

STATEMENTS ON TRAINING PROGRAM FOR
FOREIGN SERVICE WIVES

Attachments to letter of June 1, 1961
to the
Honorable Roger W. Jones
Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration
from
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Foreign Service Women's Association

	<u>Attachment Number</u>
The Foreign Service Women's Association's Interest in the Training Program	1
Sample Schedule for Training Program	2
General Suggestions for Wives' Training Program	3
The Present Situation	4
Protocol or The Tools of the Trade	5

THE INTEREST OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM

Our Association seeks to develop a sense of unity among women associated with the Foreign Service, to advance understanding of their role and responsibilities, to encourage greater cooperation among them on questions of common interest, and to help them to become the best possible representatives of the United States. Our members include women Foreign Service Officers, women of the Foreign Service staff corps, and wives and widows of Foreign Service Officers and staff corps members.

Since October 1960 we have held a series of round table discussions with participants ranging from wives of Career Ambassadors to wives of the newest FSO-8 and members of the staff corps. Over 300 women, many with wide professional experience, have actively participated in the discussions. This represents a sampling of about one-fifth of the Foreign Service women in Washington. Some other women of broad experience have also taken part.

We have considered such questions as the education of Foreign Service children, and the role and responsibility of Foreign Service women at every grade. We have tried to analyze the qualities and attitudes needed for the most effective representation abroad and, in view of rapidly changing conditions everywhere, what we could do to prepare ourselves better. Out of this sharing of experiences have come suggestions and ideas of help to us all.

But more importantly, out of the round tables has come an insistent demand for a complete training program devoted to the special problems wives face as the unofficial other-half of the Foreign Service team. There has also been an acknowledgment that, despite long and varied experience, women at all levels would benefit from "refresher" courses or a simple sharing of experiences through the round table device.

Specifically, the importance of the following needs was emphasized:

1. The establishment of a real rapport with people of the host country.
2. The knowledge to speak intelligently of America, its people, its culture, its history.
3. The ability to cope successfully with critical or hostile comments.
4. The background of successful methods and procedures involved in living as part of the American official family abroad, part of which is called "protocol."

From these round tables and from conversations with many interested and competent people, we have gained some knowledge of the kind of useful program that might be developed for Foreign Service women. A copy of such a program is included with our request to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration for a training program.

Our own feeling is that, in the long-range development of such a training program as we propose, both an academic and non-academic approach are necessary. A committee combining both elements could be established to develop a flexible program that could change as needs demand. We would be happy to participate in or consult with such a committee.

MONDAY

FIRST WEEKINTRODUCTION TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

10-12 General review of the course; the FS, importance of preparation; Intro. to Institute and Library

12-1 Lunch, FSI

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1-3 Responsibilities of an Ambassador; organization and operation of an Embassy & Consulate Film: Operation of a Diplomatic Mission

TUESDAY

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

10-11 Short tour of the Department of State

11-12 Responsibilities of the President & the Secretary of State; organization of the Dept. relations with the field

12-1 Lunch, Dept. Cafeteria

1-2 Other Agencies: ICA, CIA, USIA, The US and the UN.

2-3 Current American Policy

(all this day in the Department of State)

WEDNESDAY

UNDERSTANDING AMERICA TODAY

10-11 American System of Government

11-12 The Congress; organization and role in formulation of foreign policy

12-1 Lunch, Senate Office Building Cafeteria

1-3 Tour of Capitol, Committee Hearing if possible

THURSDAY

UNDERSTANDING AMERICA TODAY

10-11 Historical Survey of America: Main Currents in Thought & Culture
11-12 Civil Rights; the Negro & other minority groups

12-12:30 Lunch, FSI

12:30-3 Labor; Health, Education & Welfare today, here & abroad; US pattern of welfare programs for children, women aged, handicapped.

Others See Us.

3-4 America in Perspective; As We Are; As Others See Us.
5-7 Cocktails, dutch treat, with husbands also in training.

FRIDAY

UNDERSTANDING AMERICA TODAY

10-11 Historical Survey of America: Main Currents in Thought & Culture
10-12 National Gallery Tour, followed by Lecture

12-1 Lunch, National Gallery Cafeteria

1-3 Institute of Contemporary Arts

3-4 America in Perspective; As We Are; As Others See Us.

5-7 Cocktails, dutch treat, with husbands also in training.

SECOND WEEKUNDERSTANDING FOREIGN CULTURES

10 all day. Language & Culture; Communication by Action and Language; the Silent Language; Culture Shock & Empathy; How the American looks from the outside.

Lunch at FSI

12:30-1 Lunch, FSI

1-3 Techniques of answering hostile criticism abroad; explaining America in understandable terms

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNISM

10-12:30 What it is & how it operates; Nature & extent of Communist propaganda (special reference to women's groups).

