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2008 IALL Annual Course: Scholarship Recipient Report

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2008 IALL Annual Course: Scholarship Recipient Report*

KEREM KAHVECIOGLU**

Acknowledgements

First of all, as a recipient of IALL professional development bursary I would like to express my deep appreciation to the IALL president, Jules Winterton, IALL Immediate Past President, Holger Knudsen, Chair of IALL Scholarships Committee, Halvor Kongshavn, IALL Board Members and IALL members for giving me this outstanding opportunity and support to attend the IALL's 27th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship. Special thanks also go out to the members of Local Organizing Committee for their warm and friendly welcome. Moreover, I want to thank our Library Director, Serdar Katipoglu, and our Assistant Library Director, Sami Cukadar, for giving me this unique opportunity to attend the conference.

Conference Overview

The conference was held between November 30th and December 3rd in 2008 at Hotel Caribe Hilton – San Juan, Puerto Rico and the theme was “*Puerto Rico & The Caribbean: Legal Information In Multiple Legal Systems*”.

Nearly 125 delegates attended the conference from many corners of the world, including India, Ireland, Korea, Norway, the USA, UK, and Barbados. Most of the speakers were from Puerto Rico and the other countries in Caribbean and they are not only law librarians, but also from academia and legal profession.

* *IALL 27th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship*, November 20 - December 3, 2008 at San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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There were three main themes in the conference:

- Mixed Legal Systems;
- Regional and international legal orders in the Caribbean;
- The challenges for small jurisdictions.

The academic program of the conference started with the keynote speaker, Dr. Emilio Pantojas Garcia's paper titled "*From Plantation to Resort: The Caribbean in the Age of Globalization*." The paper was on the economic history of the Caribbean and the transformation process of the Caribbean economy in the global world. I think he was the most outstanding speaker and caught my interest the most by providing general insights to the Caribbean with his in-depth knowledge.

There was an interesting paper by Luis Muñiz Argüelles on "*The Puerto Rico Legal Systems: A Century of Evolution in Mixed Civil and Common Law Jurisdictions*." He provided an overview of the Puerto Rican legal system, briefly explaining the legal families and the essential elements of the two traditional Western families: the Civil Law and the Common Law. He then examined the roots of the Puerto Rican legal system from historic, economic and cultural perspectives, providing an analysis of the present revival of the civil law tradition and its place within the nascent attempt to create a new "mixed jurisdiction" group. The session continued with the paper "*Exploring Mixed Jurisdictions*" by Daniel Boyer.

There were also a number of other papers which were of interest. One of them is on "*Modernization of the Cuban Legal System: Socialist Law in the 21st Century*" by Debra Evenson. It was a really interesting presentation in terms of its outline of Cuba's legal system and Cuba's situation as a socialist country vis-à-vis the USA. Another paper was Carlos Gorrín Peralta's presentation about "The Sources of the Law in the Mixed Legal System of Puerto Rico: A Model for a Globalized 21st Century." The theory about the sources of the law in Puerto Rico as a possible model for legal research in the globalized mixed jurisdiction of the 21st Century was examined. In addition to these, other excellent papers were presented on subjects that included: Legal Publishing in the Caribbean, The Challenge of Caribbean Legal Research Legal Information on the Internet and Political and Constitutional Status of Puerto Rico.

As an overview, the standard of the presentations and the speakers was very high, and the structure of the program well balanced. I was able to digest a great deal of new information without feeling overwhelmed.

Experiences and Gains

I was so pleased with the IALL experience because it was not only the first time I have attended an IALL Conference, but also it was the first time I attended an international conference outside of Turkey. Likewise, due to the fact that Turkey will organize and host IALL's 2009 conference, I performed a presentation about Turkey, Istanbul and Istanbul Bilgi University in order to invite delegates to the conference in Istanbul. It was a great pleasure to give a presentation at an IALL conference.

I was also enthusiastic about experiencing the organization of the IALL Conference as much as I could. I talked with IALL board members, members of the Puerto Rican local organizing committee regarding their process for making conference arrangements, and I talked about their experiences from the past conferences.

Of course, one of the best parts of the conference was exploring the city of San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a beautiful Caribbean island with excellent facilities and warm hospitality. To be in Puerto Rico was such a great experience for me – a wonderful tropical island offering a diversity of areas from beaches to mountains to tropical rainforest.

As a younger law librarian in the field, the conference was a very rewarding experience for me, allowing me to gain insight into the law librarianship profession and to meet law librarians and publishers from all over the world, and share experiences about the field. This made my time well spent. I learned more about common law and civil law, and also more about some of the differences between these legal systems. I saw that these legal systems help to shape specializations within law librarianship.

Social Events

Beside the academic program, there were very well organized social programs that gave participants a glimpse of Puerto Rican culture and history. For example, we had a visit to the Puerto Rico Supreme Court Library, the Puerto Rico Legislative Library, McConnell Valdés LLC Library, and the University of Puerto Rico Law Library. Also, I had a marvelous time at social activities such as the welcome reception and buffet on Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, a research centre housed in a magnificent historic building with an attractive courtyard in the Old City. I also enjoyed a visit to the Bacardí Rum Distillery for a tour, tasting and a reception and buffet on the premises. There was also the IALL Annual

Reception and Dinner with live music and dancing at the Caribe Hilton Hotel in a room with a large terrace overlooking the sea. The other extraordinary event was a salsa dance class. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the members of the Local Organizing Committee for helping to make my experience in San Juan so excellent, for their fantastic help and their great hospitality.

Conclusion

I was very fortunate to be a recipient of IALL bursary for this conference and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn about the legal system of the country, to encounter other cultures and for outstanding opportunities to network with colleagues. I believe that meeting fellow information professionals, library directors, publishers, and other speakers at the conference from a wide variety of backgrounds and places of work exposed me to the various opportunities which exist in this field. Interacting with these many different people will undoubtedly assist me in gaining a better idea of my career path in this profession and will support me and help me contribute to the development of Turkish Law Librarianship. Also, I will share the experience which I gain in this program throughout meetings, panels and other professional activities in my country.