

Center for Legal and Court Technology Media Center

Courtroom 21 Project Hosts Russian Law Professors

Williamsburg, VA, February 20, 2003

The Courtroom 21 Project, along with the James City-County chapter of the Rotary Club, will host four Russian law professors at the William and Mary Law School and the surrounding Williamsburg area March 9-16, 2003.

The visit is part of the Open World Program, which is operated by the Center for Russian Leadership Development at the Library of Congress. The purpose of the Open World Program is to provide an opportunity for academics, civic leaders, elected officials, and emerging political leaders from the Russian Federation to obtain an in-depth, on-site introduction to American democratic institutions. The visitors are participating in a new Open World legal education exchange being conducted in cooperation with the Federal Judicial Center (FJC), the federal courts' education and research agency. The exchange aims to give the participants insight on effective responsive government at the federal, state, county and municipal levels. Principles of accounting, transparency, and citizen involvement are the major emphasis of the program.

Elements of U.S. legal education that are a special focus of the Open World exchanges include moot courts and other simulations; negotiation and ethics courses; "lawyering" programs; and clinical experience. Russia's recently enacted judicial reforms—which include expanding jury trials nationwide as part of the implementation of a new criminal code that strengthens the adversarial process, and increasing judicial authority—have heightened that country's interest in using innovative and practice-based teaching in its law schools and judicial education institutions.

The visiting group from Russia will consist of the following law professors: Stanislav Ivanovich Kirilov (Professor, Criminal Law Department, Moscow University); Viktor Mekhaylovich Stepashin (Associate Professor, Department of Criminal Procedure, Omsk State University); Tatyana Petrovna Suspitsyna (Director, Magaden City Branch of Moscow State Law Academy); and Anna Timofeyevna Tumorova (Department Chair, Legal Department, State & Law Theory and History Department).

Accompanied by Open World Program Assistant Olga Rashidovna Tekuyeva, the group plans to tour various sites in Williamsburg, including the McGlothlin Courtroom, home of the Courtroom 21 Project. Local James City-County Rotarians are also helping provide local transportation, home stays, cultural activities, and meals for the visiting group.

Open World aims to build mutual understanding between the United States and the Russian Federation and to work with Russia's leaders as they implement democratic and economic reforms. In addition to its rules of law exchanges, Open World sponsors visits focusing on economic development, education reform, and other important themes. Librarian of Congress and Russia scholar James H. Billington—whose vision of bringing young Russian leaders to the United States inspired Congress to create Open World—chairs the board of trustees that governs the program.

The world-renowned Courtroom 21 Project's McGlothlin Courtroom is the world's most technologically advanced trial and appellate courtroom. The Project is an ongoing international demonstration and experimental effort which seeks to determine how technology can best improve all components of the legal system and was a

1997 recipient of a Foundation for Improvement of Justice Award for its efforts to improve the administration of justice through technology.

For more information, please contact Christie Warren, Deputy Director for International Programs, Courtroom 21, by email at cswarrlatlwm.edu or by phone at (757) 221-2228.

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