

# A Memorial – James H. Albertson and the Wisconsin Team: Fifty Years Since the Air America Crash, March 22, 1967

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Today's Forum: **A Memorial:** James Albertson & the Wisconsin Team, 50 years since Air America crash, March 22, 1967

Today's memorial will be a *journey through my nearly two decades of research focusing on the Wisconsin Stevens Point USAID contract working with higher education in Vietnam.*

**(Today Part I) Early Research Methodology** I started researching this topic in 1996 as part of my graduate studies... leading to MST/History in 2003... For which, I received *Param Gun Sood* MAGS Award, Midwestern Association Graduate Schools, 2004, UWSP thesis: "Higher Education in Vietnam: United States Agency for International Development Contract in Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and Republic of Vietnam, 1966-74."

I've continued this research with peer reviewed article and numerous conference papers

**(Today Part II) Second phase of research and methodology. My sabbatical...**

Justus and Barbara Paul Faculty Award, 2014 sabbatical: "Quiet Warriors: a Comparative Examination of American University United States Agency for International Development (USAID) efforts to reform higher education in Vietnam."

## Research related Scholarly work/awards

2014 Justus and Barbara Paul Faculty Award (UWSP sabbatical)

2008 Publication: "Reforming Higher Education in a Society at War: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point's Advisory Mission in South Vietnam, 1967-1974." *Journal for the study of peace and conflict*. 2008-2009. pp. 2-24.

2004 Portage County (WI) Historical Society Winn Rothman Award

2004 MAGS (Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools) ParamGun Sood Thesis Award, "Higher Education in Vietnam: USAID Contract in Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and Republic of Vietnam, 1966-1974"

2003 UWSP Distinguished Thesis Award; 2001 UWSP Graduate Council Award

<http://epapers.uwsp.edu/thesis/2003/reich.pdf>

## Research related CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (does not include my Library conference materials)

Jan. 9-12, 2011

"Reforming Higher Education in a Society at War: USOM/USAID Contracts with American Universities in South Vietnam." 9th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities (peer-reviewed paper)

April 2009

"James H. Albertson Learning Resource Center: A Leader, a Legacy, and Center of Innovation." Poster session, WAAL 2009 Conference Green Lake, WI

March 14, 2009

"USAID Report: Architectural Notes in Vietnam, 1974. Campus Designs For South Vietnam: The Influence of Thailand's Thammasat University and Other Southeast Asian Models of Educational Architecture." Peer-reviewed paper, part of conference panel: *The War in Thailand*. 2009 Vietnam Center Conference: Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand and the Vietnam War, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

March 14, 2008

"Higher Education in Vietnam: USAID Contract in Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam." Peer-reviewed paper, part of conference panel: *Education and the Vietnam War*. 6<sup>th</sup> Triennial Vietnam Symposium, Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

March 15, 2008

Moderator/review panel's papers: *Political Warfare, American Protest, and South Vietnamese Intellectuals*. 6<sup>th</sup> Triennial Vietnam Symposium, Vietnam Center,

April 12, 2007

"The Wisconsin Contract in Higher Education and other USAID/Wisconsin Team efforts." Peer-reviewed paper, part of conference panel: *Military Presence in the Upper Midwest*.

Northern Great Plains History Conference, Sioux Falls, SD.

**Database:**

UW - Stevens Point University Library

**Main Author:**

[University of Wisconsin--Stevens Point Foundation.](#)

**Other Author(s):**

[Albertson, James Herbert, 1925-1967.](#)

[Eagon, Burdette Wilmont, 1919-](#)

[Vickerstaff, William B.](#)

[Dreyfus, Lee Sherman, 1926-2008](#)

**Title:**

Higher education in Vietnam : Albertson, Vickerstaff, Eagon, Dreyfus files.

**Primary Material:**

Archival/Manuscript Material

**More about this person:**

[Dreyfus, Lee Sherman, 1926-2008](#)

[Albertson, James Herbert, 1925-1967.](#)

**More about this subject:**

[Vietnam.](#)

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**Location:**

Archives (5th Floor) Non-circulating

**Call Number:**

[SERIES 17](#)

## Why Stevens Point USAID?

And, why this choice as my research emphasis?

In large part, I am a product of the Vietnam Era.

In terms of historical value, the USAID WSU-SP RVN contract in higher education was both local and international. In terms of unique historical research, the efforts associated with the Wisconsin USAID Team had been footnoted in other manuscripts, but had never been the focal point of any study!

