

## Mongolia Program Report

IATL Fellows Bill Wagner, Rosemary Alito and Joe Matthews traveled to Ulan Bator, the Capitol City of The Republic of Mongolia October 5-9, 2014 as part of the Academy's Mongolia Program and presented mock demonstrations of a product liability case to members of the newly created Mongolian Bar Association (MBA). At the invitation of the MBA and the California Bar Association, which has been consulting with the MBA as it attempts to improve the quality and stature of the legal profession and the judicial system in one of Central Asia's newest democracies, the IATL Fellows demonstrated a US jury trial. In the process, they gave several Mongolian lawyers the opportunity to serve as jurors and reach verdicts in the mock wrongful death case made available by the National Institute of Trial Advocacy.

Tampa Fellow Bill Wagner, a former president of the American Association for Justice, was brilliant as counsel for the widow of a young husband and father who was burned alive by a hydrapulper machine. New Jersey Fellow Rosemary Alito, head of K&L Gates' global employment law practice, was equal to the challenge defending the manufacturer of the machine that is the first step in converting waste paper into recycled paper and cardboard. Not surprisingly, they split verdicts with Bill convincing the first jury of Mongolian lawyers that the machine was defectively designed and unreasonably dangerous while Rosemary came back strong and convinced the second jury that the machine was not defective.

In all, more than 75 members of the Mongolian bar attended the two sessions with 12 of them serving as the two juries.

Howard Miller, partner of IATL former president Tom Girardi and head of the California Bar's initiative to help the MBA, served as the trial judge for the mock presentations and Joe Matthews displayed his multiple personalities by serving as the four liability witnesses, one lay and one expert for each party (3 male and 1 female).

This initial stage of a potentially longer term Mongolia Program came about because the California Bar, through the typically generous efforts of Tom Girardi, learned that there were members of the bar and academia in Mongolia who thought it might be time to consider introducing a form of citizen participation in the Mongolian judicial system, in the hopes that it might help reduce the corruption and create greater public trust in the courts. This presentation by Academy Fellows was a first step to give members of the Mongolian bar a better understanding of how the US jury system functions. Whether and how the Academy might further the efforts to assist the Mongolian legal profession and its judiciary in the attempt to foster an independent and respected judicial branch and legal profession will be the subject of discussion and analysis among Fellows.