

COLLEGIATE FULBRIGHT: The Power of International Exchange



Since 2000, five Louisville Collegiate School alumnae have been awarded the prestigious U.S. Fulbright Fellowship, with one alumna earning a second alumni grant by the Australian-American Fulbright Commission.

Kate Caldwell Harper '92 and **Elizabeth Potter Madin '95** are the most recent alumnae to garner this honor. They begin their research in 2008, and for Elizabeth, this is her second Fulbright. **Caroline Ahearn '03** is currently teaching English in Germany on behalf of her Fulbright teaching grant.

The Fulbright Fellowship is the largest U.S. exchange program offering opportunities for students and young professionals to undertake international graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools worldwide.

Elizabeth Potter Madin '95 traveled to Australia to research the Great Barrier Reef in 2000 for her first Fulbright. She recently earned a second alumni grant by the Australian-American Fulbright Commission to continue her research in 2008.

AMSTERDAM

For **Kate Caldwell Harper**, her Postgraduate Fulbright will fund her travels to Amsterdam in January to complete her Ph.D. in art history, focusing on 17th-Century Dutch printmaker, draftsman and painter Hendrick Goudt.

“Goudt is definitely not a household name, such as Rembrandt, but he was extremely significant for the Dutch artistic tradition in particular,” she said.

Kate is preparing for her travels by learning several languages, primarily Dutch, so that she can speak with her colleagues and friends.

“In addition, I am writing all the collections I need to see, trying to make appointments and ask about the possibilities for conservation of some works or about recording the watermarks of the prints, and ordering photography of the works,” she said. “I am trying to review all the literature on my field, too and then I am off in early January! So it’s a busy time but exciting.”

Kate will live in Amsterdam from January through September 2008. She will travel frequently to study archival materials and works of art in institutions and collections throughout Europe—Holland, Germany, France, England, Austria, and Poland.

“Receiving the Fulbright is so gratifying. I have been working nearly full-time at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston and in other curatorial positions in Boston since entering graduate school in 2000,” Kate said. “All of this work has been amazing in terms of my curatorial training, but it has been a lot to juggle with my graduate study. Now I have the opportunity to focus solely on my dissertation – this will allow me to move forward in my own research.”

The Fulbright Scholar Program sends 800 U.S. faculty and professionals abroad each year. Grant recipients lecture and conduct research in a wide variety of academic and professional fields.

After graduating Collegiate, Kate attended Georgetown University where she studied art history. Her passion for the field blossomed there, where she studied under, and later worked for, a Rembrandt scholar who later became Ambassador to the Netherlands. Since living in Boston, she has worked for Cliff Ackley, a well-known figure in the field of Dutch art history.

“Working at the MFA for Cliff Ackley has been unbelievable. I can’t overstate how important he has been in influencing my interests and approach to the subject,” she said. “That said, though, I have to say that all in all, Collegiate was the most important formative influence on my education and development.”

“My teachers took a genuine interest in me as a student and as a person, and I don’t think I was unique in that sense. Collegiate students are so fortunate to have an environment in which so many people support them, care about them, and want to bring out their strengths,” Kate said.

As a Fulbright Scholar, Kate joins four other Collegiate alumnae who hold this honor: **Elizabeth Neal Cooke** '98 who studied in Madagascar in 2001-2002 and **Allison Arensman** '00 who conducted research in Romania in 2004. As for the two recipients earlier mentioned, **Elizabeth Potter Madin** traveled to Australia to research the Great Barrier Reef in 2000 for her first Fulbright, and **Caroline Ahearn** is teaching in Germany until June 2008.



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AUSTRALIA

Like Kate, **Elizabeth Potter Madin** has an adventure awaiting her on her second Fulbright. Elizabeth will continue her research in the spring of 2008 as one of only two inaugural recipients of the 2007 Fulbright Alumni Initiative Grant given by the Australian-American Fulbright Commission.

