



Courtesy of Bismarck Myrick

Fostering Positive Change

Ambassador takes a people-oriented approach to diplomacy in Africa

By Gary Pallassino

Bismarck Myrick has represented the United States in some of Africa's most troubled areas, and witnessed firsthand one of the continent's most significant events—the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Appointed U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Liberia in 1999—after the post had been vacant during a decade of civil crisis there—Myrick has worked to strengthen U.S. relations with the country as well as improve the lives of the Liberian people. “Each environment is different,” he says of his U.S. Foreign Service assignments. “The degree of attention the society's leaders give to the development and management of their political process, the delivery of good governance, the level of education and educational programs, the management of disputes and crises—all these factors weigh on how the society functions. Our role as Americans in these environments causes us to be positive

change agents, while protecting our values of democracy, fair play, and openness.”

The Portsmouth, Virginia, native was a U.S. Army foreign area officer for Ethiopia when he arrived at the Maxwell School to work on an interdisciplinary graduate degree in African studies and a Ph.D. in history. Highly decorated for heroism in Vietnam, he'd also served in South Korea, Japan, and Germany. “I was traveling around the world and was fascinated with different cultures,” he says. “I was particularly interested in Africa because I found so much misunderstanding and distortion regarding all aspects of the continent.”

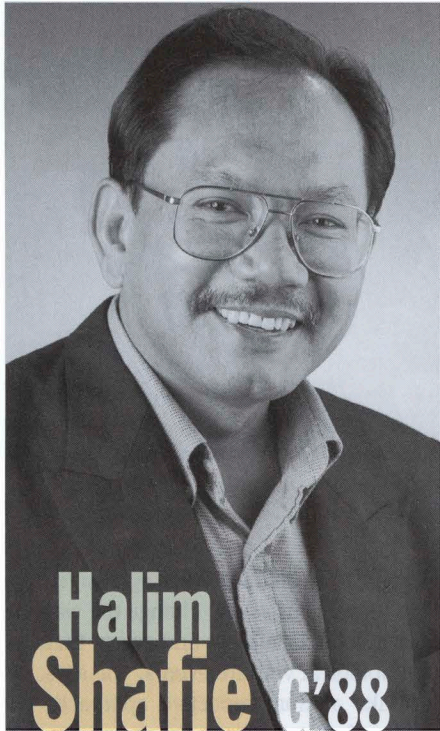
Myrick found a good academic grounding at SU for his work in international relations and went on to direct African studies in the School of International Studies at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for several years before returning as a Syracuse University Fellow to work on his dissertation. His fascination with different cultures ulti-

mately led him to enter the foreign service in 1980, completing assignments in Somalia, Liberia, and South Africa.

In 1995 President Bill Clinton appointed him ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, where he traveled extensively throughout the country and talked to people from all walks of life. The government named him Officer of the Most Meritorious Order of Mohlomi, the kingdom's highest honor for a noncitizen. Myrick's people-oriented approach to diplomacy continues in Liberia, where he welcomes more than 400 youths to his residence each Thanksgiving Day. Liberia's major newspapers named him Diplomat of the Year and Man of the Year in both 1999 and 2000.

Aside from his personal triumphs, Myrick says the United States has had differing degrees of success bringing positive change to Africa. “I was in South Africa when it experienced the most challenging and profound change that has taken place on this continent, evolving from apartheid to multiparty, nonracial democracy,” he says. “After about a half-century of those wrongheaded policies, to be present for that change was significant and rewarding from an American citizen's perspective.”

Malaysia Goes Digital



Courtesy of Halim Shafie

As deputy secretary general of Malaysia's Ministry for Energy, Communications, and Multimedia, Halim Shafie is one of the leading players in the country's entry into the world of digital convergence. A few years ago, the government passed the Communications and Multimedia Act, which replaced licensing and regulation laws that treated the telecommunications and broadcasting industries as separate entities. Under the new act, companies are licensed in four broad areas, based on the services they provide—network facilities, network services, application services, and content services. "I believe we are the first country in the world to create a digital convergence law," says Shafie, who earned a doctoral degree from the School of Information Studies. "The goal is to create a new market structure that allows for cross-movement of companies and broadens competition within the industry."

Shafie's ministry oversees the implementation of the new law, which is also designed to allow for broader participation in the regulatory process by consumers and industry. The ministry also provides ongoing support for the adoption and im-

plementation of new licensing and regulation codes being written under the act by representatives from industry, nongovernmental organizations, and consumers.

