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60
YEARS | Because of my
**EISENHOWER
FELLOWSHIP...**



ROSA MARIA PALACIOS, 2001, PERU

Director and Anchor, América Television

In March 2001, Rosa Maria Palacios, a lawyer embarking on a career in political journalism, traveled from Peru to Philadelphia for her Eisenhower Fellowship. Her objectives were to examine the relationship between the press and political institutions and the handling of ethical conflicts in journalism, and to gain further insights into U.S. political and governance issues.

At the time of her fellowship, Peru was in the midst of a major corruption scandal in which politicians were bribing the press. Rosa Maria was ready to put her energies into learning new ways to protect democracy and the media. Unexpectedly, she discovered that the U.S. media also faced a credibility crisis. However, she observed how extraordinary people in journalism were fighting to find a solution, and how she could contribute to improving the situation in Peru.



Her fellowship took her to a variety of institutions across the country. She visited television and radio networks, newspapers and magazines, NGOs, schools of journalism and law, as well as government agencies on the federal, state and local levels. Among the highlights were meetings with CNN, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Founder of the Women & Politics Institute at American University Dr. Karen O'Connor, with then-Executive Editor of "60 Minutes" Don Hewitt, and with then-Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell (now Eisenhower Fellowships' chairman). Through the years, Rosa Maria has consistently galvanized and supported women in the political process in Peru, much attributed to the inspiration she gained through the stimulating leaders she met through her program.

Since her return to Peru, Rosa Maria frequently refers to ethics manuals she collected during her fellowship to help craft ethical standards at Peru's largest national radio station. She states that her career "is not a job about making the government happy. It is, in fact, exactly the opposite..."

Over the past decade, Rosa Maria has added to her demanding schedule. Every morning, she anchors a two-hour show on Radio Capital, interviewing people active in Peruvian politics. Every evening, she produces and anchors a television interview show that features the likes of the Prime Minister and members of Congress.

When asked to reflect on her fellowship, she states that, "I cannot say that the EF experience changed my views about freedom. On the contrary, it reaffirmed my convictions about the right path in journalism ethics which is not, for sure, an easy way. Years later, after losing some jobs and getting others, I realize that the personal satisfaction that this job gives me is the full prize. I learned that in those days."

She describes her other prize as the lasting relationships she developed with the 24 other Fellows in the 2001 Multi Nation Program. United by friendship, as well as similar interests, Rosa Maria maintains contact with many Fellows and continues to see them and draw on them for background when reporting international news. In her words, "I learned and respect so much their diversity as well as their kindness and patience to explain to me a different and unknown world."

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