

Dr. Audrey Topping
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To Whom It May Concern

It gives me great pleasure to recommend Mr. Nikolai Semenenko, whom I think is literally a “Man of all Seasons.” Nikolai is a professional writer and Investigative journalist, as well as a distinguished artist who speaks several languages and creates art in different genres which include drawing, illustrating, painting, stained glass windows and sculpting in various mediums. Niko is an expert restorer who has skillfully rescued some of my own damaged paintings and sculptures. In 1976 Niko graduated from Kursk University as an art teacher and is now an experienced coach and I would highly recommend as a master instructor for aspiring artists. He possesses a charismatic personality and is a world traveler familiar with many cultures.

My husband, Prof. Seymour Topping “Top” and I first met Niko and his beautiful, talented wife Nina (a TV broadcaster and artist) in 2011 in Scarsdale, New York, shortly after they arrived from Russia. We immediately discovered we had much in common as fellow journalists and artists and soon became true friends. Niko attended Concordia College NY and learned good English in a remarkably short time. Over the years we have enjoyed many social occasions and fascinating philosophical conversations concerning art, culture, and world events, notably China and Russia where we have all lived and worked. Among a series of amazing sculptural portraits of world figures in science, art, and literature including John Lennon, Albert Einstein and Earnest Hemingway, Niko sculptured a life-size terra-cotta portrait of my husband Top which we proudly exhibit in our distinguished collection of artworks in our home in New York along with his impressionistic portrait of Leo Tolstoy.

We also exhibited Niko’s dynamic ceramic sketch named the “Egg of Civilizations,” which our sophisticated New York art critics and friends called a masterpiece. Niko created it as a model for a colossal cultural project he plans to construct when he can obtain a grant for funding which Top and I highly commend.

The inspiration for the global “Egg of Civilizations” struck Niko in 1996 when he happened to be in the ancient city of Byblos where the Bible got its name. He later wrote: “The story of humanity opens suddenly on a small piece of land. Archeologists remove the cultural layering of another ancient civilization and reveal traces of a previous civilization. Eventually, they got to the era of the Assyrian kings. What stunned me, is that each subsequent civilization has managed to deftly and shamelessly arrange it’s culture on the debris of the previous one.... One era savagely destroying the shrines of its predecessors. Isn’t it awful? “This shock lodged in me,” he commented, “as if the scene went somewhere deep into my soul. The events of recent years confirm that humanity not only hasn’t begun to see clearly but has not even matured. The history of civilizations needs to be rethought!

“One could write a whole philosophical and culture lens treatise on this topic, but I had a much more malleable (and ancient as the human race itself) material at hand. Clay. And America boils in my blood. So, my brain untied the hands and imagination..... All the pieces concerted to one

core and historical events weaved itself, without inflicting any self-torture.”

Niko feels that the small size of the present model does not allow space for all the turns of the spiral, through which mankind has wandered over centuries. He envisions a mind-boggling monumental project consisting of a welded metal frame in the shape of an enormous egg encircled by steel bands representing time and the centuries. Embedded on these will be various, emblematic and iconic figures in bronze, ceramic or marble which will echo the worthiest culturological symbols of the world's heroic but regrettably extinct civilizations from primal days to the present. The egg remains still, but inside is a nude human figure, barely visible through the grid, representing the human soul. The person, lit by sparks of contrasting beams of light appears to rush around like a confused prisoner caught in the cage of traditions, laws, wars and religious contradictions.

Top and I have found Niko to be an original thinker and superb writer as well as an excellent artist. He once interviewed my husband concerning a book Top was writing called “On the Front Lines of The Cold War.” Afterwards Top said admiringly: “That was the best in-depth interview I have ever had.” That was no small complement as Topping at that time was a Professor of International Journalism at Columbia University and the Administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes.