Shafie has worked in the Malaysian government since graduating from the University of Malaysia in 1972 with a degree in economics and economic development. He helped establish the country's National Computer Training Center and would eventually like to focus on creating quality higher-education programs in Malaysia, particularly in the area of advanced management training. "We need to build the educational capabilities in Malaysia," says Shafie, who also holds degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and the Harvard Business School. "It is expensive to send people out of the country for this training."

The solution, Shafie says, lies in leveraging technology and relationships with universities in the United States and Europe to develop distance education programs to meet the country's needs. "Development of the Internet and the improving economy in Malaysia are opening opportunities to establish these long-distance relationships," he says.

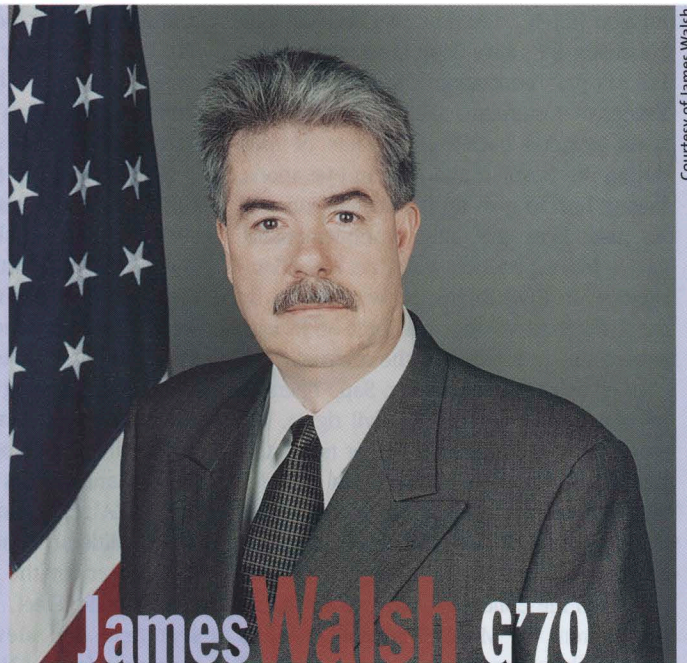
—Judy Holmes

Assignment: Argentina

Ambassador James Walsh looks out his window and sees nothing but clear blue skies from his desk at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For Walsh, this is the final assignment after more than 30 years of foreign service, which included work in Kenya, Canada, Mexico, and Belgium. As a "career" ambassador, he was appointed to the post in Argentina in June 2000 by President Bill Clinton and expects to complete his service in 2003, unless President George W. Bush names a new ambassador to the country. "When retirement comes, I will join the private sector as a consultant on Latin America," he says. "My ambassadorship in Argentina caps an incredibly diverse career and sits on the bedrock of my M.P.A. from the Maxwell School. My opportunities will be bountiful."

As the U.S. government representative to Argentina, Walsh works with American businesspeople and investors to develop trade relationships with the country. He also serves as a liaison to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, advising government officials about Argentina's economy and issues that could affect foreign policy. Although Walsh says Argentina's economy is growing slowly and suffers from high unemployment rates, he believes the country has the potential to be a great trade partner. "Argentina has provided more human and capital investments for UN peacekeeping efforts than the rest of Latin America combined," he points out.

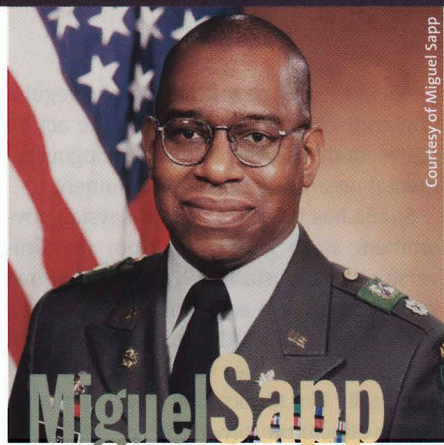
When Walsh arrived in Argentina for his ambassadorship, he already was familiar with the country. In 1964, as a high school



Courtesy of James Walsh

Rotary exchange student there, he fell in love with the country's beauty and intriguing mix of Italian and Spanish cultures. "The impulsive nature of the culture melds perfectly with my life and work style," he says. "Flexibility and enthusiasm are the hallmarks of my approach to work. I try not to lose sight of the joys of spontaneity."

