

THE EMERGENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE ACJS

by

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During the early 1980's many participants were presenting research papers with cross-cultural content at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) annual meetings. Over time, in coffee shops and at ACJS conference hotel bars, several international scholars deliberated over the possibility of creating an International section of the ACJS. At the time of our deliberations, in 1986, the ACJS had an International Committee as one of its working committees. The role of the committee was not clearly defined, and the committee was not doing what some of the international scholars of the ACJS wanted to see. At that time, the ACJS International Committee was perceived as an obstacle to the formation of an International Section.

In one of the informal gatherings in 1986 were Robert (Bob) McCormack, James Opolot, William (Bill) Wakefield, Gordon Misner, and me. We spent some hours deliberating how the International Section could be created, wondering, among other matters, whether many ACJS members would join the section, the availability of start-up funds, and so on. Bob McCormack volunteered to speak with Robert Regoli, the outgoing president of the ACJS (1986-87) and the incoming president, (1987-1988), Thomas Barker.

The five of us sat down and outlined the purpose and objectives of the International Section as one of the working groups of the ACJS. We unanimously agreed that the purpose and objectives of the International Section should be to operate as an international criminal justice machinery within the bounds of the Constitution and By-laws and policies of the ACJS, to provide advice, direction, and information on cross-cultural criminal justice issues, to provide a means for international scholar exchange, to create opportunities for cross-cultural research, international curriculum development, comparative analysis of international criminal justice data, and provide tools to make comparative criminal justice a field of concentration in criminal justice programs.

Bob was able to clear all grounds and assured both Robert Regoli and Thomas Barker that the proposed International Section of the ACJS was not going to be in conflict with the operations of the International Committee. A green light to go ahead was given to Bob McCormack, and in spring 1987, at the ACJS meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, five of us formed a "Steering Committee" of the International Section of the ACJS. Bob McCormack was informally appointed chair of the Steering Committee, and I was, in a similar manner, appointed the secretary of the Steering Committee. All of the other ground-work to form the International Section was left with Bob McCormack. Bob and I set out to solicit signatures from regular members of the ACJS to support the formation of the International Section. Before November 1987, we secured more than the minimum signatures required by the ACJS Constitution for the formation of a new section of the organization.

In Spring 1988, at the ACJS San Francisco annual meeting, the International Section of the ACJS was born. The inaugural meeting in San Francisco, California, had Bob J. McCormack as the first Chairperson of the International Section, and I was the first Secretary of the International Section. Bill Wakefield, James Opolot, and Gordon Misner were designated Executive Counselors. We did not need any Treasurer or Financial Secretary because we had no money. We started with \$10 membership dues. Membership dues were to be collected by Bob McCormack. The Department of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York College at Brockport, where I was teaching at the time, was designated the Secretarial of the International Section. My department chairman, Romine (Dick) Deming, provided me with all stationery and postal costs that I needed for the operation of the International Section. Bob McCormack also absorbed other costs at his end until we started getting annual dues in 1989-1990.

The tempo of the inaugural meeting in San Francisco, California, in 1988 was boosted by the attendance to the meeting by some distinguished international scholars such as the late Gerhard O. W. Mueller, Freda Adler, Dick Bennett, Paul Friday, Emil W. Plywaczewski of the University of Bialystok, Poland, Dick Ward, some British and Austrian scholars and a large number of young American professors of foreign origin.

I remained the secretary of the International Section until the 1994 ACJS Chicago meeting, when Bob began to centralize every secretarial operation at the College of New Jersey. We left Bob McCormack to continue to chair the International Section until the International Section became very large and needed new directions.

In effect, Ian K. McKenzie of the University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom, was elected chairperson of the International Section. After McKenzie, Max Edelbacher and Harry Dammer succeeded as chairs of the International Section followed by Phillip Reichel, John Winterdyk, Hedi Naseri, and Sanja Kutnjak Ivkovich (through 2013).

By the year 1998, ten years after its inauguration, the International Section has already funneled membership of many international scholars and criminal justice practitioners such as the former Chief of Major Crime Bureau of Austria Federal Police, Mag. Maximilian Edelbacher, Distinguished Professor Minoru Tokoyama of Tokyo, Japan, international police practitioners, some FBI agents, and scholars from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Newly Independent States (NIS) of eastern Europe, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, China, and South America.

In the 1990's, the International Section created the International Scholar award. The recipient had to be a keynote speaker at the IS annual luncheon. Several years ago, Richard (Dick) Ward pledged an annual donation to the International Section to help fund the International Scholar award. The award was later renamed the Gerhard O. W. Mueller Award for distinguished contributions to international and comparative criminal justice.

Since that time, the International Section has affiliated with the *International Criminal Justice Review*, as the journal offered to all members. Student members were

encouraged to join through discounted membership dues. The International Section continued to grow in membership and achievements, as early members have passed on (Bob McCormack, Gordon Misner, and Gerhard Mueller), but new and continuing members continue to carry out their legacy in promoting the further development of international and comparative criminal justice scholarship, teaching, and the dissemination of new ideas.



Advancing international criminal justice: Judd Ray, Freda Adler, Leslie King, Emil Plywaczewski, Max Edelbacher and Gerhard Mueller.



Past International Section Chairs, John Winterdyk and Harry Dammer, with Martin Killias, the Mueller Award Winner in 2008.