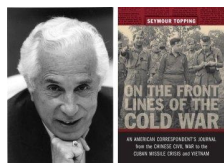
Top, a great fan of Hugo and Nina, lived an adventurous life for 99 years before he joined his ancestors on November 8, 2020. Top and I were married for 72 years. We fell in love and became engaged in China's capital city of Nanking during the Civil War between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Zedong's Communists. Top and Niko had both experienced time in the army but in two rival countries and different decades. After three years as a U.S. Army Infantry officer in the Pacific Zone during World War Two, Topping went to China as a War Correspondent to cover the Communist Revolution for the Associated Press (A.P.) I was attending the University of Nanking where my father, Ambassador Chester Ronning, was serving as a Canadian diplomat. After two romantic but turbulent years in China I was evacuated in advance of the Communists troops crossing the Yangtze River to occupy Nanking. Top stayed in China and made world headlines by crossing behind Communist lines and reporting on the horrific Battle of Huai Hai, one of the largest battles in history and the decisive battle of the Chinese Civil War. He was captured by the Communists but after a week as prisoner with the rats in a peasant's shed, he was given a horse to ride across the battlefield on “no-mans-land” to Nanking. He later caught the last ship leaving Shanghai and sailed to Canada where I was attending the University of British Columbia. We were married in my hometown in Canada just before we went to Vietnam where Top was assigned to cover the French Indochina War. Our first daughter was born in a French Military Hospital in Saigon.

After two years in Vietnam, we were stationed in London, England, where I attended the Coronation of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. Top covered the Diplomatic Beat. I studied sculpture and exhibited in The Royal Institute Gallery. We had two more daughters in Queen Mary's Nursing Home. After four years we were assigned to West Berlin, Germany, where Top covered

East Berlin and the Russian Sector while I studied art and gave birth to another daughter in the American Military Hospital. Then Top joined The New York Times and was assigned to Moscow to cover The Soviet Union. The New York Times Magazine published 16 of my stories

including 3 covers. After three years in Moscow, we were stationed to Hong Kong to cover Communist China and the American War in Vietnam. Americans were forbidden to enter “Red China” but as a Canadian I got a visa and wrote a cover story on The Cultural Revolution. I was also editor of Mandarin Magazine. After three years in HK Top was called to New York to become Foreign Editor and then Managing Editor of The New York Times. We settled in Scarsdale. At that time, I was a freelance photojournalist working with the National Geographic Magazine. This is where we met and developed respect and admiration for Nikolai Semenenko whom I highly recommend for all of his many capable positions.

Sincerely, Audrey Ronning Topping



RESUME OF SEYMOUR TOPPING

SEYMOUR TOPPING HAS HAD A VARIED CAREER AS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, EDITOR, NEWSPAPER EXECUTIVE, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PULITZER PRIZES, AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

FROM NOVEMBER 1993 TO JULY 2002 TOPPING SERVED AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PULITZER PRIZES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. CONCURRENTLY, HE SERVED AS SANPAOLO PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM WHERE HE CONDUCTED SEMINARS TO PREPARE REPORTERS FOR WORK ABROAD IN CRISIS AREAS. HE INAUGURATED THE COURSE COVERING ETHIC AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS. HE RETIRED FROM REGULAR TEACHING IN JULY 2002 TO DEVOTE HIMSELF MAINLY TO WRITING AND LECTURING. HE BECAME SAN PAOLO PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. HE HAS CONTINUED TO LECTURE ON OCCASION AT COLUMBIA, THE KENNEDY LIBRARY, VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD. IN OCTOBER 2004 HE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF EPIC, AN ASSOCIATION OF THE EMERITI AND RETIRED TENURED PROFESSORS AND OF THE MORNINGSIDE AND HEALTH AND SCIENCE CAMPUSES OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, TEACHERS COLLEGE, AND BARNARD COLLEGE.

PRIOR TO HIS CAREER AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, TOPPING WAS WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY FOR 33 YEARS AS A REPORTER, FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, FOREIGN EDITOR, MANAGING EDITOR AND AS DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL

DEVELOPMENT, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EDITORIAL QUALITY OF THE COMPANY'S 32 REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS.

