

East-West Center Oral History Project: Michael Anderson



Michael Anderson

Michael H. Anderson hails from International Falls, Minnesota. After a three-year stint in the Peace Corps (Malaysia) he came to Hawaii in 1974 as an EWC grantee to study at UH and do research in the Communication Institute, which was then directed by mass communications giant, Wilbur Schramm. Enjoying the research component, he stayed on after his UH political science Ph.D. program to work on an institute project and with the Jefferson Fellows Program. Anderson joined the US Foreign Service in 1981 and uses what he learned at EWC in his work as a Public Affairs Officer. He has served in US embassies in numerous South and Southeast Asian countries, beginning a new post in Jakarta, Indonesia right after this interview. In 2002, Anderson received an EWC Distinguished Alumni Award.

Read Anderson's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- **Personal Background**
- **Life at EWC** - Applying to EWC Communication Institute, Mid-'70s - Student Life, Mid-'70s/Favorite Memories - Inter-Island Program - Office of Participant Affairs - International Fair - Host Family Program - IMPULSE, Student Magazine - Research Institutes, '70s - Wilbur Schramm
- **Partnerships and Networks** - Communication Project with Indonesia on Television Impact - Jefferson Fellowship Program
- **Institutional Transitions** - Separation from UH
- **Life After EWC** - Foreign Service
- **Ties That Last** - Alumni Network - Outreach to Alumni - Outreach to Hawai'i Community
- **EWC's Impact** - Contribution to UH - EWC Image in Asia - Outreach to South Asia - EWC's Impact on Career, Perspectives - The EWC Mission - Uniqueness of the EWC

Interview Quotes

"I'm directly involved in fostering international cultural and educational exchange and promoting mutual understanding. As a diplomat, my job is to explain American policy and values to foreigners. That's what I do for a living. It's directly influenced by what I did at the Center. What I learned here is directly relevant. Tolerance. Cross-cultural understanding. Curiosity about other cultures. "

"Asia" doesn't exist. Asia is so diverse. Which part of Asia? What country? What culture? What group? Urban, rural, rich, poor, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu? Whatever. Asia is such a diverse, complex place. So I think that Americans need to appreciate those differences, and I think the Center has fostered that process. Every American – like every Asian -- who comes here for any length of time is changed for the better, I think. He or she becomes more of a “global citizen” from the Center experience. Definitely. "

"A number of grantees from different countries felt that the students needed their own publication to express their views and to contribute to the Center's overall mission. The grantee association funded the start-up of a student-run quarterly magazine called IMPULSE. It took on a real life of its own and became an eagerly awaited publication. It stirred up the Center and I'm sure the administration saw it as a thorn in its side. But it provided grantees a real forum, and it was a wonderful example of how press freedom works in the US. Remember, many grantees were from countries that didn't tolerate dissent on campuses or in the media."

These narratives, which reflect interviewees' personal perceptions, opinions and memories, may contain errors of fact. They do not reflect positions or versions of history officially approved by the East-West Center.

LINK (as of 06/04/2020)

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/research/research-information-services/oral-history-project/michael-anderson>