

BY CASSIE RINGSDORF

ICIU connects Iowa to the world. On April 24, 2003, the Iowa

Council for International Understanding, along with the League of Women Voters of Metro Des Moines, helped establish another link; this time between the media and Iowa citizens through a forum entitled "Ethnicity and Race in a Changing America." The forum was open to the public at no charge due to a generous donation from Mid-American Energy Company and the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney LLP. The night began with excerpts from four PBS documentaries. The film clips and other materials were provided by Preview Forum, a national project that uses media to engage the public and journalists on social issues. The topics of the documentaries ranged from the Chinese American experience, the role of race and its defining characteristics, and the changing African American role in society. These broadly defined issues provided participants the basis to begin discussion in small groups after which they could share those perspectives in a large group setting.

According to forum participant Rick Morain, Editor of *The Bee Herald* and member of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, "I was impressed by the quality of the discussion. Everyone was frank, there was no holding back, especially in the break-out groups. It was very useful in getting a handle on the attitudes out there between the media and public."

The people behind perspectives like these represent an impressive list of individuals from the Des Moines area and beyond in attendance. This forum provided the rare, but essential opportunity for them to interact with media representatives from newspaper, radio, and television in order to discuss social issues that affect, and are affected by both within society.

## IOWANS AND MEDIA CONNECT

*The public speaks with media representatives about social issues*

## 65th Anniversary, Best Ever

BY TRISHA JOHNSON

On June 24, hundreds of central Iowans gathered at the Hotel Fort Des Moines to celebrate ICIU's 65<sup>th</sup> year of international service. This year's celebration began with dancers from Janice Baker's Iowa State University dance class as well as from The Dance Place.

For the evening's entertainment, Simon Estes dazzled the guests with four of his greatest songs. The programmed speaker was also a native Iowan, Ambassador Kenneth Quinn. Ambassador Quinn helped relations between Cambodia and the U.S. and has many acclaimed awards for his excellent career in the foreign service. Ambassador Quinn elaborated on his new position as the President of the World Food Prize and expressed recognition towards famous native Iowans for the work they have done to promote international understanding.

To continue the celebration, Executive Director Michele Soria and President Bill Niebur presented the evening's awards. The recipient of the ICIU Vision Award was International Traders of Iowa for their contribution to an international program with a statewide impact. The recipients of the ICIU Diplomat Award were Harold and Carol Hill for significant contribution to an ICIU project. The Dorothy L. Towne Award was presented to the late John Goeldner for his outstanding service to ICIU. The Elinor Robson Award for significant contribution towards international understanding was presented to Doug Lewis. The final award for the evening was the Global Iowa Award which was presented to Prairie Meadows for their corporate contribution to international understanding.

The celebration came to an end as President of ICIU, Bill Niebur, made his closing remarks. ICIU staff and the board of directors are very proud of the progress ICIU has made in the last 65 years through continued service toward international understanding. We hope that next year progress will continue to move us forward with our mission. We were very happy to have shared our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary with you and we hope to see you at next year's celebration.



Featured speaker Ambassador Kenneth Quinn and featured performer Simon Estes.

### Dear Friends and Members of the ICIU,

I would like to express my appreciation to all who contributed to the extraordinary 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Awards event. The evening was a huge success and created a new level of energy to achieve our shared mission "To promote mutual respect and understanding between Iowans and people from all countries and cultures." We now are challenged to build on the momentum created by such a special experience.

Our focus at the ICIU over the coming year will be on growth. Growth in the sense of greater impact in our state and community across groups and individuals that we have not historically reached. To achieve this growth, we will need to continue to raise the staff, board members and volunteers' performance standards. We will need to improve on how we integrate and partner with other groups who share our passion and commitment to making Iowa a more diverse, interesting and productive place to live and work. We will also focus on creating new offerings that capture the interest and address the most pressing needs of our community.

## Letter from Board President, William S. Niebur

I would like to thank a number of departing board members – Carol Brown, Gary Foster and Deb Habr – whose service and contributions have been exceptional. I would also like to welcome Preston Daniels and R.W. Nelson to the board. On behalf of the board and staff, we appreciate the opportunity to work more closely with you. Thank you for joining the ICIU!

I would draw your attention to the upcoming events and activities of the ICIU, specifically the Passport to Prosperity event on September 6. This is a tremendous opportunity to connect with a diverse group of community leaders celebrating the impact that newcomers are making through work and personal commitment.

In closing, we are positioned very well for the 2003/04 fiscal year. We have recently completed a strategic plan that is providing clarity of vision and focus. The Diversity and Cross-Cultural Training program is in high demand and getting great reviews. The Community Connections and International Visitor programs are growing as a result of the excellent staff work and home hosting experiences. Executive Director and staff morale is high (*a great intern group helps!!*) and our mission is timely and critical.

Best regards,

*William S. Niebur*

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