

OBITUARY

for

ROY A. STACY

1937—2025



Roy Addison Stacy passed from this world at his home in Brittany, France in the early morning hours of March 10, 2025. Roy felt that timing, just as in comedy, was of great importance in his life. And Roy was adept at seeing and seizing the opportunities that timing would offer him. Roy went from teenage delinquency to the U.S. Air Force and then on to Ventura Community College, UC Santa Barbara, George Washington University and Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and ultimately to a career of diplomatic service. He began this career as a Junior Training Officer in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and 24 years later, he retired with the rank of Career Minister from the U.S. State Department. A former USAID colleague remembers Roy as an "extraordinary person who had an extraordinary life and career". Roy had indeed contributed to establishing a world in Sub-Saharan Africa that was more resilient, better educated and increasingly ready to participate with the developed countries as an equal partner.

Born in San Diego, California, in 1937; Roy enjoyed the first 12 years of his life just blocks from Waikiki Beach, in Honolulu, Hawaii. He would later describe this period of his life in his memoir as ideal. But the ideal was not to last. A change in family circumstances brought him and his mother back to Oxnard, California in 1949.

Early on, Roy was an uninterested student. After graduating from Oxnard Union High School in 1955, he engaged in a summer of teenage escapades with friends. But his behavior finally caught up with him. Roy was informed by several local police officers that he had a choice between joining a branch of the U.S. military or being arrested and prosecuted on numerous misdemeanors charges. If convicted; he would have found himself, a seventeen-year-old, with a long sentence in a reformatory. Roy wisely chose the U.S. Air Force.

It was during his time in the Air Force where Roy began to understand that he could learn and that by learning efficiently, there were Air Force rewards to be achieved and enjoyed. As the top graduate from "Jet Aircraft Mechanic School", the Air Force reward was

his choice of any Air Force Base, worldwide, that had an opening for his technical qualifications. As timing would have it, Oxnard Air Force Base had such an opening. Roy then happily reported for duty at Oxnard as the base's newest F-89 Crew Chief. He was back in Southern California and within sight of the Pacific Ocean.

In 1959, Roy decided to forego an Air Force career. He began student life at Ventura Community College and then continued to the University of California, Santa Barbara. His plan at the time was to go to law school; but Project India would change his path. Roy learned of Project India through a timely conversation with a UCSB classmate. He was intrigued by the project; so, he signed up for interviews. The project had 14 students from three University of California campuses travel to India to interact with their Indian student counterparts. The Indian students represented various Indian universities from across the sub-continent. The interactions brought the students together to exchange ideas on cultural and political issues. Project India opened the door to diplomacy for Roy and with it, the idea of a Foreign Service career begins.

After finishing his Master's Degree at George Washington University in 1964, Roy took his initial position with USAID. (For details on his many USAID postings both in Washington, DC and in Africa; please [click here](#) for Roy Stacy's 1999 interview by Haven North for the Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Foreign Assistance Series.) He retired in 1988 from the U.S. Foreign Service as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa (under Assistant Secretary of State, Chet Crocker and Secretary of State, George Shultz). However; Roy, a firm believer that retirement was the leading cause of old age, had not retired from diplomacy. Roy would now begin a twenty-year long second career in international diplomacy. His first position was at the World Bank's Africa Region and later as seconded World Bank staff to the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), he then went on to be Director of the Club du Sahel, OECD, Paris, France and was next the Chief of Party for the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET). After 2008, he continued making diplomatic contributions with consultancies at the Carter Center, the United Nation Agencies: Food and Agriculture (FAO), World Food Program (WFP), Development Program (UNDP). He ended his consultant postings in 2017. He then wrote his first book, "A Delinquent's Detour" at the age of 82.

A former FEWS NET colleague recently said, "Roy caught all the right moments at just the right time by utilizing his approachable personality, networking skills and intellect." Roy truly wanted to participate in having this world's people be better educated, better fed and more informed to make decisions for themselves, their families and their countries. For all of us who knew him, it was our honor and our privilege. He was not a perfect man but he was most definitively a good man. He is missed.

Roy cherished African Proverbs for their use of clear phrases to get to the heart of an idea. Here is one of his favorites from West Africa, "The first best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is NOW." He is survived by his wife, Jana Charters; two sons from a previous marriage, Ross Stacy and Christopher Stacy and a grandson.