IN 1959, WHEN SEYMOUR TOPPING JOINED THE TIMES, HE ALREADY HAD 13 YEARS' EXPERIENCE AS A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT. AFTER SERVING AS AN INFANTRY OFFICER IN THE PACIFIC IN WORLD WAR II, HE TOOK TERMINAL LEAVE IN THE PHILIPPINES IN NOVEMBER 1946 AND WENT TO WORK IN PEKING AS A CORRESPONDENT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE COVERING THE CHINA CIVIL WAR IN MANCHURIA AND NORTH CHINA. HE ALSO INTERVIEWED THE CHINESE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP IN THE CAVES OF YENAN IN SHENSI PROVINCE. IN 1948 HE JOINED THE ASSOCIATED PRESS IN NANKING, CAPITAL OF NATIONALIST CHINA. TOPPING MADE WORLD HEADLINES WHEN HE WAS THE FIRST CORRESPONDENT TO REPORT ON THE FALL OF THE CITY TO THE COMMUNISTS IN 1949. AFTER THE COMMUNIST OCCUPATION TOPPING CONTINUED FOR SIX MONTHS TO REPORT FROM NANKING.

IN 1950 AND 1951, HE WAS CHIEF OF THE AP STAFF COVERING THE WAR IN FRENCH INDOCHINA. IN OPENING THE AP BUREAU IN SAIGON HE BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT TO BE STATIONED IN VIETNAM AFTER WORLD WAR II. FROM SAIGON HE WENT TO LONDON IN 1952 WHERE HE COVERED THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCES ON THE CONTINENT. IN 1956 HE WAS APPOINTED CHIEF OF BUREAU IN BERLIN WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL 1959 WHEN HE RESIGNED TO JOIN THE TIMES.

AFTER SERVING ON THE TIMES' METROPOLITAN STAFF, HE BECAME CHIEF MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT IN JUNE 1960. HIS DISPATCHES FROM MOSCOW COVERED SUCH MAJOR STORIES AS THE U-2 SPY PLANE AFFAIR, THE CHINESE-SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL DISPUTE, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, THE FIRST SPACE SHOTS AND THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TREATY LIMITING NUCLEAR TESTS. THREE YEARS LATER, THE TIMES REASSIGNED TOPPING TO HONG KONG AS CHIEF CORRESPONDENT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE MONITORED DEVELOPMENTS IN MAINLAND CHINA, THEN NOT OPEN TO WESTERN REPORTERS, SUPERVISED THE COVERAGE OF THE INDOCHINA WAR AND TRAVELED FREQUENTLY THROUGH THE REGION.

IN 1966, HE BECAME FOREIGN EDITOR OF THE TIMES, DIRECTING MORE THAN 40 CORRESPONDENTS ABROAD. TOPPING BECAME ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR IN 1969, DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR IN 1976, AND MANAGING EDITOR ON JAN. 1, 1977, SERVING IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL 1987 WHEN HE BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE TIMES' 31 REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS. DURING HIS YEARS AS FOREIGN EDITOR AND MANAGING EDITOR, TOPPING TRAVELED THE WORLD EXTENSIVELY, KEEPING FRESH HIS SKILLS AS A CORRESPONDENT AND ASSESSING

AREAS FOR COVERAGE.

IN MAY 1971 TOPPING WENT TO MAINLAND CHINA SPENDING FIVE WEEKS TRAVELING AND INTERVIEWING SUCH PERSONALITIES AS PREMIER CHOU ENLAI. IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1974, HE TOURED THE MIDDLE EAST, INTERVIEWING SUCH LEADING PERSONALITIES AS THE SHAH OF IRAN. HE FILED DISPATCHES FROM SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, LEBANON, SYRIA, JORDAN, KUWAIT AND IRAN.