Elizabeth, currently with the Marine Science Institute and Department of Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), will work with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) on ocean ecosystems. Elizabeth will return to Queensland to work with AIMS on a project to understand how a variety of human impacts on ocean ecosystems alter the way marine food webs work.

“The AIMS Long-Term Monitoring Program (LTMP) database provides a highly unique tool to explore the community-wide consequences of predator loss on coral reefs over unusually large spatial and temporal scales,” she said “Our project will utilize this comprehensive, high-quality reef monitoring data set to examine the question: Is there evidence, over space and/or time, of community-level trophic cascades on the Great Barrier Reef?”

This project is a natural outgrowth of Elizabeth’s original Fulbright research at James Cook University, which focused on the social, or human-based, dimension of marine conservation.

Elizabeth believes the project on her Fulbright Alumni Initiative Grant will directly benefit AIMS and UCSB in two primary ways: “Scientifically, this work will draw together parallel lines of research currently being pursued by individuals at these institutions in different biogeographic regions. Secondly, and equally importantly, this research will provide a formal institutional linkage between these two world-class marine science institutes.”

Elizabeth did her undergraduate work at Emory University and graduated in 1999 with a joint degree in human and natural ecology and psychology with a minor in French. While Elizabeth was at Emory, she spent a semester studying marine ecology in the Turks and Caicos Islands.



Elizabeth Potter Madin '95



Elizabeth Potter Madin takes a break from her Fulbright research to join her family on a vacation. She is the daughter of Henry and Sharon Potter of Louisville.

She has been traveling the last year and a half nonstop to conduct research at the Caicos Islands and Palmyra Atoll, a tropical paradise in the Pacific Ocean. She just returned from a research seminar in South Africa. When she isn't traveling, a typical week finds her biking to work where she teaches fish biology at UCSB, surfing or swimming on her lunch break with her husband, Josh, and performing research after lunch on campus, such as grinding ear bones of fish to determine their age. Elizabeth and Josh are moving to Sydney, Australia in early 2008 so that Josh can begin teaching at a university there. Elizabeth will continue to work with her academic adviser at UCSB toward her Ph.D. while conducting research on the Great Barrier Reef for her second Fulbright grant.

Her advice to Collegiate students and other alumni who might be considering a Fulbright is to at least apply. "Honestly, when I heard I received the Fulbright, I didn't believe it. I thought it was a mistake," she said. "That's why you apply. And keep your eyes open for research or other work and travel possibilities. Collegiate was a place that encouraged me to try those things."

In 2004, Elizabeth was honored by Collegiate with the Young Alumni Achievement Award.

GERMANY

University of Michigan-Ann Arbor graduate **Caroline Ahearn** recently started her Fulbright in September when she began teaching in Siegen, Germany where she instructs students in English, as well as in American traditions and culture.

"So far, the Fulbright scholarship has been a very rewarding experience. I have had a chance to both teach about American culture and to learn from my students about their opinions and world views," she said. "We have had very interesting class discussions about topics such as politics and globalization in modern society."

Siegen is a college town of about 110,000 people in the Western part of Germany, about an hour away from Cologne.

During her senior year at Michigan, Ahearn worked as a full-time, long-term substitute German teacher in a middle school in Ann Arbor. According to the Chronicle on Higher Education, the University of Michigan Ann Arbor is the top producer of Fulbright awards for U.S. Students.

Caroline plans to teach German at the high school level here in the United States when she returns.

"I would highly encourage Collegiate students to consider applying for a Fulbright scholarship in the future," she said. "The program is very supportive, and the other participants are some of the most interesting people you will ever meet."

Caroline said Collegiate definitely influenced her decision to apply for the Fulbright. "Many of my teachers encouraged me to set high goals for myself from a young age. Without this support, I may not have pushed myself to create such unique opportunities in my life."



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ROMANIA

Similar to other Collegiate Fulbright recipients, **Allison Arensman** studied aboard before she applied for the Fulbright program. She studied independent concentration in bioethics at Princeton and



in the summer of 2002, she spent six weeks in Romania on a grant from the Humana Foundation. During that time, she began to develop contacts and conduct background research to prepare the protocol for her Fulbright study.

