



The Duanys of Bloomington and South Sudan

Those Duanys—trying to get them all in one place at one time proved an impossible task. For months we pursued their remarkable story, hoping to get all seven Bloomington Duanys here for interviews and photographs.

In the end, it didn't happen—which explains why there are only four adult Duanys on our cover. Matriarch of the family, Julia, is undersecretary for parliamentary affairs of the Republic of South Sudan and ensconced in Juba, the new nation's capital. Repeatedly, she had planned to return to Bloomington to be with her family and to hold her newest grandchild Mai, but it never quite worked out. Julia is deemed too important to the fledgling South Sudanese government to leave. Number two son Kueth is also in South Sudan while older daughter Nyagon is practicing medicine in Cincinnati.



Julia Duany. Courtesy photo

That left us father Wal, the former chairman of the South Sudan Liberation Movement, who for the first time in print talks about the double life he led in Bloomington: working with Elinor and Vincent Ostrom at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis while helping to direct the independence movement

from afar—and on critical occasions and at great danger, slipping surreptitiously in and out of his embattled homeland. We were also able to spend time with number one son Duany Duany and youngest son Bil who both regularly commute between Bloomington and Juba, and younger sister Nok who recently gave birth to Mai and is staying in one place for the time being. A long-distance telephone conversation with Julia (Good luck trying to get through to South Sudan!) added tremendously to the narrative. We also managed to find a photographer in Juba to take pictures of Julia there.

Bloom Contributing Editor Elisabeth Andrews conducted all the interviews, did all the research, and wrote the story. A daunting task considering the context—politics, wars, displacements, and, yes, basketball. Yet somehow she managed to tell the story and in under 5,000 words.

And what a story! It is a tribute to the entire Duany family—their dedication, bravery, and perseverance. It is a tribute to parents Julia and Wal, who under trying circumstances raised five well-rounded, compassionate, high-achieving children. And it also says something about Bloomington and Indiana University, where the Duanys found a home. “Bloomington helped raise our children,” Wal has said. “The teachers, the coaches, the ministers, the university professors, the friends we made—we will never forget how this community treated our children.”

“The Duanys’ Amazing Journey” begins on page 64. I don’t think you will soon forget their story.

Malcolm Abrams
editor and publisher