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## **America through the Eyes of Visiting Fulbright Scholars**

*New Collection of Essays Examines Life, Culture from Foreign Points of View*

**MELBOURNE, Fla.** – To help mark the 60th anniversary of the Fulbright Exchange Program, Zeeshan-ul-hassan Usmani and Omer Idrees announce the publication of their new book, *Experiencing America: Through the Eyes of Visiting Fulbright Scholars – Stories of Foreign Fulbrighters in the United States* (now available through AuthorHouse).

The book offers a rare perspective on this internationally known program and is comprised entirely of essays gathered from among the ranks of those who have come to the United States to study as Fulbright Scholars. Each author's experiences and definitions give readers an image of America from a foreigner's perspective. Scholars from Italy, Uganda, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Cameroon, Austria and the Netherlands have contributed essays.

"The book can give you so many interesting definitions of America, its people and culture (that) you have never heard of," explains Usmani. For example, he points out that some of the "obvious" and acceptable things that pervade American culture can be offensive to people from other countries. Thus, the book's overall theme is one of mutual understanding among nations and people.

"At the end, (everyone) loves peace, friendship and love, and life is all about our struggle to cope with different cultures, meanings, settings, people and places," he explains. "To understand others is the key to living a peaceful life."

Throughout the pages can be found the words of Usmani's contemporaries. In "Five Definitions of America," a student who came from a remote region of Pakistan describes the United States as "a new planet." Even more profound, however, is how his perception changed during his stay. Primed by his hometown media to view America as "the land of prejudice," he was reluctant to discard such sentiments right away. His story is a timely and insightful examination of the struggle between reality and perception, and how people and their culture combine to give an impression of an entire nation.

"The world is a collection of diverse cultures and people. We should not try to make them one. Instead, we should be open enough to accept them as they are," says Usmani.

Usmani, 27, is a native of Pakistan. He is currently pursuing his graduate degree in computer science at the Florida Institute of Technology, where his field of interest is swarm intelligence and complex systems. He was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship in 2004. Usmani is also the author of two more books, both of which are written in his native Urdu.

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