



It is on a bittersweet note that I write this introduction for the Winter 2015 issue of the *Harriman Magazine*. This is my last letter for the magazine as my term as director of the Institute ends in June 2015. One of my goals as director was to increase our public profile and strengthen ties with alumni, and the magazine has been a key part of that strategy. With its beautiful photos, revealing interviews, and timely essays, the magazine has really exceeded my expectations. Great thanks go to the editors, Ronald Meyer and Masha Udensiva-Brenner, who have been its guiding forces from the start.

It is an honor for me, and for the Harriman Institute, the proud namesake of Governor W. Averell Harriman, to feature a cover story about the wartime letters of Harriman's daughter Kathleen, written by historian Geoffrey Roberts. "Kathy" accompanied Ambassador Harriman to Moscow in October 1943, and shared with Pamela Churchill, among others, her astute observations on Russian life and the characters she encountered; her first meeting with Joseph Stalin; and her impressions of the Katyn massacre site. Special thanks to her son, David Mortimer, for the wonderful photos of his mother that accompany the article.

Another treat is an interview with Stephen Sestanovich, whose new book, *Maximalist: America in the World from Truman to Obama*, was published last year by Knopf. Sestanovich reminds us just how turbulent American foreign policy has always been—the book couldn't have been more timely. A keen observer of political dynamics, and a cherished member of the Harriman community, Sestanovich views the foreign policy challenges we are experiencing today with the eyes of a seasoned practitioner.

One major challenge we face is the deteriorating relationship between Russia and the United States. This issue profiles Gail Buyske, Harriman Institute alumna ('93) and international banking expert, who continues to travel to Russia to advise banks. She offers insightful perspectives on the Russian banking sector during a time of economic crisis. We are also fortunate to have the perspectives of our alums Nate Schenkkan ('11) and Steve Swerdlow ('03), human rights practitioners working on Central Asia, who discuss the changing human rights landscape in the region in light of recent developments in Russia, with current MARS-REERS student Casey Michel ('15).

From a cultural viewpoint, Robyn Miller Jensen, Ph.D. candidate in Columbia's department of Slavic languages, describes her experience as a stowaway on the Columbia Global Scholars Summer Workshop on socialist and post-socialist cities, "Contemporary Cities of Eurasia: Berlin, Moscow, Ulaanbaatar, Beijing," led by Charles Armstrong and Catharine Nepomnyashchy. We also have an article about our Fall 2014 exhibit, "Soviet Bus Stops," and photographer Christopher Herwig's quest to amass the largest and most diverse collection of Soviet Bus Stop photographs.

In memory of our dear colleague, Robert Belknap, we are reprinting an essay he authored for the volume *Teaching Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, based on the proceedings of a Columbia conference dedicated to him. We also have a profile of our new Polish History Chair, Małgorzata Mazurek, whom we were very happy to welcome to the Harriman Institute family last July.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for future stories.

Timothy Frye
Director, Harriman Institute