

the goals of ASIANetwork into reality have helped sustain the work of ASIANetwork over these last six years. All of us involved in development, including our colleagues at the foundations, will miss Van's presence and energy as we continue to meet the challenges of finding new funds and making each dollar stretch to support as many new ideas as possible.



**Marianna McJimsey**

As we move into the Julian year of 2005 and the Chinese year of the Rooster, Marianna McJimsey and I look forward to continuing our conversations with those who have been friends and advisors to ASIANetwork as well as funders, and to exploring new relationships with organizations who share the aspirations of ASIANetwork.

### **Board Chairs: 1999-2005**

Stanley L. Mickel (1999-2000)  
James G. Lochtefeld (2000-01)  
Joel R. Smith (2001-02)  
James B. Leavell (2002-03)  
Paul B. Watt (2003-04)  
Joan H. O'Mara (2004-05)

### **ASIANetwork Board Chairs: 1999-2005**



**Stanley L. Mickel**  
**East Asian Studies Program**  
**Wittenberg University**  
**Board Chair, 1999-2000**

There are many rewarding aspects to being the Chair of the Board of Directors of ASIANetwork, but for me the greatest was the privilege of organizing the 2000 ASIANetwork Conference. It was fitting that this first conference of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century was held at Hickory Ridge Conference Center, our 'home base' in the Chicago area.

Being responsible for organizing a national conference was intimidating to say the least. However, I was very lucky to the valuable assistance of other members of the Board of Directors in setting up speakers and panels for the conference. Fortunately for me, the first keynote speaker for the conference, Anthony Yu of the University of Chi-

cago, who had been unable to be a keynote speaker for the 1999 conference, was available to deliver the keynote address for the 2000 conference. Because my academic background is in Chinese language and literature, I had long known about Anthony Yu and deeply respected his successes working with *The Journey to the West*, one of the six great classical Chinese novels. But I had never had the opportunity to meet him in person. So it was a great pleasure to be able to have a beer in the lounge after he had given his keynote speech and chat with him about learning and teaching Chinese literature. This kind of collegiality and openness among participants is one of things that make the ASIANetwork con-

ference so appealing and popular to our members.

My experience that year with the other keynote speaker, William LaFleur of the University of Pennsylvania was similarly stimulating. Dr. LaFleur had spoken at my own school several years earlier, and it was most enjoyable to have a chance to talk with him during the conference.

While the thought of organizing the plenary sessions and the many panels and panel participants was initially daunting, Board members and panel participants were all very cooperative. We finally ended up with a rounded program of two plenary sessions on important themes and sixteen pedagogically focused panels covering topics ranging from “Women’s Issues in Asia: An Asian Perspective” to “The Dangers and Pleasures of Teaching Orientalist Classic Books.” An added treat to the conference was the field trip the day before the conference, organized by Norm Moline, that took a dozen or so participants on a tour of some of the outstanding Asian cultural areas in Chicago.

Michael Gould, a graduate of Wittenberg University’s East Asian Studies Program, gave a wonderful concert on the Japanese shakuhachi flute on Saturday afternoon at the conference. The concert was held in the outdoor tent area next to the main building. A breeze rustled the bottom flaps of the tent as Mike played, and when I closed my eyes the sensation of listening to someone playing the shakuhachi by the shore of the Inland Sea on a moonlit night came to me. Mike’s playing and his explanation of the history and theory of the shakuhachi won enthusiastic applause from the audience. For me, his description undertaking a traditional apprenticeship to master the flute seemed to model the successful accommodation of different cultural values we all hope our students will experience wherever they study in Asia.

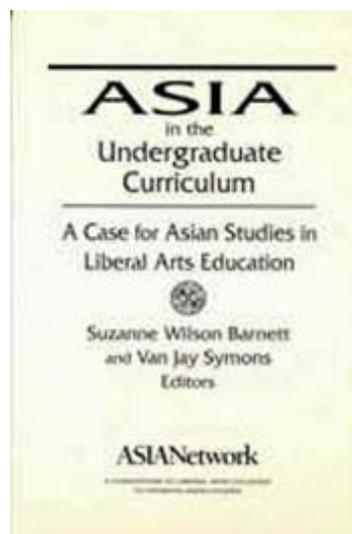
The conference ended as it had for many years, with a lunch sponsored by the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. The lunch was highlighted by a talk given by one of the UBCHEA scholars on the topic “Literature as a Tool for English Learning.”

