

Educational chances good in U.S.—Zambian brothers

By Bill Graf

Two brothers from Zambia, Central Africa, who recently purchased the Congress Inn on West O Street, said they came to Lincoln to attend school and are "very happy" with Lincoln.

Yogesh Desai, a 1976 graduate of Southern Illinois University, said he returned to Zambia in 1977 but moved to Arkansas a year and a half later and bought a hotel. He joined his two brothers, Mahesh and Umesh, and his sister, Hina, who had been in the United States since November 1977.

"We were doing quite well in Russellville, Ark., but my sister wanted to study pharmacy and my other brother is studying engineering. Russellville was too small and the university didn't offer what they wanted," Yogesh said.

"Having the university here had a lot to do with our decision to move to Lincoln."

Although Yogesh and Mahesh were born in Zambia, their parents, who still live in Zambia, moved there from India 35 years ago.

The Desai brothers also talked about the major cultural differences between the United States and Zambia.

"The family unit isn't as prominent as it is in Zambia," Yogesh said.

"When our parents get to 60 years of age, we don't put them in a nursing home. Everyone lives together, the grandparents, parents and children," he said.

Yogesh and Mahesh Desai said Zambia's economic problems are caused by low world copper prices and the fighting in neighboring Zimbabwe, Rhodesia. Copper once was the chief export of Zambia, they said.

Calling President Kaunda of Zambia a humanitarian and a man of principles, Yogesh said, "he cut off economic ties with Rhodesia because he refused to support the minority government of Rhodesia."

However, they said, this action shut off supply lines from the ports of Mozambique to Zambia, creating shortages of all items, including basic commodities such as corn meal, sugar and flour.

Mahesh explained that even though the cost of living is about the same in Zambia, wages are much lower.

"Construction workers in Zambia make about \$150 a month, where as the same type of worker in the United States would make \$1000 a month," he said.

Yogesh said the educational opportunities are better in the United States. However, he added, the quality of a high school education in Zambia is superior to the United States.

He explained that everyone attends grades one through seven. Upon completion of the seventh grade, the student must take an entrance exam and score at least a 90 percent grade to be accepted into high school.

"The people in Nebraska are the friendliest we have encountered anywhere in the United States," Yogesh said.

But they both agreed that it may take a while to get used to the Nebraska winters.

"Winter coats feel strange," Mahesh said. "They're so heavy."

The temperature in Zambia ranges from 50 to 90 degrees, he said.

Architect speaking

Henry Sanoff, architecture professor at North Carolina State University, will speak Thursday on "Social Architecture: A New Delivery System" as part of the Hyde Speaker's Series.

The 4 p.m. lecture in the Sheldon Art Gallery Auditorium is part of a lecture series based on the theme of "Professional Futures."

Sanoff is known for his work in design methods and processes, architectural programming and in citizen participation design and community development.

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