—Joanne Arany



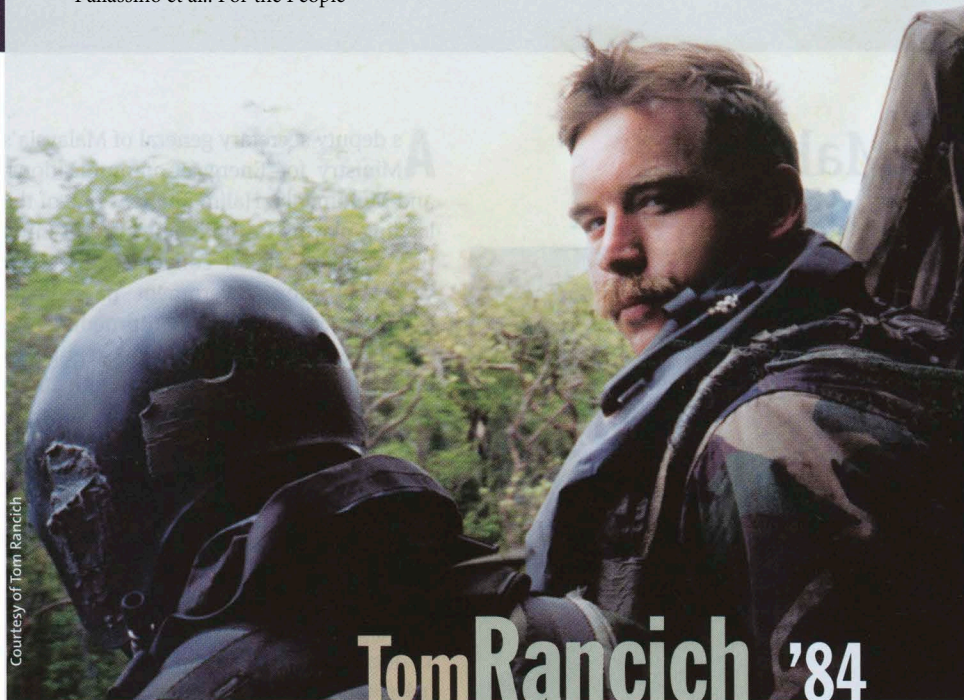
Courtesy of Miguel Sapp

Miguel Sapp '82, G'88, G'89 Rights Minded

Miguel Sapp admits it sounds corny, “but I remember as a kid listening to JFK saying: ‘Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.’ Basically that’s the way I’ve always conducted myself.” Now in his early 40s, Sapp leads a dual existence in public service. He’s a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve and battalion commander of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne). In civilian life, he’s a senior trial attorney (civil rights) for the Office of the General Counsel of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). “At times it’s been a tough balancing act,” says Sapp, a member of the SU Alumni Association Board of Directors Executive Committee. His military obligations included back-to-back tours of duty during the Bosnian and Haitian operations, forcing him to give up his civilian job. But his two lives are often complementary. Given his experience with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, he was tapped by the Army to serve on a task force on racism, extremism, and sexism in the reserves.

In all aspects of his career, Sapp operates by one guiding principle: “Civil rights, human rights, are right.” As senior trial attorney for the EEOC, he prosecutes complex civil rights cases. Sapp—who studied political science and speech communication as an undergraduate before earning a J.D. degree from the College of Law and an M.P.A. degree from the Maxwell School—seeks to balance duty, compassion, and a sense of what is right. “I look at my own life, and I look at the needs of the military, because they’re paramount,” he says. “As an attorney, your first duty is always to your client, and my client is the United States.”

—Rose DeNeve



Courtesy of Tom Rancich

Tom Rancich '84

Battling Terrorism

A friend once told Lieutenant Commander Tom Rancich: “It took five different characters to make one of you.” This observation is right on the mark—Rancich is a Navy SEAL, the operations officer for Naval Special Warfare Group II, an antiterrorism expert, an award-winning writer, and an M.B.A. candidate at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. “I enjoy experiencing new things and crossing new frontiers,” Rancich says. “I like pushing my personal envelope.”

Rancich decided to embark on a military career when he realized he could put his strong swimming skills to good use in the Navy. “A Navy recruiter talked to me about diving and explosive ordnance disposal,” recalls Rancich, who majored in English in the College of Arts and Sciences. “That sounded interesting to me.”

