



A Canadian Destiny

By Jean Senécal

Despite having Latin origins and a childhood spent under the Central American sun, Susan Grigsby's destiny is closely linked to Canada. With a Nicaraguan mother and a British father, Susan spent her early years in Nicaragua, and describes her childhood as "normal and happy in a very beautiful country." After varied studies in preschool education and sociology at the Central American University in Managua, and in languages in the United States, Susan joined the Nicaraguan foreign affairs department in 1985. She was a policy analyst in the North American division, with responsibility for Canada. From that time on, she has always had some connection with the Great White North.

In 1991, Susan was appointed to the Nicaraguan Embassy in Canada. She left her native country with her husband and two young children and lived in Ottawa for six years, serving as political counsellor, as well as in trade and in tourism promotion. "They were wonderful years in terms of both career and family," says Susan, who fondly recalls skating with her family on the Rideau Canal. "We settled in very well, despite the cold winters."

Returning to Nicaragua in 1997, Susan left the public service. She was hired a year later as an assistant to the CIDA Program Support Unit director. After two years, she became a locally engaged administrative and consular officer with the Canadian Embassy in Managua, demonstrating a great deal of efficiency, initiative and confidence.



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Did you know?

Nineteen missions have only one CBS each.

Nine missions, accounting for five percent of our total network, have no Canada-based staff. They are Sapporo and Kitakyushu (Japan), Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad (India), Recife and Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Karachi (Pakistan) and Tallinn (Estonia).

Source: Annual Report on Canada's Network Abroad 2008-2009

In 2006, her husband landed an important contract with a construction company in Mexico. Two years later, he received an offer of employment that he could not refuse. It was Susan's turn to follow him, and she resigned her position and moved to Mexico in May 2008. Again, Canada was part of her destiny: she was offered a contract with DFAIT's Physical Resources Bureau in Mexico, and worked for several months as a consultant on some of the department's major property projects there. When a permanent position opened up, Susan won the competition, once again setting herself apart through her efficiency and excellent team spirit.

Susan is currently the management and consular program assistant, one of the 150 LES at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico. Her wealth of knowledge and experience are appreciated by the large Embassy community. She plans to eventually return to Nicaragua. As she takes on new projects and challenges, it remains to be seen whether her destiny will continue to be linked to Canada.

Jean Senécal is first secretary and vice-consul at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico.