

The Bridge of Friendship

On behalf of Professor Albert Kritzer and his extended family of relatives, students, and colleagues, welcome to the 1st Annual Willem C. Vis Middle East International Commercial Arbitration Pre-Moot. By being here now, you are also a member of this extended family, joined not by blood, but by a shared vision to increase practical knowledge in international commercial law and arbitration.

I am honored to have this opportunity to share some words about this vision. My father saw the creation of a Pre-Moot in Bahrain as a format to give Arab students the tools they need to engage in a globalized commercial world. Nine months ago, he traveled with me, my husband, and our two teen aged children to Egypt to attend the 2010 meeting of the Arab Society for Commercial and Maritime Law, and help pave the way for three things:

- ◆ a Pre-Moot for law leaders of tomorrow from the Middle East,
- ◆ an Electronic Law Library for the Arab States of the Middle East organized by Professor Hossam El-Saghir, Director of the Middle East Center for International Commercial Law, and
- ◆ a Middle East “Rule of Law” Dialogue Planning Committee, led by Basem El Hendawy, Secretary *pro tem* of this Committee.

Note that he placed the event you are now attending at the top of this list. He knew the value of cooperative multi-day training sessions, arbitration conferences, and providing an opportunity for student teams to practice their oral argument skills before competing in the Vis Moot in Vienna. In my father’s words, “A strong Arab pre-Moot offers many potential benefits for the region and participating law facilities, including increasing the number and quality of teams from the Arab world competing in the Vis Moot, the strength of commercial law and arbitration education at Arab law facilities, and the chance for a coherent approach to international commercial law and arbitration from an Arab legal perspective.” He was genuinely excited about this, and gave it a lot of careful thought and creative energy.

Someone recently said that in Professor Kritzer’s presence, there was no concern about power failures, for he could light up a whole room with his enthusiasm, powered by the energy of his ideas. The opportunity before you right now is a part of this energy.

Professor Kritzer’s passion for the success of the Middle East Moot in Bahrain led him to create something extraordinary; a unique gift to be passed on each year, designed by a unique visionary:

A “Bridge of Friendship”

In his words, this is “a metaphoric crystal bridge – suggesting the friendship of equals, based on shared values and ideals.” The onyx base of the “Bridge of Friendship” is inscribed with a verse from the Al-Hajarat Chapter of the Koran. The English translation of this verse is:

We made you peoples and tribes so that you may know one another.

In keeping with my father’s plan, custody of this “Bridge of Friendship” is awarded to the law school of the student team that does the best at the annual Middle East Moot, commencing with the 2011 Moot at the University of Bahrain you are now attending. The award, now named after my father, is offered openly for the promise of a better future for the law leaders of tomorrow, and underscored by a framework originating at The Institute of International Commercial Law affiliated with Pace University School of Law. As my father was fond of saying, “Pace” is Latin for peace. **The “Albert H. Kritzer Bridge of Friendship” is both acknowledgement of work well done and an invitation to continue the vision. Congratulations to this year’s recipient.**