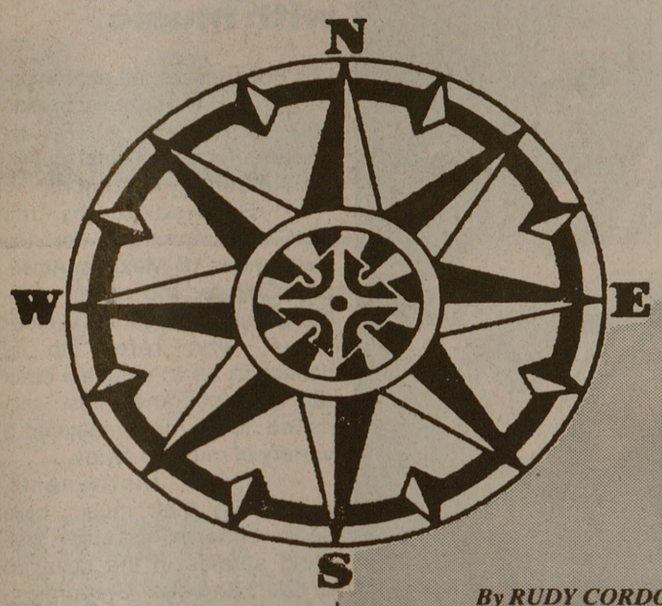

MSC Jordan Institute for International Awareness

Organization's programs act as living legacy

By RUDY CORDOVA JR

The crisis in the Middle East has bolstered a new way of thinking. With the invasion of Kuwait, the world is now on the road to an internationally unified conscience.

At Texas A&M, students have the opportunity to learn about the world around them through the MSC Jordan Institute for International Awareness.

Five years ago Jessie W. Jordan set up an endowment in memory of her husband Leland T. Jordan to promote the knowledge and spirit of internationalism in A&M students. The endowment gave way to the Jordan Enrichment Fund which is used to subsidize international programming by the Jordan Institute.

"We like to expand the awareness of international cultures through informative programs like the Jordan Fellows Program, the Living Abroad Program, and the Enrichment Program, as well as others," David McGough, chairman of the institute, says. The institute's subcommittees sponsor different programs.

The MSC Jordan Institute Fellows Program provides students interested in international leadership with enrichment and educational activities. Ten students are selected as Jordan Fellows each fall after completing an application and interview process.

"This is a program for students that want international experience abroad," McGough says.

Michael Burguieres, director of programs for the institute, says "Jordan is unique in that we operate in a lot of areas."

The Living Abroad Program sponsors ten students who are interested in living with host families in other countries. "This is probably our most popular program right now," Burguieres says.

"Currently we are working on a living abroad program with the Dominican Republic," Burguieres says. Students will live in the Dominican Republic for one month and experience the culture, bringing back with them memorabilia of their experiences.

The MSC Jordan Collection, located in the MSC Browsing Library, houses memorabilia that the Jordans collected while living in countries like Venezuela and Kuwait. The collection includes jewelry, porcelain, silverware, paintings, rugs and various pieces of furniture.

"The Jordan Collection is something we're very proud of," McGough says. "Mr. and Mrs. Jordan collected most of the exhibits while traveling around the world. A lot of it was given to him by Queen Elizabeth herself."

Luke Altendorf, adviser to the institute says, "In this global society, we are trying to learn about internationalism and be more internationally attuned."

The institute is co-sponsoring a program Sept. 25 on Iraq with Political Forum for "students to better understand what their culture is about and why the people of Iraq think the way they do," Altendorf says.

"In a time of such crisis," adds Altendorf, "it's important for us to study other cultures. It gives us an appreciation of our own country and culture."

The MSC Jordan Institute has other programs in store. "I want to do a program on comparative religions of the world," Burguieres says. "It would be good if we knew more about other religions.

In the near future, though, the MSC Jordan Institute is sponsoring a performance by the 1990 Youth Goodwill Mission from Taipei, Taiwan. This is a group of aspiring and talented young men and women from the Republic of China.

The show consists of Chinese cultural song and dance, including Chinese Opera. The performance will display many of the intricacies of Chinese culture and folklore.

The institute's continued emphasis on international culture is a tribute to the man for whom it is named. Leland T. Jordan, born in Lufkin in 1906, worked in the oil fields of Kansas and Oklahoma before attending A&M. He was captain of Battery A in the Corps of Cadets and graduated in 1929 with a mechanical engineering degree.

That same year, Gulf Oil Corporation hired him as a production engineer in Venezuela. By 1945, he was General Manager of Gulf's Western Division in Maracaibo.

Three years later, he managed and directed the newly created Kuwait Oil Company, Ltd., and by 1961 he hadtransformed the company into a successful technical and commercial enterprise.

Queen Elizabeth II appointed him Honorary Commander of the order of the British Empire in 1958 and Honorary Knight of the Most Excellent Order in 1961, in recognition of his service to British interests in Kuwait. Jordan died in 1976.

The institute is located in MSC room 216. For more information, call the MSC Jordan Institute for International Awareness at 845-8770.

Institute sponsors Chinese cultural arts

Looking for tradition? The 1990 Youth Goodwill Mission from Taipei, Republic of China, will give Texas A&M the opportunity to experience the ancient traditions and folklore of the Chinese culture.

As part of its 16th annual international cultural mission,the performance will survey the many forms of Chinese folklore and culture, including opera, kung fu and traditional costume. The opera will demonstrate the four categories of traditional Chinese opera: the masculine role, the feminine role, the painted face and the clown.

Students from colleges and universities in Taiwan make up the Youth Goodwill Mission. Through the use of Chinese wit and fantasy, they hope to promote cross-cultural appreciation.

In addition to their Brazos Valley performance, the Youth Goodwill Mission will travel across the United States, the Mideast, and Africa.

Sponsors of the Chinese Cultural Arts Performance include the MSC Jordan Institute for International Awareness, the Chinese Student Association and International Student Services.

The Youth Goodwill Mission will perform in Rudder Theater Tuesday at 7 p.m. Tickets are $3.00 and may be purchased at the MSC Box Office. For more information call 845-1234.

• RUDY CORDOVA JR

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