

Yuriy Posudin
Through the Prism of Fulbright Experience

I became one of the finalists in Fulbright competition in 1996 when the University of Georgia responded positively. The main task during my Fulbright visit was to conduct lectures in the field of spectroscopic monitoring the environment. My audience consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students, and teaching staff.

One person that consistently attended my lectures was Stanley Kays. His position is a Professor in the Department of Horticulture at the University of Georgia. Stanley is postharvest physiologist, however, his research interests also cover modern scientific areas such as non-destructive quality evaluation of agricultural products, flavor chemistry, insect resistance chemistry, removal of volatile organic compounds by indoor potted plant species, and laser non-invasive blood glucose monitoring.

When I first visited his laboratory I was, as a physicist, astonished by the modern analytical equipment - lasers, spectroscopic techniques, gas chromatographs and mass spectrometry, and electrophoresis.



Yuriy in the Laboratory of Prof. Stanley Kays

Stanley Kays is an author of remarkable textbook "Postharvest Physiology of Perishable Plant Products" (Exon Press, 1997, 532 p.) and other fundamental monographs.

He offered me three of his books and his words: "The books must be alive!" were retained in my memory. Now his books are present in National Library of Ukraine and the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine. I followed his words and my book, which was published due to Fulbright Small Grant, took its place in Science Library of the University of Georgia.

What did I know about Georgia then – hardly anything! Stanley acquainted us with his charming wife Sandra. We walked all around Athens. He once organized a fascinating pedestrian hike to the waterfall in the north Georgia mountains.

I was deeply impressed with my first visit to the United States and was eager to repeat my Fulbright experience once more. There were several attempts; each time Stanley supported me with letters of invitation. Once I found myself as a semi-finalist in the Fulbright competition but not as a finalist! Frankly speaking I was in the state of despair when I informed Stanley. As luck would have it, he was able to offer me in February 2001 a six month position in his Department. "The sooner (i.e. next month or so) the better" - he wrote. Besides, he proposed a very interesting research project. We arrived in the USA at the beginning of May, 2001.

As a result we have visited the most beautiful U.S. state of Georgia once more (I want to note that, thanks to Stanley we also visited the University of Georgia again in 2008). It is necessary to note that Stanley has an incredible ability to create a friendly atmosphere around him. The representatives of different countries are working in his laboratory. He is very sensitive to the problems of other people. While I won't enumerate his help and assistance, I am sure everyone in his laboratory was in the same situation. His beautiful house which is located in the center of Athens, constantly receives guests - scientists from various countries. At the same time, Stanley is invited periodically as a recognized expert in his field of knowledge to visit foreign universities.

On July 4, 2001, American flags appeared everywhere, although I must say that these flags are flown continuously in many dwellings - Americans are proud to be Americans. Stanley and Sandra invited my wife and I to a picnic outside the city, near the old mill with a waterfall. A beautiful table was set. Stanley is a recognized authority on the barbecue, which we appreciated and ate with great appetite.



At Picnic

In that year our acquaintance with Georgia continued. Our friends arranged for us to visit a football match. We saw a real American football - 100 players in each team. It was a bright colorful sports festival with music and numerous fans (~90,000) many of which even came from other states. They arrived on trailers, cars, with their families and their own kitchen. Americans know how to enjoy life.



American Football

As the years went by, my wife Galya and I, along with Stanley and Sandra have been enriched with grandchildren. We are continually sharing information about them, pictures, and the positive emotions that are derived from our children. Life goes on.



Prof. Stanley Kays (left) and author (right)

I am very much indebted to the Fulbright Program for the brilliant possibility to meet smart and energetic people such as Professor Stanley Kays. The Fulbright exchanges have a remarkable impact on the visiting scholars but also on scientists in the U.S., enhancing not only our individual research productivity but also our understanding of the world. I encourage anyone that would find such an experience beneficial to apply to the Fulbright exchange program.

Yuriy Posudin,
Fulbrighter 1996.