Thus, as a historian, my initial choice of this research topic and continued scholarship.

The more I follow this research journey, the more indebted I am to James Albertson and the Wisconsin Team for their sincere educational efforts and ultimate sacrifice. **And the more indebted I am to Archives!**

## **Why Stevens Point USAID?**

James H. Albertson had developed an interest in USAID efforts during his administrative work at Ball State University. Albertson, at the age of 36 became the eighth president of Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point (WSC-SP), assuming his office on 1 July 1962. Albertson's energy and academic motivation fit the mold of the early 1960's, President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier." He worked at Ball State from 1957 to 1962, assisting in a thorough reorganization of Ball State's administrative structure.

As college president, Albertson brought new ideas to Wisconsin State-Stevens Point, a course of steady growth and change. During his tenure, WSC-SP/WSU-SP experienced unprecedented growth, evolving from College to University.

Albertson looked to augment the campus's international participation as he envisioned WSU-SP as a leader in both innovative programming and multicultural awareness, a commitment that led to the mission in Vietnam.

In 1964, the USAID and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education presented WSU-SP with a grant providing for a university intern from the Philippines to come to WSU-SP to study administrative procedures. A second, larger USAID grant came to Stevens Point in 1966, calling on Albertson to serve as chief-of-team for a group of American educators to go to South Vietnam to conduct a study of higher education and construct recommendations for reforms.

The Contractor (WSU-SP) was to prepare and process preliminary and final survey reports, to be submitted to USAID Far East Technical Advisory Staff, which was to distribute recommendations, goals, priorities and assist in the achievement of such goals.

The USAID called on the Contractor to provide a survey team of approximately seven members, for a period of three to six months, which were to consult with appropriate officials of the GVN, the USAID Mission to Vietnam, and Vietnamese university educators, in order to obtain and organize data and information necessary to formulate an analysis of the program and facilities.

The contract specified that the team be composed of specialists in administration, letters, science, behavioral sciences, law, business administration, foreign languages, or other fields as agreed to by the parties. The survey team soon became known as the Wisconsin Team.

The original Wisconsin Team was composed of: Chief-of-team, James H. Albertson, President Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, (formerly of Ball State); Harry F. Bangsberg, President Bemidji State College; A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Wisconsin State University-Whitewater; Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences, Wisconsin State University-River Falls; Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University; Howard G. Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College, (formerly of Ball State); and Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago. Robert LaFollette, USAID Higher Education Advisor, Saigon Office, (formerly of Ball State and cousin of the Wisconsin LaFollete family), joined them in Vietnam.



Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point President James H. Albertson departing for Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)



Original seven members of the Wisconsin Team: (front row) Howard Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College; A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics, WSU-Whitewater; Harry F. Bangsberg, President Bemidji State College; (back row) Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University; Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences, WSU-River Falls; James H. Albertson, President WSU-Stevens Point ; Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago. They were joined in Vietnam by Robert LaFollette, (not pictured) USAID Higher Education Advisor, Saigon Office, (formerly of Ball State and cousin of the Wisconsin LaFollete family).

# VIETNAMESE INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

## **The University of Saigon (Vietnam) (1955)**

The University of Saigon's enrollment of 26,916, in 1967, was greater than that of the entire Republic's other higher education institutions combined. In 1973, it claimed an enrollment of almost 64,000 among its eight facilities.

## **The University of Hue (1957)**

Hue, as the former Imperial City, was given the challenge of establishing a university of culture in the national language.

## **The University of Dalat (1957)**

Established in the central highlands at Dalat under Roman Catholic auspices.

## **The University of Van Hanh (1964)**

Institution operated by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam/Vien Hoa Dao (the Organization for Executing the Dharma).

## **The University of Can Tho (1966)**

There had been no university in the largely agricultural Delta, which contained one-third of the Republic's population. Can Tho emerged as a focal point and a model university during the American USAID Team's advisory era, with WSU-SP serving as its virtual agent. Today, in a unified Vietnam, Can Tho remains as an important model institute of higher education, striving to demonstrate a mission that serves local and national needs.

## **(Polytechnic) University of Thu Duc (1966)**

Model training university during time of the American USAID team efforts, and remains vibrant in modern Vietnam, one of several branches in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).

