

## A History of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies

The Josef Korbel School of International Studies has offered degree programs in international affairs since its founding in 1964 as the Graduate School of International Studies. The school was renamed May 28, 2008, to honor its founder and first dean, Josef Korbel. For a biography of Josef Korbel, click [here](#).

### The Cherrington Years



In its earliest incarnation, the Department of International Relations at the University of Denver had a national reputation thanks to the leadership of Ben Mark Cherrington, a dynamic educator dedicated to providing students a global perspective of the issues of the day. The department's academic programs also had the moral and financial support of the Social Science Foundation, established in 1926 by Denver investment banker and philanthropist James Causey with the support of then-DU Chancellor Heber Harper. Today, the foundation's board manages a multi-million dollar trust, the proceeds of which are dedicated to promoting the study and application of international relations at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

As a teacher and director of the University's Foundation for the Advancement of Social Sciences, Cherrington formed life-long relationships with such thinkers as Louis Brandeis, Mohandas Gandhi and Ramsay MacDonald in an effort to seek solutions to the international problems of his day. Thanks to Cherrington's drive and enthusiasm for organizing conferences, seminars and lectures dedicated to international affairs, Denver became a temporary home to politicians, diplomats, academics, and business leaders around the world.

While professor and chairman of the Department of International Relations, Cherrington was also at the forefront of efforts to create a formal institution for U.S. public diplomacy, implementing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy," which was designed to reverse decades of U.S. paternalism toward Latin America. In 1938, Cherrington was handpicked by the State Department to lead its new Division of Cultural Relations and tasked with carrying out "The exchange of professors, teachers, and students . . . cooperation in the field of music, art, literature . . . international radio broadcasts . . . generally, the dissemination abroad of the representative intellectual and cultural work of the U.S." Thus a foundation was laid for what are today the school's hallmark strengths: a global perspective,

academic integrity, emphasis on the relevance of theory to skills, and support of initiatives and activities that support a peaceful and prosperous world. Cherrington served as chancellor of the University of Denver from 1943 to 1946, and was later an author of the United Nations charter.

### **Josef Korbel**



The Graduate School of International Studies became a reality largely due to the vision and efforts of Josef Korbel, who is now widely known as the father Madeleine Albright, the 64th secretary of state of the United States, first female U.S. secretary of state and highest-ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government. A diplomat in Czechoslovakia, Korbel's Jewish heritage forced him to flee after the Nazi invasion in 1939. He served as an advisor to Edvard Benes, the exiled Czech president in London, until the Third Reich was defeated. He then returned to Czechoslovakia to serve as the country's ambassador to Yugoslavia, but was forced to flee again during the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia 1948. After learning he had been tried and sentenced to death in absentia, Korbel was granted political asylum in the United States and was hired in 1949 to teach international politics at the University of Denver.

During his career in Denver as a scholar and teacher, Korbel decided to try to establish a professional school that would prepare talented and idealistic people for distinguished careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Finally in 1964, with the support of Ben Cherrington, Korbel founded the Graduate School of International Studies and became its first dean. To house the school, the 30,300 square-foot Ben M. Cherrington Hall was built in 1965. After Korbel's death, the University of Denver established the Josef Korbel Humanitarian Award in 2000.

### **Transformation**



The Graduate School of International Studies' most dynamic and unifying transformation occurred during the 12-year stewardship of its current dean, Tom Farer, an internationally respected lawyer, scholar and diplomat who served in the State and Defense departments and as president of the University of New Mexico. Under Farer's tenure, the school has experienced explosive growth.

New degree programs in global health affairs, international administration and international security were created. Farer spearheaded the launch of new research centers, increased exchanges with institutions abroad and expanded the school's base of financial donors. The number of student applications has soared. Today, the school's community includes more than 260 undergraduate and 450 graduate students, 25 full-time and 20 part-time faculty, 25 staff, nine academic centers and research institutes, and several thousand alumni living and working in more than 75 countries.

### **Ascending Reputation**

Taken as a whole, the strategic initiatives implemented under Farer's tenure have helped establish the school globally as a premier educational institution. The school's reputation continues to grow. Among recent recognitions are two consecutive biennial surveys conducted by researchers at the College of William and Mary and published by Foreign Policy magazine that placed the school in the top 10 master's degree programs of international affairs. In the 2006/2007 survey, the school's program ranked No. 9 in the nation, ahead of such schools as Syracuse, University of Chicago, Yale, Stanford, University of California-Berkeley, and MIT. In the 2004/2005 survey, the school's program ranked No. 10. The survey results confirm that the School has a faculty and innovative programs that are recognized by leading U.S. academics as excellent.

The recent prominence of graduates on the world stage has also contributed to the school's ascending reputation. Those graduates include U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Gen. George Casey, 38th chief of staff of the U.S. Army and former commander of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, Heraldo Munoz, Chile's ambassador to the United Nations, and former Iranian ambassador to the U.N., Javad Zarif.

### **The Korbel Legacy**



The Graduate School of International Studies was renamed Josef Korbel School of International Studies May 28, 2008, thanks to the family of Josef Korbel. The new name recognizes the fact that Korbel's life and work serves as the intellectual foundation of the school and that his spirit continues to inspire students and faculty alike. Though less-well-known than some other

philosopher-academics of his generation, Korbelt "arguably had a more enduring and practical impact on the history of American policy," according to National Public Radio correspondent Guy Raz. By the time Korbelt died in 1977, he had left behind "a legacy that spawned two generations of top diplomats and leaders," including his daughter, Madeleine, and star pupil at the University of Denver, Condoleezza Rice. "Josef Korbelt opened a world to me that I would never have known," Secretary of State Rice said in a speech in 2007. Indeed, in the post-Cold War world, Korbelt helped pioneer the field of international studies education. He was revered as a teacher-mentor by those who knew him and widely regarded in his day as a skilled diplomat. His scholarship was rigorous and perceptive. For example, his books on Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia established him as a leading authority on post-World War II Eastern Europe; his 1954 *Danger in Kashmir* is still considered a classic for its penetrating diplomatic analysis of a territorial dispute and armed conflict with implications for international security.

Today, the Josef Korbelt School of International Studies continues the work of its namesake and founder: offering a broad intellectual approach to the study of international affairs to practical idealists committed to the common good of an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.