

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Meet the Department of State Diplomat on Campus - Leslie W. McBee



Leslie (Les) W. McBee - Direct from a posting as Consul General for the south of France, Corsica and Monaco, Leslie (Les) W. McBee has assumed the responsibilities of Diplomat-in-Residence (DIR) on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Based at the UC Berkeley Career Center, McBee will be talent-scouting for the Department of State in an effort to recruit a new generation of foreign policy professionals. Moreover, on behalf of the Department, he will conduct outreach to groups with an interest in foreign affairs, the military, professional and service organizations and others considering careers in international relations within the Government. In addition to information on the Foreign Service Written and Oral examinations, he also has detailed materials relevant to overseas and domestic internships within the Department of State.

Mr. McBee is also available to serve as a panelist for departmental programs, participate in your events, meet with student groups, and engage in classroom presentations. We encourage you to refer students to him for consultation and guidance on diplomatic career opportunities.

His recent assignment in southern France occurred during what was arguably the most difficult period for Franco-American relations since the conclusion of World War II. All of his diplomatic skills were called upon to carry out his bilateral duties with local, regional and national politicians, top military officials, university presidents, professors and students, editors and reporters, business leaders, law enforcement officials and community and religious leaders. Marseille, where McBee's Consulate was physically located, is France's oldest (2600 years) and second largest city. Resembling the city's signature dish, it is an ethnic bouillabaisse with significant Italian, Armenian, Spanish, Jewish and sub-Saharan African populations. Its Muslim/Arabic-speaking population, predominantly from the Maghreb, is estimated at 20 - 30%. The many diverse tiles in this urban mosaic, and Marseille's general success at integration, make the city a living laboratory that is studied by many others interested in insertion and absorption issues. As the sole American accredited to Monaco, he had responsibility for all demarches, reporting, relations with the Foreign Ministry and local government officials, as well as regular contact with the royal family.

In the course of his postings, he has served as Mission spokesperson and press liaison; directed political, economic, commercial, consular and public diplomacy sections; managed and designed professional and academic exchanges for Europe, North Africa, the Near East and South Asia; served as editor-in-chief for a policy oriented Serbo-Croatian magazine; worked as refugee liaison officer for Vietnamese "boat people"; served as Embassy treaty representative on Law of the Sea issues surrounding the USS Alabama; designed and executed democracy building programs in the developing world; and designed cultural diplomacy programs around diverse figures such as Ella Fitzgerald, John Irving, Elizabeth Taylor, Bob Dylan, Toni Morrison, Sydney Lumet and Tom Cruise. He is the recipient of numerous Department of State Superior Honor and Meritorious Honor Awards.

In addition to France, McBee has served at Embassies or Consulates in Italy, both Congos (Brazzaville and Kinshasa), Finland, Fiji (where he was accredited to 4 Pacific Island Nations), the former Yugoslavia, and Malaysia. He was also a Peace Corps Volunteer, living 2 years in a small village in Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa. He is a native Californian who finished high school in Tehran, Iran, subsequently graduating from the University of San Francisco and Columbia University. His languages include French, Serbo-Croatian, Italian and Finnish.