In January 1967, the seven member USAID Team arrived in Vietnam to survey Vietnamese higher education. Each consultant, as an academic specialist, contributed the application of their educational expertise in institutional growth. In February 1967, Albertson returned briefly to Stevens Point holding administrative discussions on a second USAID request for another Wisconsin Team, a National Study Team. Burdette Eagon, WSU-SP Dean of Educational Services and Innovative Programs, accepted the new leadership role for that second Wisconsin Team.

In March of 1967, Albertson and the original team continued their tour of Vietnamese universities, working to modify their report based on responses obtained from their Vietnamese counterparts in Dalat, Saigon, Thu Duc, Hue, and Can Tho.

On 21 March 1967, Albertson sent an optimistic message of progress to WSU-SP, noting plans to construct a final draft and return home by mid-April. On 22 March 1967, on route to Hue from Saigon, bad weather forced the Air America twin-engine plane carrying the Wisconsin Team back to Da Nang to refuel. A second attempt to cross over the mountains in monsoon weather ended in a disastrous crash. There were no survivors as the pilot, Bruce Massey, Le Habra, CA, USAID advisor Robert R. LaFollette, and all seven members of the Wisconsin-led survey team were killed. All of the victims were memorialized in Vietnam, each awarded posthumously with the *Vietnamese Medal of Merit First Class*.

Bud Eagon, would replace Albertson as chief of team, and the Wisconsin USAID contract would be extended, running to 1974. Over the years, **some fifty different consultants worked under the banner of the Wisconsin Team, producing thirty-eight major reports and surveys.**

# 3 Educators Die in Viet Plane Crash; AID's Worst Accident

Education Advisor Dr. Robert La Follette and seven other U.S. educators were killed in a plane crash on March 23 when their plane crashed into a mountain of Hanoi during a monsoon storm. The Air America pilot was killed.

The worst accident in AID's

education work, including large projects, was in Vietnam under an AID contract to develop the country's higher education program and draw up a plan for higher education. In January, the study was completed April 1.

At the time of their deaths, the educators were traveling from Hanoi to visit the university at Vinh in the north. The plane was unshelved landing because of bad weather and decided to complete the trip.

They were:

Dr. Robert La Follette, 72, a history professor who came to AID in 1960 as a higher education advisor in Ethiopia. He

... the 'good bear' of the long flight struggle for freedom ...  
 John F. Kennedy

## FRONT LINES

Washington, D.C.  
 Agency for International Development



ROBERT LA FOLLETTE

was education advisor to the U.S. High Commissioner in Germany during 1960-62 and a faculty member at Oldenburg University in Germany in 1956.

Dr. James Albertson, 41, president of Wisconsin State University's Stevens Point branch and loans director.

(Continued on page 4)

transferred to Vietnam in May, 1964. A resident of Muncie, Ind., La Follette graduated from Indiana State College at Terre Haute in 1916, received a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1917, attended Har-

vard University in 1923 and received a Ph.D. from George Washington University in 1932.

He was head of the department of Social Sciences at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie for 32 years and taught at the Uni-



THE EIGHT educators killed in the March 23 plane crash in Vietnam, are shown before their departure. Back row, first, third, fourth and fifth from left James H. Albertson, Vincent F. Conroy, William L. Wall and Arthur D. Fildes. The other four men were not with the plane. Robert La Follette, Harry F. Dargatzis, Donald Beattie and John J. Johnsen are, front row, second, third and fourth from left.

Back row, first, third, fourth and fifth from left James H. Albertson, Vincent F. Conroy, William L. Wall and Arthur D. Fildes. The other four men were not with the plane. Robert La Follette, Harry F. Dargatzis, Donald Beattie and John J. Johnsen are, front row, second, third and fourth from left.

# Crash Kills 8 U. S. Educators

Saigon, March 24 (AP)—A plane crash in a monsoon storm yesterday wiped out a team of eight American educators who were surveying South Vietnam's high school and college problems on a tour sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

All the group, most of them Midwesterners, perished with the pilot when their twin-engine Air America plane smashed into a rain-veiled mountain North of Da Nang.

A. U. S. spokesman announced today the tragic end of the educational research mission, undertaken in January, which was to have ended in mid-April.

Messages to relatives and schools in the United States identified the victims:

James Albertson, 41, president of Wisconsin's Stevens Point State University, who headed the team.

Harry F. Bangsberg, 39, president of Bemidji (Minn.) State College.

A. Donald Beattie, 45, dean of the school of business and economics at Whitewater (Wis.) State University.

Vincent F. Courroy, 44, director of field studies at Harvard's center for educational research.