WOMEN IN WORLD AFFAIRS(LADIES' DAY)

AM Women in America. Suggest possibly Mrs. Loucheim, State Dept.; Mrs. Marcy, Director of Women's Div. USIA; & a representative of a significant women's organization (YWCA, League of Women Voters, etc.)

12-2 Lunch at HEW.

Speaker from Children's Bureau, HEW; also rep. from Women's Bureau, Dept. of Labor
2-4 Women Abroad
Lecture perhaps at Pan Am. Union; UN Commission on Status of Women

REPRESENTING THE US ABROAD AS A FOREIGN SERVICE

Official Responsibilities & Unofficial Activities
(See attached sheet for details)
This to be conducted in informal manner, similar to FSWA's round table discussions, with Director of Course leading the discussions, assisted by at least 3 FS wives of different ranks, two of whom would be junior & recently returned from the field.

At some time during or after the course, arrangements should be made for individual consultation on education, housing & effects, recommended calls in Washington (on opposite number's wife in Embassy of country of next assignment; on wife of husband's immediate superior in the Dept or equivalent); discussions with wives recently returned from the post of next assignment, etc.

Material to be covered in round table discussions at the end of the Wives' Training Program:

Official Responsibilities of the Wife

- A. General philosophy of role and responsibilities.
- B. Review of Embassy organization.
- C. Relations within Embassy:
Understanding duties of wife of Ambassador & Deputy Chief of Mission; her role in relation to them and Embassy organization; necessity for "chain of command" and coordination of efforts. Cooperation. Loyalty. Discretion. Relations with other women in Embassy.
- D. Relations with American women in other Government agencies; Importance of working together.
- E. Relations with community; official and non-official; Diplomatic corps, government officials, people of the country, resident Americans. Priorities.
- F. Importance of wide variety of contacts, and ways of establishing them.
- G. Protocol: its logic and usefulness; using it wisely and realistically as a tool.
- H. Taking part in local community activities. Opportunities for service, how to use your talents. Some cautions.
- I. Entertaining: officially and non-officially. Purpose of representation allowance and how to represent without one.
- J. Responsibilities toward visiting Americans, VIPs and others.

Unofficial Activities:

- A. Organizing and running a household.
- B. Servants, shopping, and related problems. How to live with a commissary.
- C. Children, schools, and holidays.
- D. Health problems:
Department's medical program and health insurance plans.
- E. Housing: essentials and non-essentials. How to live joyously with Government housing.
- F. Some essentials of effective representation.
- G. Travel techniques, with and without children.
- H. Some tips on arriving at a post.
- I. Some tips on leaving a post.
Importance of records; relations with your successor.

It is impossible to cover the material adequately in the two days remaining of the suggested two-week course, and it is suggested that at least two days more be allotted to this portion of the program. Our experience has been that the value of the discussion is enhanced in an unhurried, relaxed atmosphere, with full opportunity for questions and a frank and free exchange of ideas.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR WIVES' TRAINING PROGRAM

In the development of any training program for wives, we believe special consideration should be given to the following suggestions:

1. The concept of training for wives going overseas should be accepted as in the Government's interest and a necessary component of the Government's policy of sending abroad carefully selected, specially prepared personnel to represent America in this critical period.
2. The Department of State should be the leader in recognizing the value of wives' training and in developing a program of the highest quality, after serious study of the problem, and after consultation with, among others, the Director General and the Inspector General of the Foreign Service, women leaders in significant organizations and in Government service, and other knowledgeable persons interested in the subject, as well as with the principals themselves, at every level of experience.
3. The Director of the Women's Training Program should have the wholehearted support of the Department, and of the Director of the Foreign Service Institute and his assistants, and she should have adequate funds, space, and staff for a successful program. The Director should have the opportunity to visit posts from time to time to observe at first hand the realities and to refresh her viewpoint. She should coordinate participation in the course of Foreign Service wives, wives of other Government officials, and staff personnel.
4. The Program should have the widest publicity within the Service. It may be considered unwise to make such training compulsory, but every effort should be made to point out the importance the Department attaches to training for women, and to motivate the women themselves to take advantage of the opportunity to increase their knowledge and usefulness in the Service.
5. Training should be a continuous process, adapted to the needs of women at every level and serving in every part of the world; therefore, a training program for women should go beyond an orientation program for wives of new FSO-8s. Training in Washington should be coordinated with the needs of the post and any on-the-spot post training. Wives of other Government employees with Foreign Service status, especially ICA and USIA, should also attend the course. Women in the staff corps would benefit from many of the lectures.

