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WCL Sends First US Team to European Competition

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Solina Solis, a second year law student who represented a Columbian indigenous community fighting the installation of a U.S. army radar site on its tribal lands, stated that litigating in the international arena takes both originality and patience. "I learned that you have to be much more creative when you make arguments under international law" she said. "There are no set models. You go to declarations and conventions and make your interpretations."

The IHRLC is currently expanding its focus to include cases that involve issues affecting both human rights and the environment. Students are now preparing a petition in a case involving the invasion and degradation of tribal lands of the Kuna and Embera peoples in Panama.

Although Professor Wilson admits that "most students would say that these are the most time intensive credit-hours they earn in law school," he believes that the clinic affords students valuable practical experience, and that the students generally enjoy the work. Solis agrees. "You put in a lot of time but the experience is invaluable. I wish every law student had the opportunity to gain clinical practice. It's worth it." ☉

3. . . . [T]he High Commissioner should also be encouraged to work closely with nongovernmental organizations, which often have the necessary links and familiarity with the relevant hostile groups.

There is a natural impulse to throw up one's hands where these problems are concerned and to assume they are hopeless. Sometimes they are. But as the 1992 agreement between Austria and Italy on the situation of German speakers in the South Tyrol has shown, it is possible to resolve some of them peaceably, even those decades old and marked by violence . . .

Last year, Ms. Ferraro closed her intervention on this subject with a few words of the late President John F. Kennedy. Those words are worth repeating today.

"Let us not be blind to our differences—but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be solved.

"And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. ☉

WCL Sends First US Team to European Competition

by Françoise Roth

During the last week of March, six students from the Washington College of Law (WCL) traveled to Strasbourg, France to compete with 200 students representing 48 universities from throughout Europe and Canada, in the Concours René Cassin Human Rights Competition. This year's competition marked the 10th anniversary of the event and the first time that a U.S. team has participated. The WCL team consisted of JD students Sharmilla Bagwe, Marcy Neal, Sergio Ramirez, and LL.M student Fernando Gonzalez-Martin, and was coached by LL.M student Claudia Martin and LL.M alumnus Françoise Roth.

The Concours René Cassin competition, named for the French 1968 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was created in 1984 as the European counterpart to the American Jessup Moot Court Competition. It is the only moot court competition based on the European Convention of Human Rights and the only one in which participants write and argue in the French language.

Catherine Lalumière, General Secretary of the Council of Europe, stated, "the Concours contributes in a positive way to the advancement of the ideas and standards promoted and guaranteed by the Council of Europe." (unofficial translation from French).

Each team competes by writing two briefs, one for the government and one for the victim. The teams then meet in Strasbourg where they give two 45-minute oral arguments before a panel of lawyers and judges, including members of the European Court and the Commission of Human Rights.

This year's competition was based on the case of a religious minority resident of one fictitious country and citizen of another. The applicant was accused of terrorism by the country of residence while under a state of siege.

The WCL team competed against teams from Prague, Check Republic, and Lille, France. Alain Lamassoure, the French Minister of the Foreign Affairs, presided over the final round between the University of Vienna, and the winner, the University of Montreal.

The WCL participants described the atmosphere of the competition as intense, but also convivial. "We all came from different languages and cultures,



The WCL team (from left to right): Sergio Ramirez, Sharmilla Bagwe, Claudia Martin, Marcy Neal, and Fernando Gonzalez-Martin.

but maybe it was our common human rights interest that made everyone so close, so quickly," said Ramirez. The WCL students hope that they have begun an annual tradition of WCL participation in the event.

Organized jointly by the Council of Europe, the Strasbourg School of Law and the International Institute of Human Rights, the Concours' reputation has spread beyond European boundaries. In a message addressed to Professor Denys Simon, organizer of this year's event, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali recognized the role the competition plays in the promotion of human rights and encouraged its extension to Third World countries. ☉

For information about the Concours, contact: Lionel Lidy, President of the Association Juris Ludi, 1 Quai Lezay Marnésia,

67000 Strasbourg/France, tel: 011/33 88 18 78, fax: 011/33 88 52 19 75.

The International Institute of Human Rights annually organizes a specialized study session in July with advanced courses on the international law of human rights. Information can be obtained from: International Institute of Human Rights, 1 Quai Lezay Marnésia, 67000 Strasbourg/France, Tel: 011/33/88 35 05 50, Fax: 011/33 88 36 38 55. Application for this year's program are due May 31, 1994.