TOPPING VISITED SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA, NOW ZIMBABWE, IN 1977. HE INTERVIEWED PRIME MINISTER IAN D. SMITH OF RHODESIA AND JOHN VORSTER OF SOUTH AFRICA, AND OTHER WHITE AND BLACK LEADERS. FROM THESE MATERIALS, HE DISTILLED "HOW LONG CAN AFRICA'S WHITES HOLD OUT," WHICH BECAME THE COVER STORY FOR THE TIMES MAGAZINE ON NOV. 13, 1977.

THE NEXT YEAR, TOPPING AND HIS WIFE, AUDREY, A PHOTOJOURNALIST, VISITED FINLAND, NORWAY, HUNGARY AND YUGOSLAVIA, TRAVELING ALONG THE PERIPHERY OF THE SOVIET UNION. "UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE KREMLIN," ANOTHER TIMES MAGAZINE ARTICLE WAS A RESULT OF THIS TOUR. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED ON DEC. 3, 1978.

IN 1978, THE TOPPINGS VISITED PAKISTAN, BECOMING THE FIRST WESTERNERS TO TRAVEL THE FULL LENGTH OF THE KARAKORAM HIGHWAY, A MOUNTAINOUS LINK BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND CHINA. THEY TRAVELED ON INTO CHINA AND TIBET. TOPPING'S ARTICLE ON THE KARAKORAM HIGHWAY WAS THE COVER STORY IN THE DEC. 2, 1978 ISSUE OF THE TIMES MAGAZINE. HIS ARTICLE, "CHINA IN THE 80'S," WAS PUBLISHED IN THE FEB. 3, 1980 ISSUE OF THE TIMES MAGAZINE. THE TOPPINGS TRAVELED IN THE SOVIET UNION IN 1981, VISITING MOSCOW, UZBEKISTAN AND SIBERIA. THEY THEN TOURED MONGOLIA, INTERVIEWING LEADERS THERE. TOPPING'S "THE HIDDEN MONGOLIA" APPEARED IN THE DEC. 13 ISSUE OF THE TIMES MAGAZINE.

IN 1983, TOPPING, AS CHAIRMAN OFF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS' COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION, ATTENDED A CONFERENCE IN TALLOIRES, FRANCE, ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM. THIS WAS THE OCCASION FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY TOPPING THAT ASNE WOULD BEGIN A JOURNALISM EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, WHICH CONTINUES TODAY.

LATER IN 1983, HE VISITED NICARAGUA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS AND CUBA. HE SPENT AN EVENING WITH FIDEL CASTRO IN HAVANA AND ALSO MET

WITH SUCH LEADERS AS GEN. GUSTAVO ALVAREZ, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE MILITARY IN HONDURAS; TOMAS BORJE AND DANIEL ORTEGA SAAVEDRA OF NICARAGUA, AND ALVARO MAGANA, THEN PRESIDENT, AND JOSE NAPOLEON DUARTE, LATER THE PRESIDENT, IN EL SALVADOR. IN NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR, TOPPING ALSO VISITED THE AREAS WHERE GUERRILLAS WERE OPERATING.

IN 1985, TOPPING VISITED NEW ZEALAND AND THEN, MADE A 7,000-MILE TOUR OF AUSTRALIA, WHICH RESULTED IN A COVER STORY FOR THE TIMES MAGAZINE. THE ARTICLE WAS ILLUSTRATED WITH AUDREY TOPPING'S PHOTOS.

IN 1987, TOPPING WAS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN PANEL ON THE INTERNATIONALLY TELEVISED SPACEBRIDGE DIALOGUE WITH SOVIET JOURNALISTS, SPONSORED BY THE CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION. LATER IN THE YEAR, IN TOKYO AND HIROSHIMA AT THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM, HE JOINED WITH THE EDITORS OF PRAVDA, PEOPLES' DAILY, LE MONDE, AND THE LONDON TIMES IN A DISCUSSION ON JAPANESE TELEVISION OF NUCLEAR ISSUES ON THE OCCASION OF THE 42ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE HIROSHIMA ATOMIC BOMBING. IN NOVEMBER, HE TRAVELED TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR AN INTENSIVE SURVEY OF CULTURAL LIFE ON BEHALF OF THE CENTER FOR U.S.-CHINA ARTS EXCHANGE, WHICH RESULTED IN FEATURE ARTICLES FOR BOTH ARTS & LEISURE AND THE SUNDAY BOOK REVIEW OF THE NEW YORK TIMES.

