“Zbig & Maureen Grabowski

Zbig was born in Poland in 1931. He enjoyed several years of a normal childhood before World War II broke out in 1939. After that, life was not so pleasant. Poland went from a German occupation to a Russian occupation over the years, with a lot of unpleasant times between. On one occasion, Zbig was riding his bicycle home from school when he encountered a German soldier who was not friendly, to say the least. Fortunately, the shot he fired at Zbig only grazed his temple. Later, his family was arrested, forced onto a train and taken to an unknown location. They found out after a long march that they were not very far from Warsaw. During his school years, Zbig was educated in Polish, German and Russian schools without leaving Poland.

Maureen was born in 1939, just before the war broke out in England. In September of that year, her father left to join the war effort. He did not return to England until 1946. Her mother was a single mother, which was not unique in those days, and she raised her daughter well during the time her husband served their country.

Zbig excelled in school, especially in the areas of mathematics and physics. This later qualified him for a place at the University of Krakow, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees. He subsequently was invited to study for his doctorate at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. After completion of his doctorate under his major professor, Nobel Prize-winner Kai Siegbahn, he worked in Kirina, close to the Arctic Circle in Sweden. There he came in contact with physicists from all over the world, leading to his being invited to Purdue in 1963 for a year.

Maureen meanwhile completed her schooling and went to the then-prestigious Leeds General Infirmary to train as a nurse.

Travel for Maureen started as a Girl Guide (English Girl Scout), visiting camps in various places in England during her teens. Her first trip abroad was as a student nurse, when she and five fellow students went to Austria on vacation. In the 1950s, flying was a luxury, so they moved by ferry to Belgium, then took a bus through Holland and Germany, then finally into Austria.

In 1964 Maureen was invited to spend 18 months as a nurse at The Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C.

Neither Zbig nor Maureen ever returned to their home countries permanently.

Zbig attended many conferences in different parts of the world, while Maureen went to live in Vientiane Laos shortly after her marriage to her late husband. During that time, even though the Vietnam War was raging, they managed to travel quite extensively in Asia and beyond.

The Grabowskis are well aware of how the travel experience broadens the mind, as well as how living in a different country can literally change a person's life and outlook on life. As a result, the object of this scholarship is to allow as many young people as possible to be exposed to experiences like this.”