

Emilie Ann Clevenger

Emilie Clevenger Ketudat

Served in Bangkok, Thailand as Chemistry Instructor

A native of Indiana, USA, she moved to Thailand in 1962 as a Thailand Peace Corps Group One volunteer. Following an academic career which began in 1962 as a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching at the Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University, she then served at the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology, and at the Asian Institute of Technology.

Following completion of her Peace Corps service she married her husband-to-be, Professor Dr. Sippanonda Ketudat who taught in the Physics department at the same University in Thailand. Together they had three children who are now living in Thailand, the United States and Pakistan. Later Emilie worked at the newly established Institute of for the Teaching of Science and Technology in Thailand, taught and served in senior administrative positions at the Graduate School of the Asian Institute of Technology and taught at the International School of Bangkok. In 1963 Sippanondha took a Sabbatical leave at the Technical Hochschule in Darmstadt, Germany. They spent 14 months there together with their eldest son Tonytip Ketudat. On their return to Thailand Emilie worked at the Asian Institute of Technology, a well-respected Graduate School of Engineering where she served as Academic Secretary and Secretary to the Board of Trustees among many other duties.

Son Tonytip, who attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and his family now live in Lexington, Massachusetts. Two of the Ketudat children continue to live most of their time in Thailand. Dr. Mariena is married to Associate Professor James Cairns and have two children: Emilyn, who lives in Bangkok with her grandmother to take advantage of living very near a good bilingual school and, Jamiena who lives on the campus of Suranaree University of Technology with her parents.

This long-time resident has served as the Coordinator of the Thailand Campaign to Ban Landmines from 1995 until early 2010, while working as a full-time volunteer with the Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific. A native of Indiana, USA, she is the recipient of many royal decorations including the Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand.

Asia Pacific: How actions and activities as a JRS volunteer have influenced my life

Campaign Focus Staff, past and present, volunteers and refugees reflect on our 30 years serving with and on behalf of refugees and displaced people.



Emilie Ann Ketudat, former JRS volunteer

Volunteers participating in the Catholic Church's ongoing Social Apostolate work in Singapore, and a small team from JRS Asia Pacific met in Singapore in August 2008 to facilitate a better understanding of the social work of the church and to encourage them to undertake social action for human development.

Advocacy work, with and for, the poor, can ensure understanding of the mission and vision of JRS. A deeper understanding of the JRS mission and vision, and an understanding of the JRS style of advocacy and orientation came from our focus on one of the most prominent issues and campaigns for JRS Asia Pacific – The Ban Landmines Campaign.

This simple coming together of JRS colleagues reinforced the lessons I have learned during my extended period serving refugees, the disabled and especially landmine survivors, whilst editing newsletters, contacting donors and whatever else needed to be done while fully participating in the work and growth of JRSAP as a volunteer. I began helping JRS by assisting Fr Olivier Morin with the Suan Phlu Prison ministry, then became an advocacy assistant, "Light & Dark" editor, Editor of "News from The Field," and eventually settled down as coordinator for the Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions campaigns. The organization of the Thailand Campaign to Ban Landmines was very fulfilling.

Another significant example of JRS's early response and far reaching

influence on me was the JRS Colloquium on the “Comprehensive Plan of Action for Vietnamese Asylum Seekers” held in Manila in October 1992. The participants and the approaches used during this conference further encouraged my involvement with JRS. I learned a lot by helping with the organization’s work under the guidance of Rev Alan Nichols.

JRS publications, “Light and Dark” and “News from the Field,” up until that time were a way to keep contact with former volunteers and present staff, giving both a chance to tell their stories. It became difficult to solicit reflections from the decreasing number of JRS workers, but “News from The Field” survived for years under Fathers Tom, Quentin, and Steve.

With all best wishes,
Peace, compassion,
Emilie

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