

Frontiers

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A personal thanks

I am currently studying in Taipei, Taiwan. I came here with the sole interest of learning Chinese and getting an MBA so I could get a job for a company that does business in China and Taiwan.

I have been here for one semester, and it has proven to be exceptionally difficult for me, a first-generation college graduate from the Chicago Public Schools. I'm learning Chinese while taking MBA classes at the same time. It's not as difficult academically as it is socially; I'm a black American, and as you can imagine I stand out quite a bit.

Anyhow, in about October, things were really getting tough. My Chinese classmates are very competitive and really diligent at studying, while I tend to take a more "relaxed" approach to education (well, I did). Not only was I struggling to pick up the language but I was also struggling to keep up with the rigorous course work.

I became discouraged and decided to give up. I was headed back to the United States, when I bumped into a man who works for Boeing. I sat down with him and talked for hours about my troubles here: getting stares everywhere I go, not being able to understand the language, not "fitting in" here, and a whole host of other problems. This man, who didn't know me, spent about three hours talking with me, encouraging me to stay here and fight though the difficult times. He made me realize that my spoken Chinese is much better than I thought; that I do have the aptitude to compete with my Asian counterparts; and that if I stuck with the bold decision to attend school in

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—Marlon McWilliams, Taipei, Taiwan



a complete stranger. I can only imagine what the culture at Boeing is like if your employees stop to offer life-changing advice to students around the world.

—Marlon McWilliams
 Taipei, Taiwan

About my best job

Regarding your best job at Boeing article (December 2006/January 2007): I retired in 1981 after 38 Boeing years, but I still believe I had the best Boeing job ever!

For four years starting in 1949, I was assigned to the Strategic Air Command Headquarters in Omaha, Neb. SAC was responsible for the security of the United States. My job was to help SAC's Boeing fleet meet SAC's stringent mission requirements. It was no small task, but I was dedicated to the SAC mission. I worked their schedule seven days a week and was on call 24 hours a day.

Every day was different and exciting. I loved every minute of it.

—Sid Weiner
 Mercer Island, Wash.

Correction

The mountain shown in the background of the NATO AWACS upgrade article on Page 24 of the February 2007 issue was misidentified. The mountain is Mount Adams.

Taiwan, it would pay off in the long run—only the long run was not so long away.

This conversation really changed me. Near the end of 2006, the dean pulled me aside and told me that I am expected to be No. 1 in the department this semester—and it's the first time an American (let alone a black American) had finished a semester ahead of the local students.

I can't begin to express how grateful I am to this man for giving me the confidence to believe in myself. Regrettably, I've lost his business card, so I'm unable to contact him directly. I am hoping that this letter will find its way to this man (he was from Seattle and he had his teenage son with him), and that he will know how much I appreciate him and the time he spent talking with me,

Letters guidelines

Boeing Frontiers provides its letters page for readers to state their opinions. The page is intended to encourage an exchange of ideas and information that stimulates dialogue on issues or events in the company or the aerospace industry.

The opinions may not necessarily reflect those of The Boeing Company. Letters must include name, organization and a telephone number for verification purposes. Letters may be edited for grammar, syntax and size.