Howard G. Johnson, 48, dean of academic affairs at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.

Robert R. LaFollette, 72, of Muncie, Ind., former history professor, with AID in Saigon since 1964. He was a third cousin of former Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr.

Arthur D. Pickett, 51, director

of the honors program at the University of Illinois Chicago circle campus.

Melvin L. Wall, 54, head of the department of plant and earth sciences at River Falls (Wis.) State University.

## Pilot Not Identified

The pilot was not identified immediately.

The Air America line is a civilian company. It operates in South Vietnam under charter to the U.S. mission.

The crash came on the last leg of a flight from Saigon to Hue, the old imperial capital 400 miles north of Saigon.

The spokesman said rain and turbulence prompted the pilot to put down at Da Nang, but he later decided to fly the final 80 miles despite the weather.

Albertson, president of Stevens Point State since 1962, received

the assignment from AID about a year ago. He left the United States with the team Jan. 2 and returned early in February for a few days to organize a second team. He was a leader in efforts to establish the community colleges system in Wisconsin.

## Native of Colorado

A native of Bush, Colo., he was executive assistant to the president of Ball State College, Muncie, Ind., before becoming president at Stevens Point where the student body increased from 2,400 to 6,100 during his tenure.

La Fquette served with the field hospital corps in World War I and was an interpreter with the army of occupation in Germany after that war. He taught at Indiana State and then Ball State, where he served as head of the social science department from 1921 until his retirement in 1961.

On leave from Ball State, he returned to Germany to serve as education adviser to the U.S.



(NEWS Man by Staff AP/ed)  
Map locates plane crash.



Harry F.  
Bangsberg  
Victims of plane crash



Vincent F.  
Courroy  
Victims of plane crash



Robert  
LaFollette  
Among the dead



James H.  
Albertson  
Among the dead

high commissioner from 1950 to 1952 and as professor at Oldenburg University in 1956.

(Other Viet news on page 6)

# Vietnamese Will Honor Albertson

The Vietnamese Medal of Merit First Class will be presented posthumously Saturday to James H. Albertson of Stevens Point and seven others who died March 23 while making a study of higher education in South Vietnam.

Dr. Albertson, president of Wisconsin State University, headed the team. He and his companions were killed in a plane crash near Da Nang in the northern part of the country.

Dr. Barbara W. Eagon of WSCU, who is heading a team currently studying elementary, secondary and vocational education in South Vietnam, will accept the awards.

The presentation will be made at Saigon University by Premier Nguyen Cao Ky.

In addition to Dr. Albertson, the educators were:

Dr. Harry F. Bangsberg, president of Bemidji State College, Minnesota.

Dr. A. Donald Beattie, dean of the school of business at Wisconsin State University, White-water, Wis.

Dr. Vincent F. Conroy, director of field studies at Harvard University's center for educational research.

Dr. Howard G. Johnson, dean of academic affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.

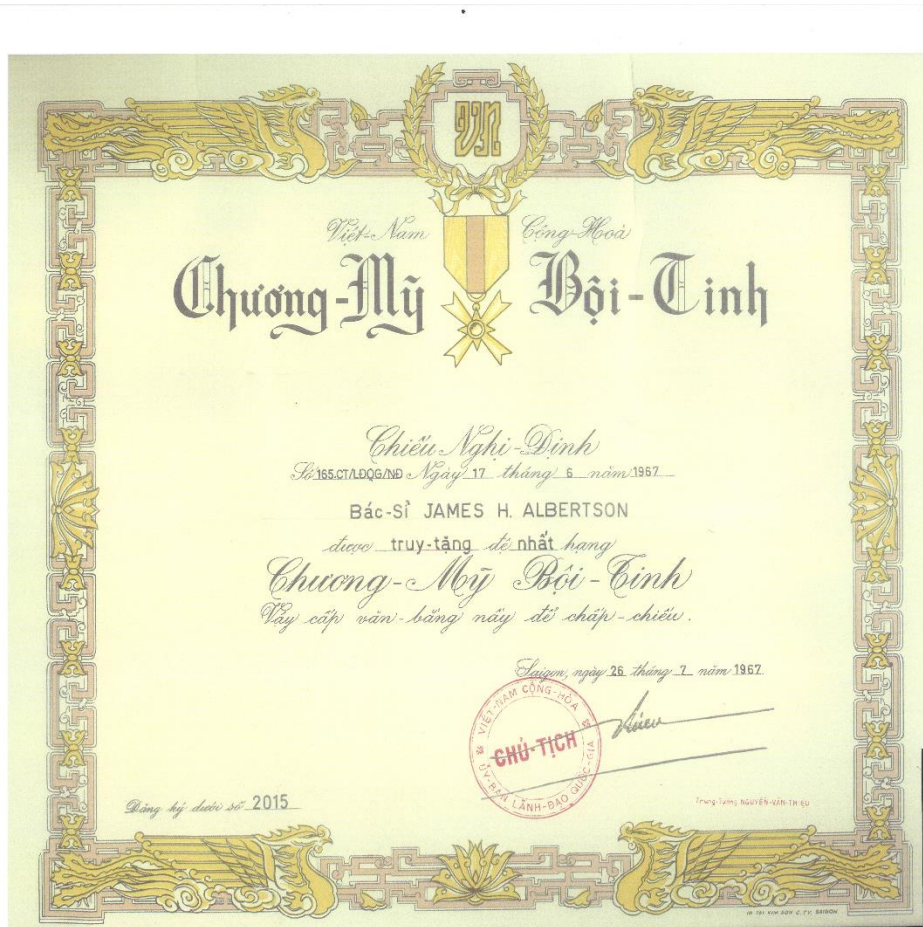
Dr. Arthur D. Piccoli, professor of biological sciences, University of Illinois, Chicago.