Another major activity that involved the Chair of ASIANetwork was the meeting held in January to judge applications for the Freeman supported “Faculty-Student Fellows Program.” The applications students and faculty wrote were of high quality, and it was very difficult to make final choices among them. The selection committee discussed the qualities of all the applications in careful detail throughout the afternoon and evening before coming to a decision about who would be selected and who would be urged to apply again the next round. The process, while arduous, was conducted in a spirit that epitomized the enthusiasm AN members have for our programs. A long-range outcome of the 1999-2000 deliberations was that Van Symons, ASIANetwork Executive Director, and members the Development Committee were willing to accept Mr. Freeman’s recommendation that the number of participants in each year’s “Faculty-student Fellows Program” be increased. The Fellows Program has been a vibrant, effective, and larger AN program since then.

Two other AN program activities initiated before my chairmanship but still being implemented that year are programs that promote the growth of Asian Studies at ASIANetwork member institutions. The first of these is “The College in Asia Program.” Under the direction of Norman Moline and associate direction of Jim Winship (both of Augustana College), a faculty member and an administrator from various colleges and universities traveled for three weeks through Japan, Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China to study how to administer and run in-house term-in-Asia programs. During the summer of 2000 six institutions participated in this program. The “ASIANetwork Consultancy Advisory Program,” modeled after the “Luce Consultancy Advisory Program,” brought several experienced Asian Studies program consultants during the school year to AN member institutions that had a desire to establish an Asian Studies program. The consultants provided a voice of experience to these liberal arts schools on ways to develop the study of Asia on their campuses.

Finally, the book *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Case for Asian Studies in Liberal Arts Education* was newly published by M.E. Sharpe in May 2000, just after my term as Chair of the Board ended. This well received book has six chapters that range in content from an overview of the development of Asian Studies on liberal arts campuses to chapters on the history of the study of Chinese and Japanese languages and the establishment of study abroad programs. Support from the Luce Foundation was crucial in creating this book, as Luce support has been through the history of ASIANetwork.

In all, it was a very busy and enjoyable year.





**James G. Lochtefeld**  
**Associate Prof. of Religion**  
**Carthage College**  
**Board Chair, 2000-2001**

Since I was on sabbatical in India in April 1998 and had thus missed my first ASIANetwork board meeting, I was not expecting the telephone call I received from the Nominating Committee the following September, asking me to consider accepting the post of vice-chair, effectively putting me in line to become the Board Chair. My first response was disbelief (surely there must be *someone* more qualified!), then uncertainty whether I could do the job, and finally a willingness to try. It was with a mixture of delight and anxiety that I took over the chair from Stan Mickel in April 2000. Those were busy days, but very heady, since they allowed me the chance to work closely with talented Board members and with Van Symons, whose enthusiasm for the consortium is matched only by his energy.

As I was quickly informed, one of the Board Chair's primary responsibilities is to arrange the annual conference. The 2001 conference in Cleveland had a strong focus on the arts, which I consider indispensable for interdisciplinary instruction, and for the liberal arts in general. Several conference panels focused on using the arts as part of instruction. These were complemented by a visit to the Cleveland Museum, which has one of country's finest Asian art collections. The arts theme was also evident in the featured speakers, filmmakers Joseph Elder and Regge Life. For many years Dr. Elder was the head of the South Asia Center at UW-Madison, where he produced many documentary films on South Asia, whereas Regge Life's films on Japan and Japanese culture ultimately stem from his personal experience of cultural encounter, dissonance, and integration.

The conference's initial contact with the Cleveland Museum raised the prospect of an arts-related grant project between ASIANetwork and the Museum. After several years of consideration, a joint proposal was finally submitted to various granting agencies. Although this proposal was unsuccessful, for various reasons, this notion of an arts-related proposal has been transformed and borne fruit through the current ASIANetwork initiative, *Asian Art in the*

*Undergraduate Curriculum*, which has been funded by the Luce Foundation.