IN 1992 TOPPING PARTICIPATED IN THE FREEDOM FORUM CONFERENCE IN ST. PETERSBURG TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS OF ASSISTANCE FOR SOVIET EDITORS. IN THE SAME YEAR HE ATTENDED THE EARTH SUMMIT IN RIO DE JANEIRO SERVING AS SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE CONFERENCE, MAURICE STRONG. HE WROTE THE INTRODUCTION TO "OUR COUNTRY, THE PLANET" BY SHRIDITH RAMPHAL WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONFERENCE.

DURING 1994 TOPPING SPENT A WEEK IN THE DISPUTED AREAS OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA TOURING THE LINES OF CONFRONTATION WITH UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCES AS RESEARCH FOR HIS SEMINAR ON COVERING REGIONAL AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS. IN DECEMBER 1995 TOPPING CHAIRED A WORKING GROUP OF THE CENTER OF PREVENTIVE ACTION OF THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, WHICH VISITED SERBIA, KOSOVO, MACEDONIA AND ALBANIA TO EXAMINE THE ALBANIAN MINORITY PROBLEMS IN KOSOVO AND MACEDONIA. THE GROUP MET WITH THE LEADERS OF THE REGIONS VISITED TO SEEK A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION OF DIFFERENCES AND THUS AVERT ETHNIC VIOLENCE PARTICULARLY IN KOSOVO. THE GROUP BRIEFED STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ON ITS FINDINGS UPON RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES. THE NEW YORK TIMES PUBLISHED AN OP-ED PIECE ON

MARCH 11 CO-AUTHORED BY TOPPING AND BARNETT RUBIN, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION, HEADLINED "WILL KOSOVO EXPLODE?"

SINCE THEN THE TOPPINGS HAVE TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY ON JOURNALISTIC ASSIGNMENTS TO CHINA, SOUTH KOREA, INDIA AND RUSSIA. IN OCTOBER 2003 TOPPING WAS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT A CONFERENCE OF CHINESE NEWSPAPER EDITORS ON FUNCTIONING IN THE FREE MARKET. HE ALSO LECTURED IN CLASSES AND AT A UNIVERSITY WIDE MEETING AT TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY. HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED AS HE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MEMBER OF THE SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY'S NEW SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM. TOPPING ALSO LECTURED IN NANJING AND WAS APPOINTED THIS YEAR A VISITING PROFESSOR AT NANJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY. HIS BOOK, JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO CHINAS, PUBLISHED BY HARPER & ROW IN 1972, WAS PUBLISHED THIS YEAR IN TRANSLATION IN CHINA.

IN 1992-93 TOPPING SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS. HE IS SERVES ON THE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR JOURNALISTS. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, THE ASIA SOCIETY, AND THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES-CHINA RELATIONS, AND OF THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION.

TOPPING WAS BORN IN NEW YORK ON DEC. 11, 1921. HE IS A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM IN THE CLASS OF 1943. HE RECEIVED THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN JOURNALISM FROM THE MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM IN 1968 AND THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD IN 1993. IN 2002 THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS PRESENTED JOINTLY TO AUDREY AND SEYMOUR TOPPING, THE FIRST ANNUAL GREENWAY-WINSHIP AWARD FOR SERVICE TO INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM. TOPPING ALSO HOLDS AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS FROM RIDER COLLEGE, LAWRENCEVILLE, N.J. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO CHINAS, PUBLISHED IN 1972 BY HARPER & ROW AND THE PEKING LETTER, A NOVEL OF THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR PUBLISHED IN 1999 BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AND FATAL CROSSROADS, A NOVEL OF VIETNAM 1945, PUBLISHED BY EAST BRIDGE IN JANUARY 2005.