Dr. Melvin L. Wall, head of the department of plant and earth sciences at Wisconsin State University, River Falls, Wis.

Dr. Robert R. La Follette, higher education adviser with the Agency for International Development.



RVN Memorial Service for Wisconsin Team, the mutual commitment found a new common-ground.



Việt-Nam Cộng-Hòa  
**Chương-Mỹ Bội-Tinh**

*Chiếu-Nghị-Dinh*  
Số 165-CT/LĐQG/ND Ngày 17 tháng 6 năm 1967

Bác-Sĩ JAMES H. ALBERTSON

*được truy-tặng đ. nhất-hạng*

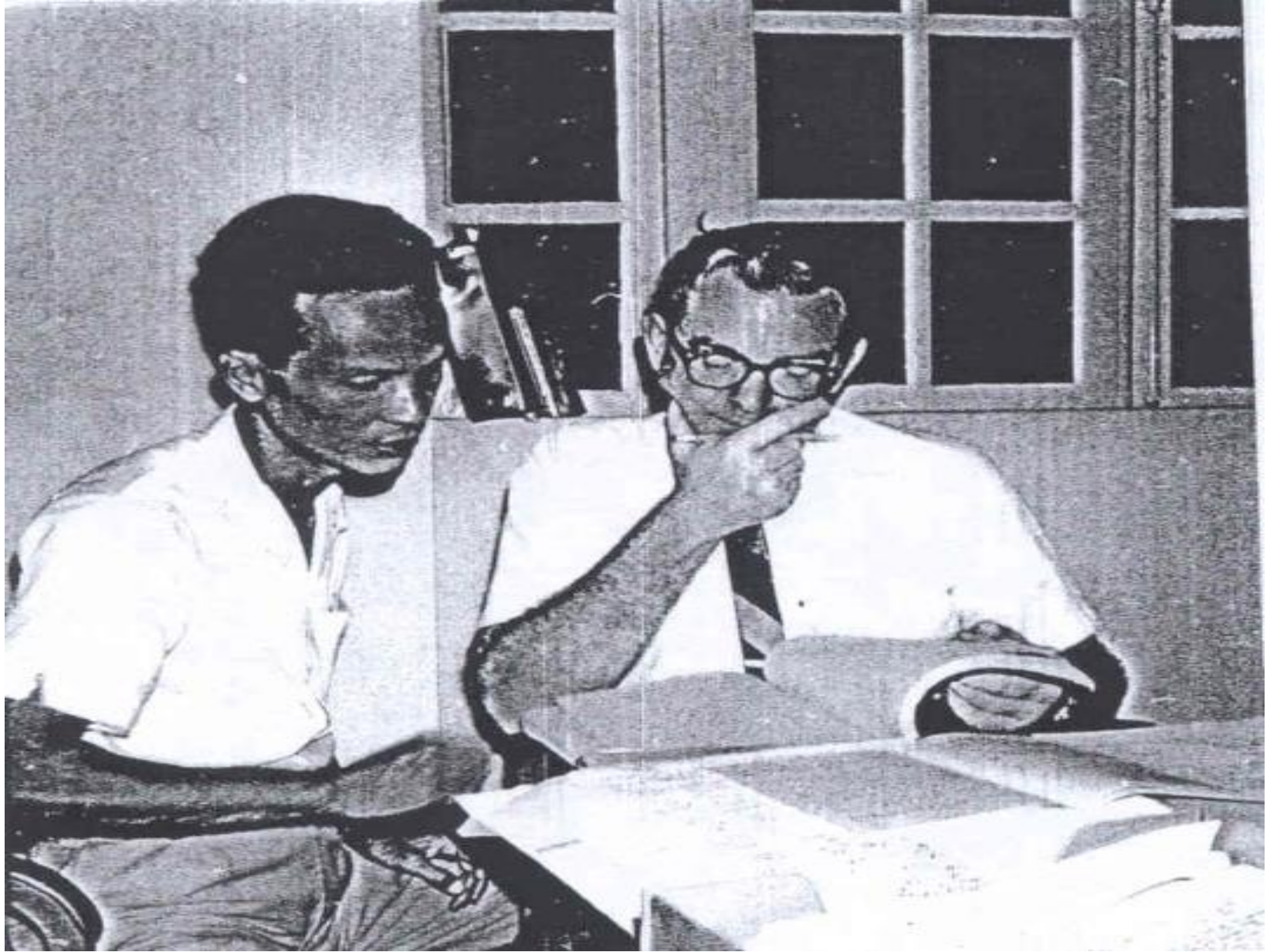
*Chương-Mỹ Bội-Tinh*  
*Vây cấp vào: bằng này để chấp-chiếu.*

