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Brandeis meets Gutenberg

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Foreword: Honoring and Remembering the Johannes Gutenberg Faculty of Law - University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law Exchange Relationship

by Russell L. Weaver, Eckart Klein,** Dieter Dörr,*** Udo Fink*****

As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the exchange between Johannes Gutenberg Faculty of Law and the University of Louisville's Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, it is worthwhile to reflect on how the exchange came into being, and some of the many connections that have developed over the years.

In 1990, when this exchange began, the University of Louisville's Louis D. Brandeis School of Law had only one active academic exchange relationship: with the University of Leeds School of Law. This exchange had existed since the 1950s, and there had been many fruitful exchanges. Indeed, many current and former faculty had participated in the Leeds exchange, including Professor Robert L. Stenger, Professor David Leibson and Professor Russell L. Weaver. However, the Leeds-Louisville relationship was built on a model that contemplated year-long exchanges of faculty. By the early 1990s, this model was still viable, but was becoming more difficult to sustain. Few faculty, especially those with children, could go away for an entire year. Moreover, the University of Louisville found it difficult to raise the money to support a year-long exchange. As a result, Professor Russell Weaver conceived the idea of shorter (2-3 week) academic exchanges designed to facilitate more frequent academic exchanges, and the ability to maintain closer contacts between faculties on an ongoing basis.

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As this new exchange model was being developed, it was logical to try to extend it to other universities besides Leeds. Johannes Gutenberg University and the University of Montpellier were likely targets for the establishment of such exchange links. Both universities are located in sister cities of Louisville (Johannes Gutenberg University being located in Mainz, Germany, and the University of Montpellier being located in Montpellier, France), and there were support structures that could help support and nourish exchange relationships. As a result, the University of Louisville decided to send Professor Russell L. Weaver to both cities to conduct discussions and attempt to bring exchange relationships to fruition.

Sister Cities of Louisville and the Mainz Friendship Circle were instrumental in helping establish the exchange relationship. In particular, Frau Gerlinde Brautszch played a critical role. Frau Brautszch was a tireless advocate for the Mainz-Louisville Sister City relationship. Interestingly, at that time, although the City of Louisville had officially designated the City of Mainz as a “Sister City,” Mainz had only designated Louisville as a “friendship city.” This difficulty was rectified a few years later when Mainz officially declared Louisville as a Sister City. Frau Brautszch deserves some credit for the finalization of the relationship because she worked incessantly to bring it to fruition.

Frau Brautszch was also instrumental in the development of the law school exchange. She an ever present friend to the many Louisvillians who visited Mainz, and she established a “Friendship Circle” designed to help nurture and facilitate the relationship. Inevitably, as he sought to develop the exchange link, Professor Weaver learned about Frau Brautszch, and contacted her about how to best make contact with Johannes Gutenberg University. Frau Brautszch immediately took charge of the situation. Within days, she had contacted Professor Dr. Eckart Klein and Professor Dr. Alexander Böhm, and arranged a meeting during Professor Weaver’s proposed visit. At that meeting, a decision was taken to establish the exchange link, and Dr. Professor Klein came to Louisville the following September as the first exchangee.

In the early years of the exchange, Frau Brautszch provided invaluable assistance to the Louisvillians who came to Mainz. Using her Friendship Circle, she would always arrange accommodation with a family. She also arranged numerous excursions and events for visitors from Louisville, as well as visits to the Gutenberg Museum, Rhine River boat tours, free bus passes, dinners and lunches. These home stays were very interesting for the Louisvillian visitors. Not only did the Louisvillians get the opportunity to interact more closely with Mainzers, they came away with many interesting stories. Professor Eades stayed with a family where the man, who was getting up in years, had been a prisoner

of war in the United States during World War II. Professor Weaver stayed with a man who had fought under Field Marshall Rommel in World War II, who could recount the devastation of post-World War II Germany, and whose family had owned Kupferburg Wineries (which they were able to visit as special guests). In addition, visitors to Mainz heard many interesting stories.¹ The early Louisvillians who went to Mainz have a very strong affection for Frau Brautszch who helped introduce them to her beloved city.

Over the years, many Louisville and Mainz faculty have participated in the exchange. From the Louisville side, Professor Ronald Eades (now retired), Professor Robert Stenger (now retired), Professor Russell Weaver, Professor John Cross, former Dean Donald Burnett, Professor Susan Duncan, Professor Judy Fisher and Professor Lisa Nicholson. From Mainz, participants have included Professor Dr. Eckart Klein (now retired), Professor Dr. Walter Rudolf (now retired), Professor Dr. Dieter Dörr, Professor Dr. Udo Fink, Prof. Dr. Frank Peter Schuster, Professor Dr. Mark Cole (now with Luxembourg University), Dr. Tobias Keber, Dr. Heiner Baab, Jessica Sänger and Ines Gillich.

Today, as the Johannes Gutenberg University- University of Louisville law exchange approaches the beginning of its third decade, the bond between the two law schools is stronger than ever. Although Professor Klein has moved on to Potsdam, Professor Dieter Dörr and Professor Udo Fink have stepped forward to nourish and manage the exchange on the Mainz side, and have taken the exchange to new levels. Professor Weaver now speaks regularly at the Mainz Media Institute's annual media symposium, and he teaches a course for the Institute each year. In addition, Professor Weaver, Professor Dörr and Professor Fink

1 During the following years, Professor Weaver became particularly close friends with Herr Eckart Schneider-Reuter (unfortunately, now deceased), a former merchant in Mainz who was later President of the Friendship Circle. Herr Schneider-Reuter told Professor Weaver about his recollections of World War II, and in particular the night that Mainz was bombed during February of 1945. During the bombing, some ninety percent of the city was obliterated, and Herr Schneider-Reuter (who had just turned 15), who was subject to induction into Hitler's army, took advantage of the situation to quietly slip off to live with relatives under the war was over. On another occasion, Herr Schneider-Reuter invited Professor Weaver to dinner at his house (in fact, Professor Weaver was there with his young kids, and Herr Schneider-Reuter in an extraordinary gesture of kindness and good will had moved out for the week so that Professor Weaver and his family could use the house), and told Professor Weaver that a "genealogist" would be coming to dinner that night. Professor Weaver, in an attempt to make conversation, tried to engage the "genealogist" in conversation about his work. However, the "genealogist" seemed absolutely clueless about genealogy. Turned out that he was a "gynecologist" and Professor Weaver decided not ask a lot of questions about his work.

have hosted a free speech discussion forum in Mainz, and will co-host the Privacy Discussion Forum in 2011. In addition, various faculty have co-written articles together.

For many Louisvillians, frequent trips to Mainz have simply become a regular and enjoyable part of life. For law school faculty, not only are the trips enjoyable, but they are intellectually, academically, and professionally rewarding.