Short Bio of Seymour and Audrey Topping

Audrey and Seymour (Top) Topping met in Nationalist China's wartime capital city of Nanking, (now Nanjing). Audrey was a student at The University of Nanking and Top was a war

correspondent for the Associated Press covering the Chinese Civil War between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Zedong's Communists.

They had both arrived in China in 1946, shortly after the end of World War II. Top had

spent the previous 3 years as an Infantry Officer in the Pacific zone and Audrey had just left her peaceful home in Canada to sail across the Pacific, with her family, to China on a converted troop ship to join her father, Ambassador Chester Ronning, a Canadian diplomat assigned to Nanking, China, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist capital. Two action-packed years later Audrey was evacuated by air as the Communist troops stormed across the Yangtze River to occupy Nanking. Top remained and became the first correspondent to witness and report the Communist victory. He was imprisoned as a spy but released after a week. His reporting made world headlines

Seymour and Audrey were married in Audrey's hometown in Canada and left immediately for Hong Kong and Saigon, Vietnam where Top was assigned to cover the French-Indochina War and open the AP Bureau. After a historic interview with King Sihanouk of Cambodia in his shimmering fairy tale palace, His Majesty arranged for the newlyweds to travel in an armed French convoy with a supply of French champagne to Angkor Wat, the ancient Kingdom of the Khmers, to spend a romantic honeymoon. Top spent the next two years covering the War for the AP while Audrey took photos, wrote for Canadian magazines and gave birth to their first daughter in a French Military hospital.

From Indochina they spent four years in post war London where Top covered the diplomatic beat and Audrey studied sculpture and exhibited four terra-cotta figures in The Royal Institute Gallery. She also gave birth to two more baby girls, in Queen Mary's Nursing Home on Hampstead Heath.

Then the family lived for three years in West Berlin, Germany where Top was Bureau Chief for AP. This was before the Wall, when the city was divided into four allied sectors: The Toppings lived in the American Sector where another daughter was born in the American Military Hospital.

While on Home leave in 1959 Top joined the New York Times and was assigned to Moscow as Chief Correspondent in The Soviet Union. Audrey worked for NBC TV and wrote for the New York Times Magazine. Their daughters attended Russian schools.

In 1963 they were stationed in Hong Kong where Top was Chief of Bureau for South East Asia. He covered China again and returned to Vietnam to report the American-Vietnam War. At that time Americans were forbidden enter Communist China but Audrey, a Canadian, obtained a visa and returned to China to report on the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Her cover-story "Through Darkest Red China" was a cover story for the New York Times Magazine.

In 1966 Top became Foreign Editor of The New York Times and the family moved to Scarsdale where one more daughter was born. Audrey continued her sculpture and had several exhibitions of her artwork. Their home became a launching pad from where they continued to travel together

and separately, on reporting assignments throughout Asia, Tibet, Bhutan, the Middle East, India, Australia, Africa, Latin America etc.

Fast forward: Top became Managing Editor of the New York Times for ten years. After retiring from the Times Top served as Administrator for the Pulitzer Prizes at Columbia University for ten years while concurrently conducting seminars at The Graduate School of Journalism to prepare reporters for work in crisis areas. He then became Professor Emeritus of International Journalism at Columbia and plays tennis twice a week. Top and Audrey each hold five honorary doctorate degrees from universities in three countries: USA, Canada and China.

Awards include the International Center for Journalists awarded to Audrey & Seymour as “U.S. Journalists who have made a significant contribution to a better understanding of world affairs.”

