

## Generations of Strife

Ying Lao came to IU as an undergraduate recipient in the Burmese Refugee Scholarship Program, a U.S. State Department initiative to educate a generation of students displaced from their homeland by a military government that has changed even the name of their country. The program has brought students to IU for more than a decade so that they can gain the skills they need to work toward a democratic government in Myanmar/Burma.

One of the ways Ying Lao applies her political activism is through a leadership role in the Women's League of Burma (WLB), an umbrella organization of 12 women's organizations from Burma that seek a larger role for women in that country's democratic movements. In December 2008, the National Democratic Institute awarded its annual Madeleine Albright Grant to the Women's League of Burma. Albright herself presented the award to the WLB leadership to support their efforts to "stand with their sisters and brothers—with OUR sisters and brothers—in keeping alive the dream of a country and government worthy of its people."

"My hope for the future is to be able to go home and live with my family," says Ying Lao. "I believe everyone who is fighting for

democracy in Burma also shares this hope. This award is the indication that the day that we will be able to go home where we belong is getting closer."



*IU student Ying Lao (far right) stands with the founder of the Women's League of Burma, Thin Thin Aung (left) and Yee Moon Htun (center) at the National Democratic Institute headquarters after the Burmese women's organization was awarded the Madeleine Albright Grant. Present in spirit (and on the poster) was Aung San Suu Kyi, the only Nobel Peace Prize winner currently under house arrest and a worldwide symbol of peaceful democratic activism. Behind her on the poster is the face of her father, General Aung San, who negotiated Burmese independence in 1947. Photo by: SalweenTiger*

## Of Note

### Jordan's Ambassador Visits IU



*(From left) Feisal Istrabadi, visiting law professor; Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S.; IU President Michael McRobbie; and IU Vice President Patrick O'Meara.*

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, the Jordanian Ambassador to the United States, visited Bloomington last fall. He gave a public lecture sponsored by the IU Maurer School of Law, and he met with university officials, including President McRobbie and Vice President Patrick O'Meara to discuss the role of American universities in the difficult Middle East peace process.

Prince Zeid, along with Feisal Istrabadi, visiting law professor at IU, spoke candidly about the prospects for peace around the world. They

said that we must not allow ourselves the pessimistic view that differences in culture make lasting peace impossible. The world needs to help Iraq gain stability by showing Iraqis that it is possible for different groups of people to coexist peacefully.

"What we should be doing is showing them that this is doable," Prince Zeid said. Noting that Iraq is at the center of the Middle East, he pointed to Switzerland's similar status in Europe. "They have four official languages," Zeid said of the Swiss. "It works there. There is nothing to suggest that groups of different people can't live together. The United States is a testament to that."