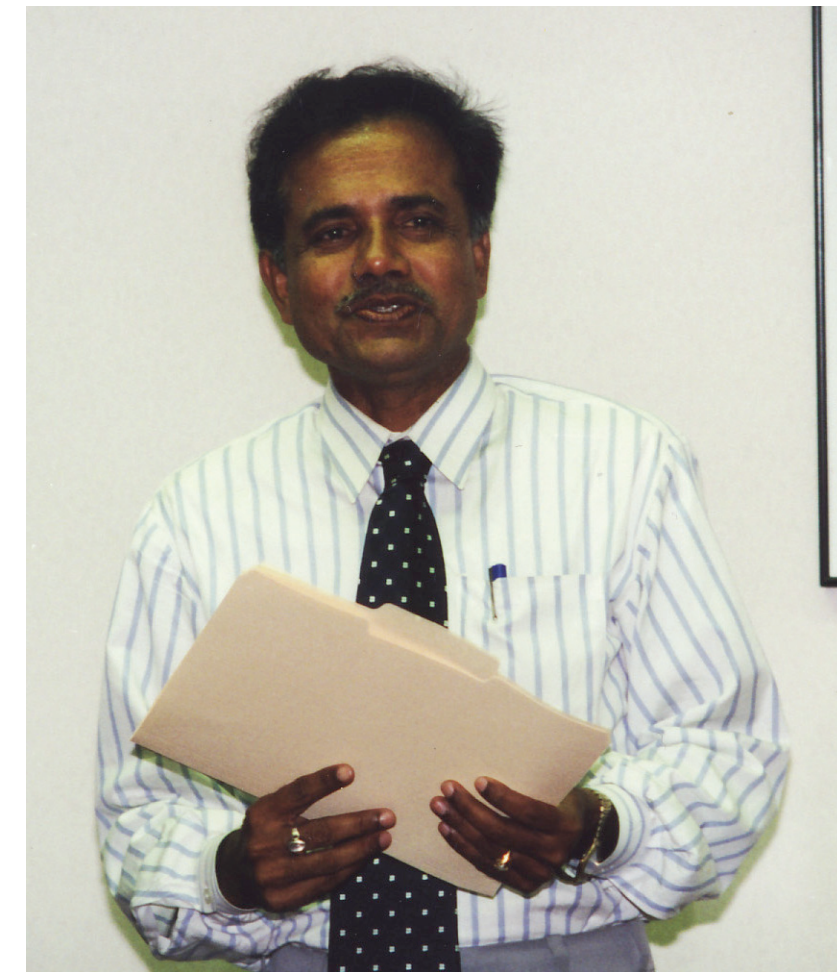


TAKING A GLOBAL VIEW: WORKING WITH CUNNINGHAM FELLOWS

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PREPARATION AND VISIT PLANNING

Himmelfarb Library has hosted librarians from Ethiopia, Tanzania, China, Turkey, and India. The Cunningham Fellows spent approximately two weeks at the library, while other visiting librarians stayed as long as six weeks. In order to make the visit as productive as possible for both the librarian and the host library, some planning is needed.

- Learn as much as you can about the visitor before he or she arrives.
- Try to contact the fellow prior to his or visit, but be prepared that poor internet connectivity may hinder this effort.
- Develop an orientation schedule for the visitor.
- Make sure there will be a designated place for the visitor to sit and work, preferably located within library staff office space.
- Arrange for a computer and internet access in order for the visitor to explore some of the library's offerings, practice some new skills, and work on the projects.
- Provide the visitor with a sense of belonging to the host library.
- Arrange for any necessary IT accounts prior to the visitor's arrival.
- Alert the visitor that the host library staff members are very interested in learning more about his or her home library.
- Sort out where the visitor will be staying (hotel, friends/family, etc.) and how he or she will get to the host library.
- Recognize that the best laid plans may need to be altered!
- Learn some information about the visitor's home library.

DURING THE VISIT

THE FIRST WEEK

- Provide a welcome event to introduce the visitor to the host library staff.
- Give the visitor a tour of campus, the library, even local sights.
- Help the visitor convert money, navigate the local public transportation system, and/or assist with any other mundane but crucial systems.
- Take the visitor to lunch or dinner some time during the first week.
- Meet with the visitor to establish the goals and projects for the visit.

AFTER THE FIRST WEEK

- Complete the orientation schedule.
- Schedule any additional meetings needed to further progress on projects.
- Schedule weekly meetings between the visitor and the library director (or the person overseeing the visitor) to answer any questions, arrange for additional meetings, and/or ensure the project(s) is progressing.



HOSTING LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE

The library staff learns nearly as much from hosting the visitor as the visitor learns from us. Our library staff has learned a tremendous amount about library staffing and resources in other countries, has been exposed to a variety of cultural expectations and habits, and gained an outside perspective on how we conduct our library business.

Staff insight has been gained through:

- One on one meetings: Library staff through their individual meetings with the visitor to orient him/her typically learn how the specific area (reference, technical services, etc.) is organized and run in the visitor's home library.
- Presentation on home library: The presentation, often complete with photos and statistics, provides a wonderful snapshot of library services in that library and perhaps the country as a whole. Information about staffing and collection sizes, hours of operation, characteristics of patron communities, and budget information provide insight into library operations.
- Completed projects: Since the international visitor is looking upon our services and collections with fresh eyes, they are often able to bring a new perspective in evaluating our library.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Be flexible in planning and scheduling; new topics may be identified, and project topics may change.
- Be aware of differences in culture and accompanying expectations. Some people always arrive early to meetings; others are less concerned with time.
- Encourage your visitor to ask questions. What may be perfectly clear to us may be confusing to someone from another background.
- Ask questions yourself! It is enlightening to learn how others perform similar tasks in a different environment.
- Stay in touch! Your initial visit may result in a collaborative project or a reciprocal visit later on.

HIMMELFARB LIBRARY

Over the past ten years the Himmelfarb Library has hosted multiple Cunningham Fellows as well as several other international librarians for varying lengths of time. Each experience was structured to address the needs and interests of the visiting librarian, but also provided valuable information and perspective for the hosting library staff.

WHAT IS THE CUNNINGHAM FELLOWSHIP?

The Cunningham Memorial International Fellowship is awarded annually to a librarian(s) from a country outside the United States and Canada. The award is meant to supplement the education and training of these librarians through visits and projects with hosting libraries as well as attendance at the annual Medical Library Association meeting. The Fellowship was created in 1967 through a bequest from the estate of Eileen R. Cunningham and has been awarded nearly annually since 1972. Past Cunningham Fellows have come from Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

During the 3-4 month fellowship, the international fellows are hosted by two or three libraries. While in residence at the libraries, the fellow becomes familiar with various operations at the library and completes a specific project applicable to the fellow's home library and utilizing the host library's resources.

OTHER VISITORS

Himmelfarb Library has also been fortunate to host international visitors in cooperation with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Regional Office of the World Health Organization Fellowships program. This program facilitates the exchange of scientific knowledge and technology by supporting training for health care practitioners and researchers from around the globe, including librarians working at international research institutions. The PAHO collaboration has resulted in individual requests from librarians for in-depth visits to Himmelfarb, funded by the visiting librarian's home country.