Audrey became the features writer for WAG Magazine, The Earth Times and others including the Khmer Times in Cambodia. Her articles and photos have been published worldwide including Life Magazine, the New York Times and the National Geographic. Her photos have been exhibited in numerous galleries notably The Metropolitan Museum, Hallmark Gallery, Westchester Community College and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Audrey and Top have published eleven books. Audrey has received 5 honorable Doctorates: 2 from U.S.A., 2 from China and one from Canada. Audrey’s most recent book: CHINA MISSION, won the prestigious PROSE AWARD for Media and Culture, from American Publishers. Top’s most recent book: ON THE FRONT LINE OF THE COLD WAR was a best seller.

Resume of Audrey Ronning Topping

Audrey Ronning Topping is a prize-winning photojournalist and freelance writer. She is also a documentary filmmaker specializing in Chinese affairs. Audrey has toured China, including such remote as areas as Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Sinkiang, on a dozen reporting assignments for newspapers and magazines. Her articles and photographs have appeared in The New York Times: 19 stories from Russian and China in the NYTimes Magazine, 2 cover stories in The National Geographic. Other articles appeared in Foreign Affairs, Life, Time, Newsweek, Geo, Reader’s Digest, Science Digest, Art in America, World Policy Journal and Le Temps Strategic in France. In 1966 she was among the first Western reporters to report from Communist China. her account of the onset of the Cultural Revolution. The New York Times Magazine published her cover story: Through *Darkest Red China*. In 1971 National Geographic Magazine published her illustrated cover story: *Return to Changing China*, which became their first article from Communist China. Her next cover story: *China’s Incredible Find* about the discovery of the First Emperor’s tomb was published world-wide including a hard cover story for Horizon Magazine.

In 1972 Audrey was Assistant Producer for an NBC documentary “The Forbidden City.” In



1974 she was the first foreign correspondent to report the discovery of the life-size terracotta soldiers guarding the tomb of the first emperor of China. Her illustrated articles were published world-wide with cover stories in the National Geographic and Horizon magazines. Topping has also reported from Indochina, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, South Africa, Australia, Pakistan, and Bhutan, which she toured in 2002 on the invitation of the High Lama. She returned to Vietnam in 2005 and China in 2007 and 2008 on assignments.

Topping is the author and illustrator of seven books including two children's books. Others are *Dawn Wakes in The East*, Harper & Row 1972; *The Splendors of Tibet, Sino*, 1982, *Charlie's World*; *The Improbable Adventures of a Hong Kong Cockatoo and His American Family*, Earth Times, 1999, which was translated into Chinese in 2003 and serialized in the Beijing Morning Post. Her book *China Mission* won the 2013 Prose Award for Media & Culture. She has also produced two Photo Narratives: *The Old Silk Road & Me* and *The Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon*. She has written and produced four prize-winning television documentaries about China.

Audrey's photographs have been exhibited at Hallmark Gallery New York, NY, The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, The Metropolitan Museum, Neikrug Gallery, NY, and the gallery of Westchester Community College. Her digital photographs from Bhutan were exhibited in December 2003 at the Libby Gallery in Purchase New York, in May 2004 at the Westchester Community College, in 2005 & 2006 at the Permanent Mission of Bhutan at the United Nations in New York, the Hammond Museum in North Salem, New York. In 2006 her photos of photos of China, Tibet, Vietnam and Bhutan were exhibited at the Art Gallery of the City of New York Graduate Center and in 2007 at Adelphi University on Long Island. .

The Toppings met in Nanjing, China in 1947 when Seymour was covering the Chinese civil war for the Associated Press when Audrey, daughter of Canadian Ambassador Chester Ronning, was a student at Nanking University. Her father later served as ambassador to Norway & Iceland, High Commissioner to India and as Ambassador at-large. After their marriage in 1949 in Audrey's hometown, Camrose, Alberta, Canada, the Toppings frequently worked as a team on journalistic assignments. They were posted abroad in Vietnam, London, and Berlin for The Associated Press and then in Moscow, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia for The New York Times. The Toppings have five daughters; one born in Saigon, two in London, one in Berlin, and one in Scarsdale NY. They now reside in Scarsdale, New York. Audrey is member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Asia Society, and the Society of Woman Geographers.