After serving as a Navy diver and explosive ordnance disposal technician for six years, Rancich was accepted into the elite Navy SEAL program and was later appointed expeditionary antiterrorism force protection officer for the commander-in-chief of the Atlantic Fleet. For two years he researched and developed antiterrorism measures for the Navy. As a result of this experience, he wrote an article published last year in the U.S. Naval Institute’s magazine, *Proceedings* (www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles00/prorancich.htm). In the article, Rancich offered a blunt synopsis of what he believed the Navy could

do to better prepare itself against terrorism. “My intent was to change the way we look at terrorist attacks and accept them as psychological warfare events,” he says. “If we take a more proactive approach, we can combat terrorists in the short term and defeat their strategy in the long run.”

Last October, while the article was being edited, terrorists attacked the *USS Cole* in Yemen, claiming the lives of 17 sailors. “The hardest thing about that for me was that I mentioned in the article a situation where a small craft was coming up along a Naval ship,” Rancich says. “Then it actually happened.”

The article became must-read material within the Navy and earned Rancich the Naval Surface Literary Award from the Naval Surface Warfare Association and the U.S. Naval Institute. “What the United States does from now on will determine whether the terrorists have a successful attack or an unsuccessful attack,” he says. “We need to be proactive to deflect a developing threat.”

In addition to his military career, Rancich founded Wounded Bear Strategies, a consulting firm that applies SEAL Team strategies to the challenges of the business world. “I find it interesting how totally different experiences have so much in common—like the goals of unconventional warfare and the tactics of business strategies,” he says. “I enjoy finding new pieces to improve the old puzzle.”

—Tammy DiDomenico

View From the Bench

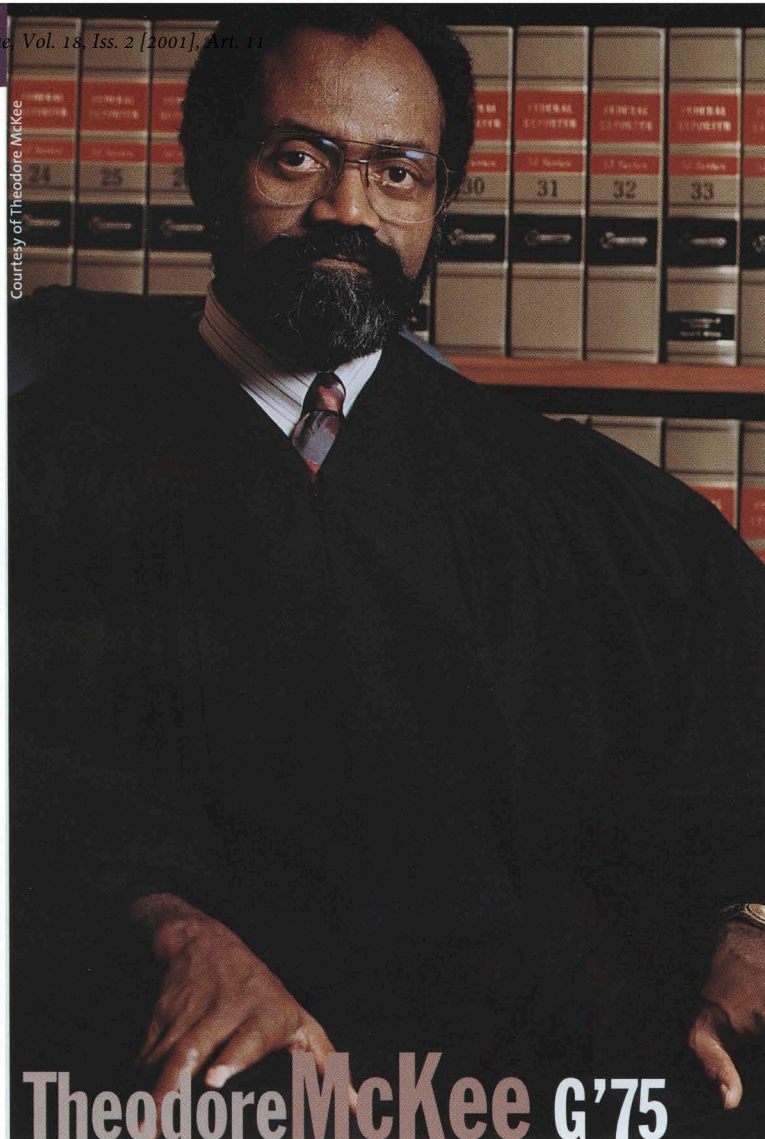
Theodore McKee grew up in the small town of Scottsville, New York, but he was keenly aware of the big picture. He knew early on that the law would be his way of making a difference in the world. “The Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the assassinations of King and Malcolm X—there was a lot going on,” he says, “and it seemed to me that law was an avenue to have a constructive impact for change in this country and society.”