For women with more experience, perhaps a "refresher" course, plus reading materials and informal discussion groups, would meet their needs effectively.

Ambassadors' wives and wives of other senior officers should definitely have a special program planned for them.

Foreign-born wives should be urged to take advantage of the excellent course, introduction to the USA, given at the International Center. The Center will be happy to admit these wives upon receiving official permission from the Department of State.

6. Every wife should receive at the beginning of the course a kit containing:

Information on the Department of State, Foreign Service, and current developments in American foreign policy.
Background material from other Government sources.
A general bibliography of books on the United States, international relations, etc.

Some of the materials prepared by non-Governmental sources such as the Carrie Chapman Catt Fund, the League of Women Voters, Committee of Correspondence, etc.

The Junior Wives Committee of our Association -- wives of FSO-6s, 7s, and 8s -- has specific recommendations of books to be included for the young wife new to the Service.

7. Area kits should be prepared for wives after they receive notice of assignment. These kits should contain, among other things, the Embassy Wives' Handbook and any other Embassy information on local customs and protocol.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Prior to May 1960 wives were allowed to attend orientation classes (M-100) at the Institute, with a day and a half devoted almost exclusively to protocol or "Social Usage." Protocol lectures included FSO-8s, Naval and Army Attache wives, State FSRs, and some wives from other agencies (not including ICA). The orientation lectures were prepared for staff and personnel of other agencies. No part of the course was especially designed for Foreign Service wives.

From May through October 1960 no wife was permitted to attend any class at the Institute. This was the summer period when the greatest number of departures from Washington to a new post takes place, so that a relatively high percentage of women going abroad for the first time did so during that period without any training or advice except what could be obtained from well-meaning friends.

In October, the legislation was approved that "spouses" could be trained "to the extent that space is available therefor." The day-and-a-half program devoted to wives has not been reestablished, but legally wives are now allowed to attend classes at the Institute on a space-available basis. Although this limitation appears to be no great problem in the general orientation course, we have heard of instances where a wife was not allowed to attend because there was no "space." The language classes pose the greatest problem, particularly the so-called "hard" languages, where the classes are usually full.

However, if the Institute were asked how many wives had been turned away from either the orientation or language classes, the honest answer, we are sure, would be "very few."

The reason for this is simple and twofold: 1. The wives have not been encouraged or motivated to attend; and 2, frankly, they often feel that they cannot afford to attend.

With respect to point 1, many of the young wives just entering the Foreign Service have no conception of the kind of preparation needed, and sometimes even no realization of the necessity of preparation.

With respect to point 2, the Foreign Service Women's Association has compiled information on the problems involved and will be glad to discuss them and assist in their solution whenever called upon.

PROTOCOL, OR THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A minimum knowledge of protocol is necessary for our effective conduct abroad.

The teaching of "protocol" must have a new look for a new world. In the last sixteen years, the old forms have changed, become blurred, and in many instances, are simply unknown. Sometimes they are dispensed with in the interest of saving time or in the name of progress. It is difficult for anyone who has not recently served or travelled in a less developed or newly independent country to appreciate the changes and subsequent confusion.

Since protocol is still a subject of terror to the young wife entering the Service and a subject of controversy to the experienced wife now in the midst of contradictory attitudes, it is urged that the Department authorize the Director of the Women's Program at the Foreign Service Institute, or some other competent person, to review the subject and to recommend a general procedure to be followed, within reason, at each post. The booklet "Social Usage in the Foreign Service" could be the point of departure.

For this review, each post should be asked to prepare a single sheet of specific rules applying to that country -- even Ougadougou. This sheet should be kept up to date annually; it should be in the country file at the Institute, and it should be part of the country kit prepared for the wife after assignment, along with the general booklet on protocol in the Foreign Service.

A special problem is calling. As part of a constructive procedure to meet quickly wives of the country and wives of one's husband's colleagues in the mission or in the diplomatic corps, calling should be encouraged. Receiving calls, within reason, by the women whose husbands have ranking positions, should be part of their duties.

We believe that calling, as part of training, as part of a program to introduce newcomers, and as part of an effort to create some unity in this rapidly increasing Service, should begin in Washington. With a simplified procedure, it should not be a burden for anyone if intelligently carried out.

The feeling of the majority of Foreign Service women is that despite the trend towards simplicity, calling and other aspects of protocol are extremely useful tools of the trade. Rather than ignoring these tools, we should use them to the fullest, tempering their use by common sense.

It will be difficult to get general agreement on protocol practices for Foreign Service women. However, we believe it is important that the Department recognize that we need guidance and a new set of rules, and that such protocol is consistent with democracy and adaptable to the New Frontier.