Her Fulbright research in Romania focused on the relationship between lead poisoning and ADHD in a pediatric population. She said the project was truly a collaborative effort by Romanian and American physicians.

"While the data was interesting and supported a statistically significant relationship, I was most pleased that my project provided the groundwork for what has become sustainable research in the hands of excited and caring Romanian physicians," she said.

Allison, who is in the second year of medical school at Dartmouth, felt she was in over her head when she applied for the Fulbright because of no special expertise or relevant language skills.

"I quickly learned how to ask for and accept help," she said, adding that her Collegiate education helped in this effort.

"The amount of time and support faculty members regularly and enthusiastically devote to students gave me the confidence to seek help from accomplished researchers and ask unlikely parties to collaborate," she said. "I learned the language of toxicology and pharmacology through the ultimate crash course: conversations with experts"

Allison said Pubmed, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine that includes more than 17 million citations from MEDLINE and other life science journals, became her Rolodex. "Nearly every investigator forgave my ignorance, patiently answered my questions and offered to help," she said.

Spending a year in Romania, working with physicians too poor to ride the public tram, turned Allison's world-view on its head.

"While the Romanian doctors obviously cared deeply for their patients, often walking miles to the hospital through snow and sleet, the majority punched out with the regularity of shift workers at 1:30 p.m. Many peeled off their white coats for second, more lucrative jobs waiting tables or driving taxis," she said.

In a country where complacency seemed to be a survival tactic, Allison was impressed and thrilled by the willingness of these busy physicians to help with her study.

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MADAGASCAR

Elizabeth Neal Cooke traveled to Madagascar to study during the 2001–2002 academic year. Her Fulbright focused on the conservation movement in Madagascar, specifically the use of national parks.



“I did some comparisons between their approach versus other East African countries. A trend began in these areas to develop Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs). ICDPs had a combined goal of protecting the environment and creating opportunities for local human populations to both continue their traditional livelihoods and benefit financially from the existence of the parks,” she said. “This approach had been quite successful in several Eastern African

countries. Unfortunately, it was not as successful in Madagascar. I was looking for some of the reasons explaining this result. I focused on one rainforest park that started in the early 1990s.”

Much of Elizabeth’s research examined the role of international, especially American, influences and management styles in Madagascar’s park systems. She said one of the most difficult aspects to reconcile was the goal of the international community, both environmental and career development and securing of grant money, with those of local communities – namely survival.

“My own exploration into this puzzle was very frustrating and burst many naïve bubbles I carried with me,” she said. “I think there is still a lot of hope there, but I was not convinced that there were strong efforts to bridge those two different objectives.”

Elizabeth’s project became “somewhat disjointed” shortly after arriving in Madagascar. “I arrived in November 2001 and a month later the country

had a presidential election with disputed results that lead to my being forced to leave the country in April 2002,” she said. “I returned in September after a new administration had firmly taken hold of the country. So some of my second-phase research incorporated how this new administration would lead the conservation effort.”

Prior to Madagascar, Elizabeth graduated cum laude from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota in May of 2001. While at Macalester, she received the Environmental Studies Student Prize for academic excellence in multidisciplinary studies of the environment and the Case Prize in Western History for original research of Western American history.

“Collegiate certainly helped with my preparation for this project. A Fulbright is a lot about self-motivation and direction. When you are virtually alone in a country you have to work very diligently to make the contacts needed,” she said, adding that Madagascar did not have a local Fulbright office as many countries do.

“While Collegiate offers a lot of guidance and support to students, I think I learned quite a bit about persistence there as well,” she said.



Former Collegiate college counselor Jack Geary told Elizabeth to find her passion. “I don’t think I knew what it was while I was still at Collegiate, but the skills I learned there helped me be able to find it later.”

Elizabeth Neal Cooke '98 talks with Collegiate students during an international photo shoot. The international ad can be found at www.loucol.com/news/ads.

