

BIOGRAPHY



AMBASSADOR (RET) STANLEY T. ESCUDERO

A career diplomat for 33 years and a businessman for ten years thereafter, Stan Escudero is a native Floridian, who was born in Daytona in 1942 and spent his childhood in New Smyrna. Upon final retirement in 2010 he and Jaye, his wife of 50 years, returned to the area and currently live in Daytona Beach Shores.

Stan spent his high school years at Carlisle Military School in South Carolina, where he graduated first in his class and absorbed a strong sense of conservatism and love of country. Graduating from what was then Daytona Beach Junior College (where he was student government president) in 1962 Stan went on to the University of Florida where he again served in student government, completed the high honors program and graduated in 1965 with a degree in history and international relations. While at University he applied for entry into the Foreign Service of the United States and returned to New Smyrna to await the outcome of the complex examination process.

In early 1967 he was accepted. Stan and his fiancée, Mary Jaye Cobb, married and drove to Washington to begin their new life together. In a career focused primarily on Central and South Asia, they served in Pakistan (1967-68) Niger (1968-70) Iran (1971-75), (Stan returned to Iran undercover during the Iranian revolution in 1978-79). Stan's career also included service in Washington, marked by a Congressional Fellowship at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University and three years as a very successful lobbyist for the State Department in its Bureau of Legislative Affairs. This was followed by assignment as political counselor in India (1984-87) and then as political advisor to successive commanders-in-chief at Central Command (Marine General George Crist and Army General Norman Schwarzkopf – 1987-89) where he helped coordinate the military effort which halted Iranian attacks against oil shipping in the Persian Gulf and destroyed some one-third of the Iranian navy. At CENTCOM Stan also initiated the process which led to the planning of the successful US military campaign in the First Gulf War. He followed that assignment with the political counselling in Egypt (1990-92) where he helped to orchestrate Egypt's successful diplomatic and military participation on the American side in that same war.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Stan was named the first U.S. Ambassador to the newly independent state of Tajikistan. Within days of his April 1992 arrival there was a

bloody coup which turned out to be the opening shot of a brutish civil war during which the capital city of Dushanbe was overrun and Stan and his embassy earned the distinction of being the only American embassy ever to be evacuated under fire inside Russian armor. While away from post Stan was named Special Envoy for Humanitarian Aid to Tajikistan with the rank of ambassador. Upon his return to post, Stan worked with the senior resident UN official to negotiate an end to the fighting and things calmed down enough for Jaye to join him in late 1993. She took on the directorship of an important English language training and scholarship program during which she too travelled throughout Tajikistan's war torn and remote mountains and villages.

In 1995 he was reassigned as Ambassador to the neighboring Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan. There he successfully established a close relationship with that country's powerful post-communist ruler, brought about greater respect for human rights and orchestrated the building of a protective relationship for Uzbekistan's substantial community of Bokharan Jews. This laid the groundwork for Uzbek willingness to permit establishment of American bases in that country in the period immediately following 9/11. The ruler of Uzbekistan in those years, Islam Karimov, only recently died.

The Ambassadorship to the oil and gas rich Caspian Sea nation of Azerbaijan followed in 1997. There Stan helped to negotiate the agreements which made possible the 1200-mile Baku/Ceyhan pipeline which crosses the territory of three countries and brings Azerbaijani oil from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean.

This project solidified Azerbaijan's readiness to develop a close cooperative relationship with the United States, including in military and intelligence fields. His close friendship with the then Azeri President, Haidar Aliyev, and with his successor and son Ilham, encouraged and accelerated extraordinary improvements in human rights, opposition political party activity and press freedoms. Azerbaijan remains in large part authoritarian but remains a strong supporter of a forward-leaning America in the Caspian region.

By 2000 Stan was the winner of numerous medals and performance awards and had become, at that time, the senior official of the government of the United States most experienced in Central Asia.

At this point Stan and Jaye elected to retire from government service and returned to Daytona intending to live the quiet life in paradise. But family concerns intervened, and Stan opened a consulting firm whose clients soon insisted that he and Jaye return to Azerbaijan in a private capacity. This initiated a ten-year second career in which the couple and their two sons Alexander and Benjamin started several successful companies. As an ambassador Stan had been a strong supporter of American business abroad and served enthusiastically as Honorary President of the American Chamber of Commerce in both Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. As a private businessman, Stan was President or Vice-

President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Azerbaijan for virtually all of the decade he spent there.

In February 2010 Stan returned to the Daytona/New Smyrna area for what he devoutly hopes is the final time.

Upon his return Stan became deeply concerned about the direction of the nation and the Marxist philosophy of its newly elected President. Fearing for America's political and economic future, Stan became active in the Republican Party and, by 2012 had been elected Chairman of the Republican Executive Committee of Volusia County.

Under Stan's leadership the Republican Party in Volusia County morphed from its near-moribund state into a powerful and well organized force which, in the 2012 election, carried the Democrat-majority county for the Republican presidential candidate, delivered a victory for the Republican Congressional Candidate, enabled victories for all five of the state Republican Senatorial or Legislative Candidates contending in all or parts of Volusia County and helped to elect Republicans to three of the seven County Council seats, including the position of Chairman.

Having served as the architect of this string of Republican victories and the re-creation of the Republican Party in Volusia, Stan stepped down as Republican Executive Committee Chairman, leaving the official leadership positions to younger men and women. But as Chairman Emeritus he remains a very influential leader of the GOP in Volusia County.

He remains a well-known and very popular public speaker, addressing veterans' groups, political rallies, Republican and other conservative gatherings, college classes and organizations interested in foreign policy and domestic politics throughout the county.

By putting aside his official duties Stan had hoped to find the time to pursue his hobbies: he remains fascinated by American history and political development and collects Persian carpets and Islamic metalwork. He enjoys fishing and has been an avid hunter, taking big game, waterfowl, and upland game birds on three continents.

But demand for his services proved too great. The death of the incumbent propelled Stan into the three years of service as the president of the Republican Club of Southeast Volusia County. The Governor appointed him to the Board of Trustees of Stan's alma mater, now called Daytona State College, where he served for five years and advanced to the Board Chairmanship. He was also appointed to the Charter Review Commission which conducted the decadal review and revision of the charter which governs Volusia County.