

Mike Dunn: My life (so far)

On leaving McAuley I attended the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in DC. In 1969 I graduated with a degree in International Affairs. I was determined to pursue a graduate degree, but it was the era of the Vietnam draft. During the summer, I was classified 1-A, but that Fall Nixon introduced the draft lottery, and I got a high number. So I was able to continue my graduate work, taking an MA and later a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern History. After several years studying Arabic at Georgetown, in 1972-73 I had a Fellowship year at the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad at the American University in Cairo. The Middle East was very different then and Egypt and the US did not even have diplomatic relations. (Though while I was there, Sadat threw the Russian advisors out.) I improved my Arabic and traveled extensively in the Middle East.

After returning to the US and finishing my doctorate, I spent a year teaching as a sabbatical replacement at Utah State University in Logan, Utah in 1976-77. A year in a small Mormon city was almost as much a cultural experience as Cairo had been.

My mother had died suddenly in 1966 while I was in college. My father died in 1976. Although I had aunts and cousins still in Joplin, I returned far less frequently after my parents were gone.

Full-time teaching jobs being scarce as all the baby boomers were looking, in 1976-77 I returned to Cairo as a post-doctoral Smithsonian Fellow at the American Research Center in Egypt. That year I got to witness Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

Back in the US the academic market was still tight, so I took a job writing and editing for a group of defense publications. This gave me opportunities to travel to the Middle East almost every year, mostly to Egypt and Israel. I also taught courses on Islam and related topics as an adjunct at Georgetown through the 1980s.

I met my future wife in 1983; we dated for a few months, and she broke up

with me. I would eventually get even by marrying her.

In 1989 I started a newsletter of my own, and kept it going through most of the 90s. I was great at analysis but lousy at marketing, And also timing, since the paper newsletter was being rendered obsolete by the Internet.

My future wife, Tam Mehuron, and I reconnected in 1991, got engaged in 1992, and married in 1993. Though we met the first time at an Egyptian Embassy party, she's a Nebraskan from the Omaha area, so we're both Midwesterners and not so far apart.

But we were also not as young as we once were, and after years of trying to start a family, and one miscarriage, we opted to adopt. In 2001 we went to China to join our daughter Sarah. She's now 17, and the prospect of her starting college is the main reason I am not yet retired.



Mike, Sara, Reindeer, Tam

In 1998, I was offered the Editorship of The Middle East Journal, (website: <http://www.mei.edu/middle-east-journal>), a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal of the contemporary Middle East, founded in 1947 and published by The Middle East Institute in Washington (website:

<http://www.mei.edu/>). I've been in the same job for 18 years writing , and for the last eight I've also been writing the Institute's Editor's Blog. Which you can find here:
<http://mideasti.blogspot.com/>.