school transferred to Oklahoma A&M. But we have no definitive information on him

Regarding your inability to receive your father's naval records, I believe that you may need to send proof of death (copy of published obituary or death certificate), as privacy act issues no longer apply for the deceased. I am reasonably sure that you should be able to acquire those military records, especially since Navy records were not affected by the fire that destroyed so many Army records from WWII.

I found your biographical statement on the web and posted it in our project newsletter, The Interpreter, in issue #217.

David M. Hays  
Editor & Archivist

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Hello, Mr. Hays!

About my father:  
In *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. 4, 1961-1968 and in earlier editions:

A.B. Wabash College, Indiana, 1942 (Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa in junior and senior years), Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1942-1943. University of Colorado, 1943. U.S. Naval Reserve Intelligence Officer (Naval Agent) 1943. With War Relocation Agency 1944-45. Foreign Service Officer, Department of State 1945. Staff, Special War Problems Division, Department of State 1945; assigned Vice Consul, Capetown, South Africa, 1945-1948; temporarily in charge of consulate, Port Elizabeth, 1948. Bangkok 1948-51. Attache U.S. Embassy, 1951-1954. Consul, Singapore, 1954-1956. Assigned to University of Washington Far East-Russian Institute, 1956-1957. Political Officer, Chinese Affairs, Department of State. Political Officer, U.S. Mission Berlin, 1957-1960. Berlin Task Force. Assigned Department of State, 1960. Officer in Charge of Soviet Multilateral Political Affairs, 1961. U.S. Senior Seminar on Foreign Policy 1963-1964. Distinguished Alumnus Award, Wabash College, 1963.

Author: *Communist Trade with Southeast Asia*, 1956; *A Study of National Communism*, 1957. (First in class at Wabash College)

My father had a hernia and high blood pressure and that may have affected his continuation in the school. He *might* have been dismissed for medical reasons, but washing out is highly unlikely... he knew many languages including Chinese. I have found only one "B" in his college transcripts and that was in a mathematics course... and he was working full time during his Wabash years as well.

I do know that he was employed at Camp Amache (Grenada) near Rocky Ford, CO during the war.

When he joined the Foreign Service in 1945 he was to be assigned to Japan but he was reassigned to Cape Town, South Africa at the last minute.

Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk had stated that "...no

American knew more about Russia" than my father.

Thanks for writing (two pictures attached)!

Sincerely,  
Mark Anderson

Son  
January 27, 2015

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Dear Mr. Anderson:

*By washing out, I was not implying grades. Health, physical requirements, and other issues often caused students to be reassigned. But health issues may indicate why he was such an early entrant who later ended up being sent to Stillwater. But I have no hard information.*

David M. Hays  
Editor & Archivist

## Rudd Fleming JLS 1944, 1908-1991

Professor Rudd Fleming, died at 1:30 a.m. Tuesday (Oct 22, 1991) at Suburban Hospital, Bethesda. He was born Nov. 1, 1908, in Bloomington, a son of Harry L. and Florence Sample Fleming. He married Mary "Polly" Wight Dec. 27, 1932. She survives.

Other survivors include two sons, Dr. William Rudd Fleming, R.R. 4, Bloomington, and Jonathan Fleming, Chevy Chase; two daughters, Mary Sheh, San Marino, Calif., and Joan DeVrieze, Winchester, Mass.; 15 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Mr. Fleming was a professor of literature at the University of Maryland beginning in 1945 until his retirement in 1973. He spent many summers in Bloomington during his long teaching career.

His own published work ranged from scholarly articles on literature and philosophy to a mystery novel titled "Cradled in Murder," which was written in Bloomington.

Last year, Princeton University Press published a translation of Euripides "Electra," which Mr. Fleming translated in collaboration with the late poet Ezra Pound when Pound was a resident of St Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C.

In 1988, Mr. Fleming was honored guest at the premiere performance of that work by New York's Classical Theater. Although schooled in the classics, he was best known in Washington as a sympathetic teacher and critic of modern poetry and drama. His reviews of contemporary poets were a frequent feature of the *Washington Post* book pages during the late 1950s.

Mr. Fleming came to Washington in 1944 as a lieutenant assigned to the Navy's Japanese Language Annex. He was a member of the second class to be graduated from the Navy's Special Language School in Boulder, Colo.

At the end of World War II, he resumed teaching English at the University of Maryland. He also instructed returned veterans at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Washington.

He attended Washington University, Illinois Wesleyan University and the Sorbonne in Paris before graduating from the University of Chicago. He received his doctorate in comparative literature from Cornell University.

Long active in the fine arts community in Washington, he was a skilled classical pianist student of medieval plainsongs, exponent of Chinese philosophy and a successful amateur actor. He was fluent in German, French, Italian, Latin and classical Greek. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Chi and the River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda.

Memorials may be made to the Kinesis Foundation; Mary Gold-water Awards of Theater; University of Chicago fund; or a charity of the donor's choice.

The Pantagraph  
Bloomington, Illinois  
October 24, 1991, Page 25

## Lunch with JLOs on Iwo Jima

[Joseph Pulitzer III was on Iwo Jima in the early months of 1945 to lead a study team of enemy defensive installations within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division zone of operations. He was invited to lunch by the 3<sup>rd</sup> MARDIV's Japanese Language Officers



(Larry Vincent, Jack Craig, Walt Williams, Larry Thompson and Tad Van Brunt? They were all 3<sup>rd</sup> MARDIV JLOs). This is how he described the lunch 'al fresco' on Iwo Jima.]