One of the primary concerns during my tenure as Board chair was the consortium's continuing dependence on "soft" (grant-related) money to pay part of our operating expenses (at that time, around two-thirds of the total). During this time the Board gave considerable thought to how ASIANetwork could become more financially stable, either through finding new funding, or through saving enough money to create an endowment. The efforts to find new funding were spearheaded by the Development Team, which was created at the end of Stan Mickel's tenure as Board Chair, and which began its work during my first months as chair. The Development Team was formed because we realized that Board members were not in the position of undertaking effective development work, given the other demands on their time. Moreover, the turnover of Board members made it difficult to develop long-term relationships with granting agencies. In light of this, the Development Team was initially charged "with articulating a long range developmental strategy, identifying potential funders, and then building strong relationships with those foundations, agencies and individuals."

During that year development moved in fits and starts. Our biggest opportunity came when the Luce Foundation invited ASIANetwork to apply for a million dollar endowment grant that would permanently cover the difference between ASIANetwork's revenue and its operating costs. The grant request, titled "Securing the Future of ASIANetwork," was sent to the Luce Foundation in the spring of 2001. We were disappointed when this grant request was not approved—my understanding is that the Luce Board, on principle, balked at giving money for an endowment—but the Luce Foundation did award ASIANetwork a five-year grant for \$300,000 (\$60,000 per year), with this money explicitly earmarked for operating expenses. While this grant represented another infusion of "soft" money, it dispenses funding for only a finite time period, but we were happy to

receive it, since “soft” money is infinitely better than none! This support from Luce allowed ASIANetwork to bank other funds that would have normally been spent on operating expenses, thus increasing the consortium’s savings, and also created a secure climate for the Development Committee’s subsequent work, during which time it has been quite successful.

Finally, one of the most rewarding experiences during my tenure as vice-chair and chair was the chance to sit on the committee reading the applications for the Freeman Faculty-Student Fellowships. Many of the proposals were a joy to read, and the committee’s lively discussions were an added intellectual delight. These

proposals not only showed the breadth of ASIANetwork faculty interests—and some of the most interesting ones were from fields and regions far removed from my own—but they also showed the care that these faculty invested in their students. This opportunity to give students personalized attention and mentoring is one of the unique features of teaching at small college, and one of the things I treasure in my own work.

More than anything, my experiences as an ASIANetwork board member and board chair have reinforced my faith in the value of small colleges, and in the importance of the work that we do there to foster more effective teaching, learning, mentoring, and living.



**Joel R. Smith**  
**Skidmore College**  
**Department of Philosophy and Religion**  
**Board Chair 2001-2002**

Chairing the ASIANetwork board in 2001-02 was among the most challenging, rewarding, and exhausting work I’ve ever done. Working with so many stimulating colleagues from varied disciplines and diverse colleges was certainly the highlight for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the close working relationship with Van Symons, my fellow board members, and our small but fine staff, as well as meeting new and old colleagues at our conferences.

During our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, 2002, we celebrated at the April conference at Hickory Ridge Conference Center near Chicago. Conference highlights included keynote talks by Susan Napier on “Inside the Labyrinth: Anime Visions of Technology, Modernity, and Apocalypse” and by Henry Rosemont, Jr. on “Confucian Perspectives on Freedom, Human Rights and Justice.” Putting the conference together is an enormous undertaking by the chair—always with Van’s help, of course—and the late cancellation of a keynote speaker due to illness certainly put me in crisis mode until Henry Rosemont generously stepped in to deliver his superb keynote address. Many of the past members of the board, as well as some members of our council of advisors, joined the current board members in a special Friday afternoon session to reflect upon the past and future of ASIANetwork. Some of their ideas were

shared at a Saturday morning plenary panel, “10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reflections.” The sixteen breakout panels addressed the usual wide range of interdisciplinary topics, and an evening *pipa* recital charmed us all with Chinese music. Sunday morning we rounded out our anniversary reflections with a plenary panel on “The Future of Asian Studies.”

Although I had some good administrative experience when I became chair, the administrative work for the board was new and always seemed to involve re-inventing ourselves even as we built on our past success. The Henry Luce Foundation had recently awarded ASIANetwork a generous grant of \$300,000 over a five-year period to sustain a variety of activities relating to program development. The Freeman Foundation had recently renewed its initial million dollar grant for the Student Faculty Fellows Program and the College in Asia Summer Institute. Much of the fun on the board involved brainstorming about new projects, nurturing some of them into a viable focus, procuring funding for them, and inviting faculty to implement them for our members.

More mundane activities included sustaining and increasing our membership, re-structuring the board’s committee system to make it more effective, and exploring ways to give ASIANetwork a firm financial basis. We also established committees to begin the search for a new director

upon Van's departure and to review the role and functions of the director's position itself. Setting the agenda for and chairing board meetings was living on the edge, as we all know too well when we try to guide faculty to efficiently stay on task so we can accomplish a full agenda.

Exhausting? Yes. I remember dozing off after the conference in the Hickory Ridge lobby waiting for my limo

to the airport. Challenging? Yes. The board chair performs such varied tasks, many of which are far different from our usual academic duties. Rewarding? You bet. Never have I had so much interaction with colleagues from other disciplines. Would I do it again? Maybe in a later life. But it was sure a heck of a joy ride this time around.



**James B. Leavell**  
**Herring Professor of Asian Studies**  
**Departments of Asian Studies, History, and Art**  
**Furman University**  
**Board Chair 2002-2003**

Van Symons has been both a friend and mentor since I began service on the ASIANetwork board in 2000. Over the years I have been particularly impressed by the manner in which Van, as Executive Director, has identified particular talents of various people and has provided the opportunities for those talents to be used for our collective good. But, he does not just notice our special gifts. He is also listening constantly to our individual passions and considering ways such energy can be channeled for ASIANetwork's benefit. I have long harbored the belief that Van encouraged my nomination for board service because he learned of my interest in website design. He knew I was not actually very web savvy but was eager to learn. I have always been grateful for that special encouragement. Fortunately for all of us, Diane Clayton ultimately brought the ASIANetwork website to genuine functionality, but I had great fun tinkering with the early look. Thank you, Van.

To me, Van's skill in the area of conflict resolution has been inspiring. On a number of occasions I have watched him bring disparate and intensely held positions toward a consensus. Van's ability to negotiate with a broad spectrum of highly placed individuals in funding agencies, museums, and various academic institutions has brought credit to ASIANetwork and our wide variety of projects.

Two particular events during the last five years have served to deepen my admiration for Van. The first of these was his guidance as we planned the 2003 ASIANetwork annual conference in Greenville, SC. His ever-evolving set of meticulous task lists kept me focused during discussions with

hotel managers as well as conference panel participants. I marveled at his ability to adjust when carefully laid plans dissolved due to unforeseen developments. At all times he was gracious, but firm in protecting the interests of our organization.

The second event was Van's service as an ASIANetwork consultant on my own campus. He basically ran a workshop for me on how consultants should perform. He moved smoothly at all levels of the faculty and administration, listening carefully and translating what he heard into suggestions that quickly began to lift our Furman program to new levels.

It seems appropriate to mention that Van has been joined in his service to ASIANetwork by an extraordinary group of Augustana College colleagues—Norm Moline, Marsha Smith, Nirmala Salgado and of course, Ruth Symons. What a team!

Van's extraordinary contributions to ASIANetwork will leave a legacy upon which we will continue to build. He has left big shoes to fill. Fortunately for us, Teddy Amolozza has impressively large feet.



**Paul B. Watt**  
**Professor and Director of Asian Studies**  
**DePauw University**  
**Board Chair 2003-2004**

Certainly the best parts of any job are the opportunities it provides to work with constructive and energetic colleagues and to contribute to a worthwhile cause. The years that I served on the ASIANetwork Board of Directors and as its chair provided both of these opportunities. All who read this publication know of the important work that liberal arts colleges do in the development and dissemination of knowledge about Asia. ASIANetwork has a unique role to play in supporting the students and faculties at these institutions, and it has been a joy to be a part of this effort.

During my time on the Board, ASIANetwork has continued to mature as an organization. ASIANetwork will always work with the many foundations that have so generously supported us in the past and that share our sense of mission about the critical need to strengthen education about Asia on our campuses—the Ford Foundation, the Freeman Foundation, the Luce Foundation, and the Japan Foundation, to mention the most prominent. But in recent years, the Board has devoted special attention to establishing a solid financial base for ASIANetwork's everyday operations, and we are making progress toward that goal. In terms of our programming, we continue to seek out new and relevant ways to expand the opportunities we offer our students and faculties. Two recent efforts, both supported by the Luce Foundation, illustrate these efforts. I refer to ASIANetwork's new program focusing attention on Asian art and the role it can play in our classrooms and to the new opportunity provided by the Center for Educational Exchange with Vietnam and the American Council of Learned Societies for selected ASIANetwork colleges to host scholars from Vietnam. During my years of service, the Board also developed our first application directed at the U.S. Department of Education for a month-long faculty development program in the Pearl River region of South China. While others on the Board have done the serious work related to the development of these programs,

I have appreciated the opportunity to contribute to these discussions. Each Board chair has special responsibility for the annual conference; let me express my sincere thanks to all who made the 2004 conference at Hickory Ridge a success and especially to the Korea Society for its support of the Sunday morning plenary session on Korea.

