

## Highlights of Luann's Career and Professional Life

I will not be as dramatic as Earl who painted a picture of who Luann was, but I do want to outline a few highlights of her career and professional life.

Luann received her Bachelor's degree in English from Goshen College. Her sense of adventure led her to Washington, DC, in 1972 to work as a volunteer Legislative Aide at MCC's Peace Office, where she was involved in educating the Mennonite church about public policy, and engaging in advocacy with the U.S. Government. Identifying as a Christian feminist, she was one of the early leaders of MCC's Task Force on Women in Church and Society, editing their newsletter. She decided to spend a year at seminar in Elkhart, IN, pursuing peace studies. One of her interests was the Biblical testimony on economic injustice. MCC was so impressed by her work that they offered her a senior position in peace issues at their headquarters in Akron, but fortunately from my perspective, she turned it down to accept my proposal for marriage.

Anticipating joining me in my Foreign Service career, she earned a Master's degree in International Development from American University. She finished her thesis the day before our first child, Annette, was born.

With a little girl, and three years later a son Gregory added while we were posted in Cameroon, Luann's commitment in those years was to her role as mother. Later in Pakistan with the children in school, she focused on maternal and child health and nutrition, working with UNICEF. After an assignment in the DR Congo, we settled in the Washington, DC area where she worked for non-profit research firms and implementing organizations involved in maternal and child health and nutrition. She began at the Center to Prevent Childhood Malnutrition, which was later merged into the Academy for Educational Development and still later into an organization called FHI 360. Luann worked on large, global projects funded by USAID and the Gates Foundation until she retired several months into her journey with cancer. Her last position was Associate Director for Communications for a project called Alive and Thrive.

Her strengths were in communications and organization, using her creative gifts and technical writing skills in large projects to promote breastfeeding and other improvements in child nutrition and maternal health, and to develop strategies for scaling up successful pilot projects to large populations.

Luann was very much appreciated by her work colleagues. At her memorial service, her project director cited five qualities of her approach to her work:

1. high standards and expecting others to have high standards,
2. being a straight shooter, honesty and accuracy in work,
3. integrity, rising out of the moral center of her faith,
4. high productivity, and
5. future focused, mentoring young professionals to develop their skills.

## Launch - Ray speech, "The Story of the Gift"

MCC has asked me to share the "Story of the Gift." I suppose it is not inaccurate to describe the Legacy Fund as a "gift," but I'd rather think of it as an "investment," an investment in healthy mothers, babies, and families, and overall, a better world.

In the next few minutes, I'll attempt to answer these three questions:

1. Why make this contribution at all?
2. Why to MCC?
3. Why focus on maternal and child health and nutrition?

### 1. Why make this contribution at all?

Both Luann and I had good paying jobs, so we could easily have found other ways to spend our money, but we chose, like many Mennonites and others, to live a more modestly comfortable lifestyle. After all, where does happiness and satisfaction come from? The Apostle Paul quotes Jesus in Acts 20:35 as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Our Anabaptist theology and culture emphasize the importance of service and community. My parents certainly modeled that ideal. My father was keenly committed to foreign missions. One year, when the uneven cash flow of a farmer made things a little tight when the annual offering for Eastern Mennonite Missions was planned, he borrowed money so he could give at the level he wanted to.

Orie Miller, one of the founders of MCC and a very successful businessman, is quoted in the recently published biography My Calling to Fulfill, as saying "It's OK to make money, but **you** don't want to **die** a **rich** man."

In our society, we tend not to share information about our income and wealth, so it may have come as a surprise to some of you that I am able to make a grant of a million dollars to MCC. Without explicitly intending to become well off, Luann and I accumulated considerable assets through the years. We found a lot of satisfaction in using those resources generously to improve the welfare of poor people around the world. And we observed that our wealth, when shared wisely, could make a measurable difference in other people's lives.

Of course, not everybody has a pot of disposable income that they could use in this way. Some people, including many of you in this room, chose career paths with church agencies or service professions that do not pay handsomely. But many do have some wealth, and in our affluent society there are many in the church who do. People with good positions in the business world or professions can save a lot of money, invest wisely, and find themselves in their older years with considerable wealth. Luann and I believed

that our faith calls us to a higher purpose than to save it all for our own financial security or to transfer it all to our children, who often are comfortable themselves.

In our case, financing this Legacy Fund is essentially allocating Luann's retirement accounts and savings for a cause that was dear to her heart, one that gives me and my family the tremendous satisfaction of seeing her efforts continue after her untimely death to make an impact in the years ahead on the lives of women and children and families around the world.

## **2. Why to MCC?**

There are several reasons why MCC is the partner in this gift. One good one is that it was MCC that brought Luann from Indiana to Washington in 1972 to work in MCC's Peace Office. It was Luann who escorted a group of visiting Mennonite peace representatives from various congregations to the State Department to hear me present on what it was like for a Mennonite to be working for the government. She is the only one that I remembered from that group, probably because she was the only woman in the room. Over time we came to see each other as special and three years later were married. It was MCC that brought us together.

In several overseas postings, we encountered MCC volunteers and Mennonite missionaries, appreciating and admiring MCC's emphasis on relationship building, community development, and partnerships with the church and other local organizations. One of the people we met, in fact, was Bruce Janz, now Campbell-Janz, who we hosted at our place in Kinshasa, DR Congo, for Thanksgiving in 1990.

Our family was deeply involved with MCC through the years, and two of my brothers, Earl and Luke, worked many years for MCC. From the beginning of our marriage, Luann and I donated liberally to MCC.

As we were approaching retirement, Luann and I talked about exploring possibilities to contribute some of our savings to MCC to continue our commitment to service in developing countries. After she died in July, I had further discussions with MCC, learning that they were just about to embark on a new strategic plan period, and that many of the priorities in their plans for 2015 to 2020 aligned very closely to causes that Luann and I cared about.

Another reason why I was excited to work with MCC in developing this initiative was MCC's growing capacity to incorporate cutting edge approaches to its development cooperation, while maintaining at the same time its commitment to relationship building and working with the church. Such features that we built into the proposal include innovation from best practices observed elsewhere, measuring results, and proactive sharing of project experience in conferences and journals.

### **3. Why focus on maternal and child health and nutrition?**

I spoke earlier about how Luann's career path focused heavily on maternal and child health and nutrition since the 1980s.

My career at USAID and the World Bank, and more recently as Executive Director of a large network of organizations and professionals called Christian Connections for International Health, also included a lot of projects focused on maternal and child health. It is an area that I care deeply about as well.

Luann and I derived great satisfaction in seeing both of our children choose careers that benefit maternal and child health and nutrition. Annette is a Program Director for an organization called Results for Development where she works to improve primary health care systems around the world where many maternal and child health and nutrition interventions are provided. Gregory works at the U.S. Census Bureau helping developing countries gather and analyze data used for development planning, aiding decision making on maternal and child health and development issues.

When I learned that maternal and child health was one component of MCC's new strategic plan, and that they would welcome a designated gift in Luann's honor that would enable MCC to expand its activities in this sector, it seemed as though everything was falling into place perfectly. As I worked with Beth Good, Mimi Copp Johnson, Bruce Campbell-Janz and others in conceptualizing and designing this program, I knew that we shared common values and approaches to international development. I look forward to working with MCC, both here and in the field, in getting this program up and running.

I thank all of you for coming to this program today and participating in launching this initiative. We look forward to reporting to you from time to time about progress in the field.

*- Ray Martin, final remarks for presentation at Launch of Luann Martin Legacy Fund for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition, Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, PA, February 26, 2016*