Saigon, ngày 26 tháng 1 năm 1967.

**CHỦ-TỊCH**  
*[Signature]*

Trưng-Tam NGUYỄN-VĂN-THỰ

Số đăng ký dưới số 2015



Eagon went to Vietnam seven times consulting and working with Vietnamese counterparts on field surveys and reforms. Eagon returned to post war Vietnam twice in 1990's.



**WSU-SP hosted numerous seminars and tours.**  
Pictured here in Stevens Point, **Lee Sherman Dreyfus** gives Vietnamese  
rectors (university presidents) The Wisconsin Story



(seated) President Lyndon Baines Johnson with Vietnamese Rectors (standing) Egon, USAID officials and Dreyfus



Republic of Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu and WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus meeting in Presidential Palace, Saigon

## **Second phase of research and methodology. My sabbatical...**

Justus and Barbara Paul Faculty Award,

2014 sabbatical: “Quiet Warriors, a Comparative Examination of American University USAID efforts to reform higher education in Vietnam: The Wisconsin Team, University of Florida, Ohio University, Southern Illinois University, University of Missouri–Mining & Engineering Rolla.”

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF MY SABBATICAL**

- 1) Place the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point USAID advisory contract within the amassed USAID American university contractual efforts at educational reform in Vietnam.
- 2) Identify recommendations for the development of libraries and native information resources as fundamental elements of higher education reform in Vietnam;
- and 3) Identify the institutional legacies of each of the original WI USAID Team consultants, Vietnam era and now. *The latter objective is related to my long-term recognition of the sacrifices made by the original Wisconsin Team.*

### **I linked my sabbatical objectives to the use of incremental research questions.**

Q.1. How does the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point USAID advisory contract fit within the amassed USAID American university contractual efforts at educational reform in Vietnam? What commonalities and abnormalities exist between the various USAID university teams' contracts? What was the nature of interaction between USAID and the university teams? Moreover, between the USAID university teams themselves.

Q.2 What role did library development play in USAID American university contracts?

Q.3 What are the institutional legacies of each of the original WI USAID Team consultants, Vietnam era and now?

## HOW WERE SABBATICAL OBJECTIVES REALIZED?

My earlier study provided a strong foundation. Initial sabbatical research focused on extensive evaluation of key interlibrary loan materials.

Ultimately, I conducted extensive archival research.

Focus group: **Comparative American University USAID Teams.**

I investigated archival materials held at the University of Florida, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Ohio University-Athens, University of Missouri Mining & Engineering-Rolla, State Historical Society of Missouri, and the American Library Association archives held at University of Illinois-Urbana.

Focus group: **Original Wisconsin Team** I investigated archival materials held at the each of the **member's campus**. These archives included UW-SP, UW-River Falls, UW-Whitewater, Ball State University, Gustavus Adolphus College, Bemidji State College, University of Illinois-Chicago, Harvard University, Wisconsin State Historical Society (Madison), and Minnesota State Historical Society (St. Paul.)

