

The DACOR Foreign Service cup

HENRY ALLEN HOLMES

A career Foreign Service Officer for 40 years, Ambassador Holmes served overseas and in Washington in a series of positions of ever-increasing responsibilities, both at the Department of State and on loan to the Department of Defense.

In the State Department, he served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, and as Ambassador at Large for Burden sharing.

He also served as Ambassador to Portugal, where he negotiated a new base rights agreement for facilities greatly needed by the United States military. Other overseas assignments included Africa in the immediate post-colonial era, Counselor for Political Affairs in Paris, and Deputy Chief of Mission in Rome.

His extensive international affairs expertise led to his nomination and confirmation as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, a position he held for more than five years. He was responsible for the overall supervision of the U.S. Special Operations Command, as well as the special operations and low-intensity conflict activities of the Department of Defense.

He also served as the Defense Department Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support and advised the Secretary of Defense on requirements, priorities and resources for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance programs, including demining and landmine control. Regionally, he oversaw the formulation and coordination of Defense security policy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Following his retirement, he has, for almost two decades, continued to devote his time and talents to advancing international affairs as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Diplomacy, and the National Youth Leadership Forum in Defense, Intelligence, and Diplomacy. However, of particular note, has been his distinguished work as an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service over a period of 17 years. Almost 300 students, mostly undergraduate and some graduate students were the recipients of his wide-ranging experience across both civilian and military issues in international affairs through his small interactive seminars. Distinguished US diplomats and other foreign policy experts were also regular guest lecturers.

His seminars concentrated on the post-Cold War period and addressed all the major foreign policy challenges from Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Yemen, Iran, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The general program required the students to write six short analytical papers and a longer term paper on foreign policy and national security issues. Numerous hours were also spent advising countless students about the Foreign Service as a career. Over 17 years, each year an estimated five to eight students, on average, took the Foreign Service Officer Entrance exam at least once due to his encouragement; several of these students won Pickering fellowships.

Ambassador Holmes has been a true advocate of US policy and the Foreign Service. His leadership and dedication to rising generations are recognized and celebrated through the 2018 Foreign Service Cup award.