Today, as a federal appeals court judge in Philadelphia, McKee is making a difference in human rights cases and labor disputes as well as criminal and civil law cases. A judge with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, McKee is only the fourth African American to serve on that bench. “The variety of issues we get is incredible,” he says. “We have human rights issues regarding immigration; criminal law cases; cases involving all aspects of civil law; and all kinds of labor cases—involving retirement benefits as well as whether an employer or labor union has engaged in an unfair labor practice. It provides a wealth of exposure to things I find very stimulating and challenging intellectually.”

After graduating from SU’s College of Law, McKee spent two years with the prestigious Philadelphia law firm Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen. He then served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania before joining the Philadelphia city solicitor’s office as deputy for enforcement. Three years later he won a seat as a trial judge in the state’s Court of Common Pleas, and stayed there for more than 10 years until he was appointed to the federal court circuit in 1994. “I love reading and writing and that’s what I do all day long,” he says.

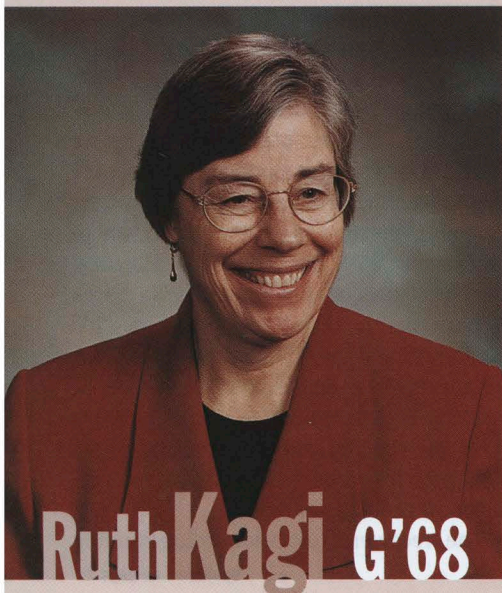
After work, McKee continues his public service with community organizations. “I think it’s important for people in the legal profession to work toward bettering the lives of others,” he says. “Public service is the most important aspect of my profession.”

—Gary Pallassino



Theodore McKee G'75

Championing Children's Causes



Ruth Kagi G'68

Courtesy of Ruth Kagi

Washington state legislator Ruth Kagi never intended to go into politics. After earning an M.P.A. degree from the Maxwell School, she settled into a 15-year career in employment and training administration at the U.S. Department of Labor.

From there Kagi became active in the League of Women Voters—which proved to be her first step toward a political career. “I lobbied for a ballot issue we called the Children’s Initiative, and I got to know my legislators quite well,” she says. “One of them encouraged me to run for office.”

Kagi, who owns and manages a commercial real estate business, waited until her daughter was older before taking the plunge into politics, and was elected representative of Washington’s 32nd Legislative District (northwest King County) in 1998. “My work with the political process as a private citizen came together with my background in public administration,” Kagi says. “Being a legislator is the best way to improve public policy.”

She set her priorities on improving children’s services and introduced a successful bill to establish residential services for homeless youth. “I sponsored another bill to consolidate our fragmented child-care delivery system,” Kagi says. “It didn’t pass, but the governor took the idea and is moving forward with consolidation.”

This year, Kagi is introducing “A Fair Deal for Foster Kids” bill that will move the Department of Social and Health Services toward providing better services and greater accountability, and improve support for foster parents. “One of the ironies is that voters are approving revenue reductions at the same time they’re dictating an increase in expenditures,” she says.

Kagi calls being a legislator the most rewarding job she’s ever had—aside from being a parent. “Just introducing a bill can help drive public policy,” she says. “The executive branch focuses more when a legislator picks up an issue and starts running with it.”

—Carol North Schmuckler