

BEING AN “ASIA MARYLANDER:” THE IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

Timothy P. Maga
July 2020

“TOUR 1” (1981-84): The University of Maryland Far East Division (UMFED) and the renamed University of Maryland Asian Division (UMAD).

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS (Annual Contract, including “roving” duties as a Coordinator for History and Government): JAPAN: Yokota Air Base, Camp Zama, Atsugi Naval Air Station, U.S. Fleet Activities-Yokosuka.

: REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Osan Air Base, Kunsan Air Base, Camp Humphreys, U.S. Army Garrison-Yongsan.

:U.S. TERRITORY OF GUAM: Naval Station, NAVCAMS, Naval Air Station-Agana, Andersen Air Force Base.

“TOUR 2” (1988-91): The University of Maryland Asian Division (UMAD).

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS (Annual Contract, including “roving” duties as a Coordinator for History and Government): JAPAN: Misawa Air Base, Kadena Air Base (Okinawa).

: REPUBLIC OF KOREA: U.S. Army Garrison-Yongsan.

: REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS: A Founding Faculty Member and on-site paper pusher for this new program (1988). Responsible to its founding area director (and UMAD Registrar), Emory Trosper. LOCATIONS: Kwajalein Atoll and Roi-Namur Atolls.

:U.S. TERRITORY OF GUAM: Academic Coordinator/Lecturer (1989-90)

“TOUR 3” (2003-07): The University of Maryland University College Asia (UMUC Asia)

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENT: Academic Director for History, Government, and Asian Studies (UMUC Asia headquarters campus at Yokota Air Base-Japan. Responsible to Dean Lorraine Suzuki).

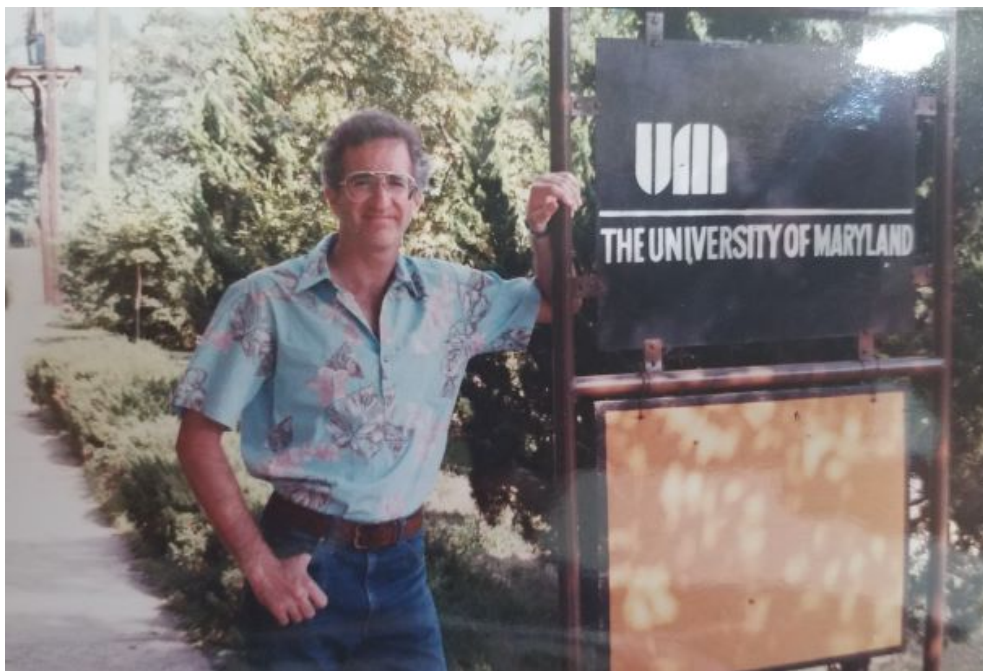
TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS: Yokota Air Base and Camp Zama, Japan.

“TOUR 4” (2015-Present, Distance Learning only): The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) and renamed The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC).

