

## Don Camp, India 102 Former Peace Corps Volunteer is working on the Friends of India 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Steering Committee

(This is an excerpt from an article from the Carleton College alumni magazine that they wrote to commemorate PC's 50th anniversary.)



### Don Camp '70

#### **Service: Tamil Nadu, India (1970–1972)**

Don Camp already had an India stamp in his passport when he received notice that he'd be heading back on a Peace Corps assignment. He had spent fall term of his senior year in Pune, India, as part of Carleton's inaugural India program in 1969, and he couldn't wait to get back.

Camp spent two years in the small village of Sholapuram in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where he helped rice growers increase their yield by using fertilizers, pesticides, and hybrid varieties of rice. He discovered that though he often felt far from home, the world was smaller than he realized. "Even though the people in the village were largely illiterate, they were well informed about international affairs, for example, because they listened to the radio," he says. "It made me realize how connected we all were, long before we all talked about the global village."

Ultimately, he became closely connected with many people in the predominantly Muslim area and was invited to participate in Ramadan feasts as well as many smaller family celebrations. Camp's Peace Corps experience was the launching pad he needed for the nearly four decades he spent in the Foreign Service, including stints in China and Sri Lanka, and in Washington, D.C., where he worked for the State Department, the National Security Council, and the White House during the Clinton and Obama administrations. In 1993 he participated in the inauguration of the Peace Corps in China. "It was nice to see a program that I benefited from back in the '70s coming to another country," he says. "It's wonderful that it's still thriving."

*"The basic experience of the Peace Corps hasn't changed—you are immersed in a foreign culture and become a part of it. But today, people have Skype and broadband. When I was in the Peace Corps, we had a single telephone for an entire village."*