The people that I have had the great pleasure to work with during my years on the Board and as chair are far too numerous to mention. I am grateful for the support and friendship of all Board colleagues and for the genuine concern and constructive advice of ASIANetwork's Council of Advisors. I have appreciated the opportunity while chair to meet with representatives of many organizations who share ASIANetwork's goals; these organizations include the Freeman Foundation, the Luce Foundation, the Korea Society, the publication board of the Association for Asia Society, the editorial Board of *Education About Asia*, and the Asian Studies Development Program. The one person I will mention by name is Van Symons, ASIANetwork's Executive Director. Van has worked tirelessly and creatively for ASIANetwork throughout his term. As I have said before, though ASIANetwork has drawn on the talents and energies of many people, no one has done more for ASIANetwork than Van. The long hours we worked together were a pleasure, and I am grateful for the unselfish way he shared his time and knowledge with me.



**Joan H. O'Mara**  
**East Asian Studies Program Director**  
**Washington and Lee University**  
**Board Chair, 2004-2005**

I've just returned from the last of three consecutive weekend meetings at the Hickory Ridge Conference Center, with members of the Executive Committee and Project Directors for three different programs that ASIANetwork will be running in the year to come. In addition to hours spent in consideration of the applications for these programs, we have also been conferring about the upcoming AN-ASDP conference and several other initiatives that ASIANetwork is embarking upon in the near future.

These weekends, however taxing, have proved enjoyable and productive, in the time they have allowed us to work toward implementing the consortium's programs, many of which have made a difference in the lives of faculty and students, and their institutions. Now, in reflecting about the state of the consortium at this particular point in our history, I cannot help but be impressed not only by the "can-do" attitudes of the people I've been working with, but by the tremendous energy and commitment they bring to the tasks before them.

This is an organization where the efforts of such individuals make a difference. There is something about that "can-do" spirit that, I think, underlies our commitments to teaching careers at four-year liberal arts institutions, places where there is perhaps less tendency to focus narrowly and greater willingness to reach across disciplines, for the sake of an area studies program.

In the several years since I joined the Board, the pot that has been quietly simmering seems to be coming to a boil. Programs have been conceived and carried out; a few have run their course or, in the case of the program to bring ASIANetwork external evaluators to campuses to assess Asian Studies programs there, the grant money has run out but the program has taken on new life as a self-sustaining program. One of the early programs, the *Student-Faculty Fellows Program*, has been funded for another round by the Freeman Foundation. Two new grants—the arts consultancy program and an exchange program for Vietnamese and U.S. faculty members—have been sought and funded by the Henry

Luce Foundation and are currently in the planning stages. A faculty development program in the Pearl River Delta area of China has been jointly conceived with the Hong Kong-America Center, and yet more new ideas crowd the horizon.

Our finances are in order for the present and (we hope) the near future due to the implementation of a carefully considered policy for promoting the responsible growth of our investments.

Memberships are up, with old members renewing and new members joining as full or associate members, as people hear about and want to be considered for one or more of the programs that ASIANetwork is running.

We have now achieved a critical mass, with a track record of responsible administration of grant initiatives and programs that bodes well for the future, as we are poised for a stage of further growth and development.

There is a growing awareness, both among "insiders" and "outsiders," that the consortium has matured and has earned a seat at the table, that ASIANetwork individual members are ready and willing to take on responsibilities and carry them out expeditiously. As an organization, ASIANetwork has a voice that is taken seriously by AAS, by *Education about Asia*, the American Council of Learned Societies, ASDP (with whom we will be meeting jointly at the April conference), and the Hong Kong-America Center.

I don't want to close without expressing appreciation for the unstinting efforts of the Development officers, and, finally, our gratitude to the foundations, whose generosity has been the leavening agent for so much of this enterprise. Thanks to all who have played a role in the history of ASIANetwork, as we prepare for the next steps in the growth of the consortium.