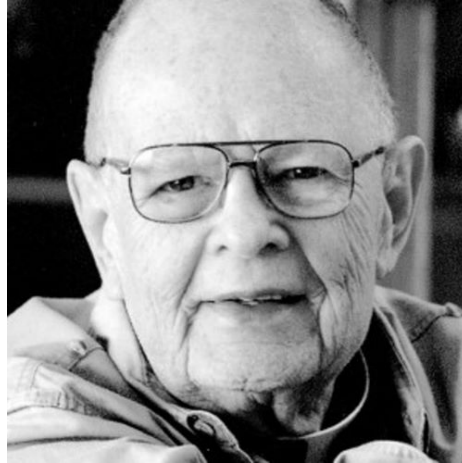
TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS: Collegiate Full-Professor rank. Department of History. Students: Mostly enlisted military/dependents on bases in the Asia/Pacific region.



DAY ONE OF "TOUR ONE," Yokota Air Base-Japan, August 1981. Wary, jet-lagged, a Ph.D. in history for only days, and fresh from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, my 27 year-old self is now an "Asia Marylander." Like veteran "Asia Marylander" and Registrar Emory Trospen once told me, Maryland work looked like something "one might do for a little while." (He was there for decades). Next year marks my 40th year of doing something-or-other for what my "Asia Maryland" mentor and friend, Dr./Fr. Jay D. Dobbin, once called "Mother Maryland."



CAMP COINER, SEOUL, KOREA (1988) DURING "TOUR 2." Fresh from a trail-blazing and fascinating assignment to Kwajalein and Roi-Namur in the RMI (Republic of the Marshall Islands).



“AN INTERESTING CHARACTER.” When hired the first time (May 1981) to join the University of Maryland-Far East Division (UMFED), I was told by the Stateside/home campus hiring-authorities that I would meet “interesting characters over there.” This was understatement. One of the most memorable and influential is photographed here, Dr./Fr. Jay D. Dobbin, near the end of his life in 2011. Dr. Dobbin held the Ph.D. in both sociology and anthropology, a Masters in theology (from a school in Rome), had been a ski instructor with the 1960 U.S. Olympics ski team, multi-lingual, a buddy to Popes, a superb writer, longtime coordinator of Asia Maryland programs on the U.S. Territory of Guam, and, was, without question, the most masterful classroom performer I’ve ever seen. I’ve tried to live up to his commitment and expertise.



“ANOTHER INTERESTING CHARACTER.” The “interesting” personality and influence did not have to be a fellow Asia Maryland faculty member. Those “interesting” folks tended to congregate near Asia Maryland operations, such as the gentleman to the left in this photograph, Ernest Jefferson “Jeff” Cheek. This 1990 picture was taken at a Ryokan in a tiny seaside village at the tip of Tohoku province in Japan, and “Mr. Cheek” was the longtime Education Service Officer (ESO) of Misawa Air Base near there. He was a former CIA field officer in the Southeast Asia of the 1950s, former CIA Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, former “Kennedy For President” campaign director (1960) in Honolulu, Hawaii, and that was just the start of it. Also a former Shakespearean actor, he was greatly interested in “classroom delivery.” His advice was solid, and is still employed in my own work today.

Somebody once said that character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved. The “Asia Maryland” life could be trying, forever distant, and, at the same time, challenging, inspiring, and life-changing. Those latter qualities are often confined to the “Asia Maryland” student experience, but I am living proof that faculty were a part of this equation as well. Indeed, the exotic travel, the “interesting characters,” and the everyday challenges of a now long-gone Asia/Pacific were always important components of the “Asia Maryland” package. But, for this writer, the bottom line was, and remains, the learning factor.

Masterful teachers taught me their stuff. Masterful writers taught me how to please an academic audience and wow a general audience at the same time. Administrative trial-and-error taught me how to be (and how not to be) an acceptable boss-man. Without this learning experience, there would have been no opportunities in Congress (as the youngest ever Legislative Director of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Asia/Pacific Affairs). There would have been no teaching award-winning, full-professor/endorsed chair in my field by age 43. And there would have been no “go for it” attitude that has led to the Hollywood writing and Big Screen acting opportunities of recent years. Because of these things, I always head back to a Maryland assignment to learn more, integrate more, and share with others. And that is that.



SIGN OF THE TIMES, APRIL 2020. Myself and my spouse of 28 years, Patsy Ann Maga; former Acting Coordinator, UMAD, on the U.S. Territory of Guam (1988-89), as well as former Library Assistant and Assistant to the Dean (Dr. Lorraine Suzuki), UMUC Asia, 2005-07.