# Quiet Warriors Research Archives

- **The Wisconsin Team**
- WSU-SP/UWSP (James Albertson, others)
- UW-River Falls (Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences)
- UW-Whitewater (A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics)
- Ball State University, IN (Robert R. LaFollette, James H. Albertson, and Howard G. Johnshoy)
- Gustavus Adolphus College, MN (Howard G. Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs)
- Bemidji State College, MN (Harry F. Bangsberg, President)
- WHS (Madison)
- MHS (St. Paul)
- University of Illinois-Chicago (Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs)
- Harvard University (Vincent F. Conroy, Harvard Director of Field Studies)
- **Other USAID University Teams**
- Southern Illinois University-Carbondale
- Ohio University-Athens
- University of Florida-Gainesville
- University of Missouri–Mining & Engineering Rolla
- State Historical Society of Missouri
- American Library Association archives held at University of Illinois-Urbana
- **Other elements**
- **Interlibrary Loan & other elements**
- Oral history/interviews/archival tapes
- State Dept. & USAID Libraries
- NARA (National Archives) Maryland
- Library of Congress
- **Social Media > Facebook group > Children of Air America Crash 3-67**
- **FOIA > USAID > CIA**

## Archival Research highlights

Multiple visits to Original Wisconsin Team member's campus > *made extensive research notations, scanned 1041+ document pages; oral history – Wendy Wall, on-going others*

2 day visit Ball State University (BSU/Wisconsin Team “connection”) *extensive research notations, scanned 431 document pages for follow-up analysis*

4 day visit Southern Illinois University USAID program (1960-70) elementary teachers' training; SIU Center for Vietnamese Studies; *extensive research notations, scanned 934 document pages for follow-up investigation*

4 day visit Ohio University USAID contract (1960-72) focus on faculties of pedagogy and developing programs for secondary teachers' training; *extensive research notations, scanned 1026 document pages for follow-up investigation*

University of Florida USAID contract (1967-72), Vietnam programs in agricultural training and development *UF had failed to retain team records > ILL to the rescue > major reports from USAID, State Dept., other archives, plus Library of Congress*

4 day visit University of Missouri-Engineering Rolla and State Historical Society of Missouri: Vietnam programs in engineering education and other technical programs, 1967-73; *extensive research notations, scanned 1200+ document pages for follow-up investigation*

2 day visit American Library Association archives held at University of Illinois-Urbana: Files: *National Policy on International Book and Library Activities extensive research notations, scanned 851 document pages for follow-up analysis*

## Sampling of Finding aids, i.e. Findley Papers

<http://shs.umsystem.edu/manuscripts/rolla/r1317.pdf>

[Delyte W. Morris Administrative Papers, 1916-1971](#)

3/RG 2/8

### Results Found Within Box List

- [Box 453](#) Folder 21: Student Activities Controversial Programs "Inside Vietnam", 1968
- [Box 453](#) Folder 23: International Services Vietnam Project - Correspondence, 1964-1968
- [Box 453](#) Folder 24: International Services Vietnam Project Materials, 1964-1968
- [Box 521](#)

[Folder 31: Visit of President Dreyfus, Wisconsin State University, Congressmen Chieu & Kinh, Vietnam, Dr. Gibbs, Et Al, 1969 July 28](#)

[Arthur L. Aikman papers, 1961-2007](#)

SIU Student Unrest and Vietnam War Protests

[Memorial service for Robert R. LaFollette,  
Howard G. Johnshoy, and James H. Albertson.](#)

[Robert R. LaFollette papers collection](#)

<http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/housing/halls/map/lafollette>

**Ohio materials not formally processed – archivist pulled files! 3 carts +**

American Library Association archives held at University of Illinois-Urbana: Files: National Policy on International Book and Library Activities

<http://archives.library.illinois.edu/alaarchon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=7452>

<http://archives.library.illinois.edu/alaarchon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=7268>

<http://archives.library.illinois.edu/alaarchon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=7395>