Marines tend to a Japanese soldier wounded on Iwo Jima. He is one of the very few who survived the 36-day battle. Photo provided by Dick Honyak, <http://donmoorewartales.com/2011/02/14/dick-honyak/>

"Today I was invited to lunch with the Japanese language officers at the stockade. The meal was prepared and served by one of the Japanese prisoners and the food was Japanese which had been captured during the campaign. The cook was typical of a Jap cartoon – all smiles and sibilant mutterings and he backed out of our tent in a half-bowed position which would have done justice to an Oriental servant in a story by Somerset Maugham. The officers chatter away with the prisoners in fluent Japanese, which is a credit to the language schools the Navy started some months ago [*Yay Team!*]. If it isn't confidential, the story might make interesting reading in the paper and I imagine could be got from Public Relations in Washington.

My reaction to the lunch was mixed. He canned sardines were delicious. The rice with vegetables and soy sauce quite edible, but I could not go for the sweet pickled turnip which [had] a dead taste which reminded me of corpses – of which we have seen quite enough. Unfortunately the Japs must have drunk all of their Saki during the campaign as nothing but empty bottles have been recovered."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence about Navy service of JPIII between August 29, 1942, and March 21, 1945, JPIII Papers, reel 6, frames 69-132, in Daniel W. Pfaff, *No Ordinary Joe: a Life of Joseph Pulitzer III*, (Columbia:

University of Missouri Press, 2005}, 55.

[Ed. Note: Two of Pulitzer's cousins were killed, one in France and one on Okinawa.]

## Wil Fountain JLS 7/2/42-, (1920-2015)

Wilbert Bernard Fountain, PhD Feb. 17, 1920 - Jan. 3, 2015 Longtime Piedmont Resident Wil, as he was known, was born in Oakland on Feb. 17, 1920. He attended Lakeview and Crocker Highlands grammar schools, Westlake Junior High, Piedmont High School, and then on to U.C. Berkeley.

At Cal, he earned an athletic letter on the tennis team and in later life he was a nationally ranked table tennis player. While at Cal, Wil became the editor of The University of California yearbook, "The Blue and Gold." Wil graduated Phi Beta Kappa, cum laude and later received both an MA and a PhD. At UC he was elected into the Order of the Golden Bear and was head of his alumni class reunions for many years.

During World War II, Wil was a Japanese translator in Naval Intelligence. After the war he entered the business field as a wholesale distributor and manufacturer of venetian blinds and custom draperies. His main plant was in San Francisco with branches in Seattle, Hawaii, Sacramento and overseas in Hong Kong.



Wil was previously deceased by his parents, William Mason Fountain and Midge Fountain. He was married to his beloved and devoted wife, Marilyn Mazor Fountain for 74 years. They have two wonderful children, Merilee Fountain

Hoffman and Douglas Mazor Fountain. Their four loving grandchildren are Lauren Beth, Sandra Jean, Troy and Danny and one great grandson Tenor Patrick.

Wil was very active in his community. His activities included being president of his rotary club, grandfathers club, and the Friday luncheon group. After his business retirement, Wil became very active in the art field. He and Marilyn accumulated a considerable art collection parts of which were donated to major museums including the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., the University of California Art Museum among others. Wil and Marilyn donated several original works by Gauguin to the Gauguin Museum in Tahiti. For this they received an official government commendation.

The main art collection will be subsequently donated to San Francisco State University and the Fountain Family Collection will be available to students, faculty and citizens for years to come. Wil's caring nature will be sadly missed by his loving family and multitude of friends.

Contra Costa Times  
January 16, 2015

## Thomas Murfin: Ground-Level Diplomat

Thomas Hawes Murfin, a state senator's son who enjoyed a satisfying career as a State Department diplomat in Japan and Italy, went far beyond the example set by his father in public service.

Mr. Murfin got down among refugees on Okinawa and helped them build new lives, from the mud up, during and after World War II.

He served as U.S. consul general at embassies in Japan and Italy from 1962 to 1973.

When he lived in Olympia from 1973 to 1986, he assisted refugees from China and Southeast Asia and worked for pacifist causes. Then he bought a farm in Bellingham and a small house in Seattle.

"He was very gentle, very family-oriented and always ready to help anybody," said his wife of 58 years, Julie Murfin of Seattle.

Mr. Murfin died Saturday (Jan. 22, 2000) of leukemia. He was 84.

During his illness, many refugees he had helped would call or visit. One former "boat person," only 12 when she left Vietnam, but now, thanks to his support, an oral surgeon in Georgia, flew here recently to sit at his bedside.

"She had been scared of her first day at an American school, so my father picked her up, drove her to school, gave her a new pencil box and took her picture, which made her very happy," said his daughter Mary Murfin Bayley, Seattle Times dance critic.

Born in Sunnyside, Yakima County, to newspaper publisher and later senator Arthur Murfin and Adella Hawes Murfin, he enjoyed hiking and trail building. He learned Japanese and developed a love of Asian culture from a woman who ran a Sunnyside laundry.

He earned a bachelor's degree in foreign studies at the University of Washington, then served in Okinawa. Later, he joined the U.S. Diplomatic Service with postings abroad.

He retired in 1973 and put his pacifist thoughts into action. He was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, committed to peace and justice.

He also helped war-displaced Southeast Asians resettle in the Northwest.

Fifteen years ago, Mr. Murfin purchased the farm in Bellingham. He spent winters in Seattle.

"He spent all those years in the diplomatic corps, but just loved farming and the outdoors," Bayley said.

Also surviving are his children Asaph Murfin of Amherst, Mass.; James Murfin, Missoula, Mont.; and Julie Pielemeier, Arlington; a brother, Richard Murfin, Ilwaco, Pacific County; sister, Mariem Brumbach, Scott Depot, W.Va.; 12 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Carole Beers  
Seattle Times staff reporter  
Seattle Times  
January 7, 2000