

Biographic Information for Embassy Conference Room Honorees

JACQUELINE BOUVIER KENNEDY ONASSIS

Jacqueline Kennedy brought beauty, intelligence, and cultivated taste to the role of First Lady as wife of President John F. Kennedy. Her interest in the arts inspired an attention to culture never before evident at a national level. In November 1967, at the invitation of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, she was able to realize her "*lifelong dream of seeing the temples of Angkor Wat*". Her enormously successful visit helped pave the way for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cambodia in 1969. At her funeral her son described three of her attributes: "*love of words, the bonds of home and family, and her spirit of adventure*".

DON V. CATLETT

Don Catlett opened the U.S. Legation in Phnom Penh on November 14, 1950, housed at the Hotel Le Royal. He was the first U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to reside in Phnom Penh. He is also known for having undertaken a difficult and delicate diplomatic mission: shipping a live elephant presented by His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk to President Truman in Washington. The elephant unfortunately expired en route while the ship was sailing around the Cape of Good Hope in turbulent seas.

FRANK VINCENT JR.

Frank Vincent, Jr., archaeologist and ethnologist, was engaged in travel and exploration in all parts of the world, and particularly in S. E. Asia. He was the first American known to have traveled to Cambodia. He vividly described the ruined temples and palaces of Cambodia in his book *The Land of the White Elephant*, published in 1874 and still in print. He acquired a large collection of Cambodian art and antiquities which he donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

DAVID P. CHANDLER

David Chandler specializes in the history and politics of Cambodia. Regarded as one of the foremost western scholars of Cambodia's modern history, his books include *A History of Cambodia* (1983), *The Tragedy of Cambodian History* (1991), *Brother Number One* (1992), and *Facing the Cambodian Past* (1996). David Chandler holds degrees from Harvard College, Yale University, and the University of Michigan. From 1958 to 1966 he was a U.S. Foreign Service Officer, and was posted to Phnom Penh (1960-1962), Bogotá, Cali, and Washington, DC.

FRANKLIN E. HUFFMAN

Professor of Linguistics and Asian Studies at Yale and Cornell universities from 1967 to 1985, Frank Huffman published nine books and numerous articles on Southeast Asian languages and linguistics. His *Cambodian System of Writing, Beginner Reader*, and *Modern Spoken Cambodian* were first published in 1970, and with later books including the first comprehensive *English-Khmer Dictionary* (1978), they remain the most popular and authoritative texts for students of the Khmer language.

Frank Huffman also served as U.S. Foreign Service Officer from 1985 to 1999 and was posted to United Kingdom, Burma, Morocco, France, Cambodia and New Zealand. He recently published *Monks and Motorcycles: From Laos to London by the Seat of my Pants, 1956-1958*. In 2004 he donated his collection of Khmer books to the Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER

One of the foremost patrons of the arts in her time, she traveled the world to expand her knowledge of art and satisfy her passion for discovery. It is believed that she was the first American woman to have visited Angkor Wat. Her vivid descriptions of the journey and her meeting with His Majesty King Norodom in 1883 are of great historical value. Her house, a Venetian palace she had transported to Boston, is now a museum housing her remarkable and extensive art collection.

BERNARD KRISHER

Having fled to the United States in 1941 to escape Nazi Germany, Bernard Krisher, journalist and philanthropist, has dedicated himself to those surviving the terror of the Khmer Rouge. In 1991, he collaborated with then Prince Sihanouk on a memoir, entitled *Sihanouk Reminisces: World Leaders I have Known*. He founded Cambodia's first independent newspaper *The Cambodia Daily*, in 1993. Among his many humanitarian projects are building a free hospital in Phnom Penh and securing funds for the construction of over 300 schools in rural Cambodia. His Majesty King Sihanouk endorsed these projects to: *"strengthen our efforts to establish a civil society by alleviating the pain, the lost years, and the isolation endured by our people during the insufferable years of genocide and civil war."*

JACOB ELON CONNER

Jacob Elon Conner was the first U.S. diplomat ever to visit Cambodia while he was Consul General in Saigon. He was a member of the National Geographic Society and a personal friend of Gilbert H. Grosvenor, director and editor of the magazine. He wrote an article for the National Geographic in 1912 entitled '*The Forgotten Ruins of Indo-China: The Most Profusely and Richly Carved Group of Buildings in the World*'. This article contains the first American publication of photographs of the temples at Angkor Wat.