## **Archival research highlights**

### **Certain common threads ran through the various USAID American University Teams documents**

- 1) A disparity between education and the nation's development needs. The gap between education and employment figures was exacerbated by a history of colonialism and war.
- 2) There was an absence of a visibly stated and systematized National Policy for higher education.
- 3) No definitions of the relationships of government, various institutions, and the responsibilities of officials at all levels.
- 4) There was a distinct lack of institutional unity.
- 5) An increasingly obsolete curriculum, as higher education had not kept pace with advances in new knowledge and technology. Curricula were narrow in scope and theoretical in nature. Reforms called on institutions to inaugurate semester and credit systems in place of their traditional block and certificate systems, and allow transfer of school credits.
- 6) Instructional methods in Vietnamese higher education were highly structured, carrying Franco traditions.
- 7) Higher education allowed multiple registrations. Students often registered in two or more faculties and more than one university.
- 9) All institutions had inadequate classrooms, laboratories, and library facilities.
- 10) Higher education in the Republic of Vietnam had too few university professors.

**A series of common recommendations run through USAID Team reports.**

**All USAID Teams studied called for:**

Additional regional and national studies, and conferences;

Massive training programs, structural and functional reorganization;

Cooperative inter-ministry efforts;

The establishment of a national training center for leadership;

The allocation of twenty-five percent of the national budget for education;

An infusion of a technical emphasis at all levels through method and curriculum;

The establishment of educational standards by professional committees, enforced by MOE.

## **A comparative analysis of each university's archival files:**

All archives held letters, cables, team logs, official reports, etc. noting the WI Team Air American crash, March 22 1967

All archives held materials showing each university's USAID team had significant interaction with WI Teams

Each team recommended development of, and budgets for, academic libraries in Vietnam

Each team recognized the need for native language textbooks and other information resources

All teams commonly used Can Tho and Thu Duc as training centers and models

All teams commonly called for development of Community and/or Junior Colleges

SIU and Ohio U-Athens teams had much in common (emphasis on teaching training), w/lots of interaction, yet sometimes had contractual turf questions/battles

Likewise, U Florida and UM Rolla teams had much in common (agricultural & engineering, workforce training, economic programs, infrastructure, vocational programs, technical emphasis, w/lots of interaction, yet seldom had contractual turf questions

## **More comparative analysis...**

Both second Wisconsin Team and Ohio Team, along with their Vietnamese counterparts, and their University Presidents met as separate teams with President LBJ in 1968.

All teams had long-term commitments by their chief-of-party; some terms extended six to eight years. Team leaders often stayed in Vietnam 3-4 months (WSU, UF), while SIU, Rolla, & Ohio, team leaders stayed 10 out of 12 months (with their families in Thailand, Malaysia, etc.)

Other team consultants rotated on a regular basis, participating in field studies, teacher and admin. training, regional meetings and workshops.

Each American University President and/or Chancellor played key symbolic roles.

Team members had close interactions with Vietnamese educators “in country,” and the Vietnamese often visited American campuses for seminars, tours, etc.

All USAID University teams, submitted semi-annual and annual reports.

USAID higher education Saigon & Washington education offices, developed periodic reviews/reports noting major work done by the different American University Teams.

When faced with contract termination each American university team developed proposals for extensions and/or new contracts in other lesser developed nations.

Upon the termination of the contracts and the ultimate collapse of South Vietnam, USAID Team members and their associates worked caringly to assist scores of Vietnamese families in relocating to the United States

SIU was the only USAID team I researched that became a focal point for antiwar activities on its campus. The SIU “Center for Vietnamese Studies and programs” became very controversial...

The loss of the eight original Wisconsin Team remains the largest single day tragedy in USAID history. All total, fifteen USAID consultants were killed in Vietnam.

USAID Team members showed little fear of the wartime conditions, they were conscious of the security risks, delays in the distribution of supplies, destruction of educational facilities, and limitations imposed on educational funds.

In the long run American political and public disfavor with “progress” in war went against the financial support of USAID foreign aid programs. USAID contracts had limited success in some areas, such as campus planning, credit programs, university record-keeping and administration.

Wartime conditions inhibited broad changes, and the missions was eventually overwhelmed by events - the credibility of the GVN, the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces, the “cease-fire” of 1973, the diminished funding for USAID contractual obligations in South Vietnam, and the collapse of the RVN during the North Vietnamese Spring Offensive of 1975.

Indications of the resiliency of mission objectives surfaced with the attempted renewal of educational relations on the part of Vietnamese educators from a unified Vietnam who visited Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1998.

Upcoming activities: **Albertson Hall (memorial/dedication), and donation of materials to UWSP Archives**

**Children of Air America Crash 3-67** families finding each other & telling their story...