

# The Supreme Court of Ohio

65 SOUTH FRONT STREET, COLUMBUS, OH 43215-3431

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Friday, Oct. 20, 2006**

## **Delegation of Ukrainian Judiciary to Study American Judicial System During Week-Long Visit**

VISIT BEGINS WITH SYMBOLIC BREAD AND SALT CEREMONY

***TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED INCLUDE IMPORTANCE OF JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE, ACCESS TO THE COURTS, DISPUTE RESOLUTION***

COLUMBUS – The Supreme Court of Ohio will welcome eight members of the Ukrainian judiciary to the state of Ohio on Monday, as they begin a week-long visit to study the American judicial system. A welcoming ceremony on Monday in the Ohio Judicial Center will feature the traditional Ukrainian custom of hosts presenting bread and salt to their visitors.

“The Supreme Court of Ohio, the Supreme Court of Ukraine and the Supreme Rada of Ukraine have partnered for nearly 15 years for the purpose of exchanging ideas and furthering the ideals of democracy in both countries,” said Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer. “We are honored to host this Ukrainian delegation and again provide a forum for the sharing of ideas about the rule of law and the democratic electoral processes.”

Five Ukrainian judges, three court officials as well as two facilitators are at the Court for a five-day visit with justices, court personnel and others from the legal community. Their visit is marked by several highlights, including the **Bread and Salt Ceremony** at 9 a.m., Monday, Oct. 23 in the North Hearing Room on the first floor of the Ohio Judicial Center, 65 S. Front St.; a discussion on the importance of judicial independence led by Judge Judy French of the 10<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals; viewing a common pleas trial at the Montgomery County Courthouse; as well as discussions on how to use mediation to solve disputes and the relationship between courts and the media. The delegates also will attend a presentation on the interdependency of the courts and legislative branches.

During the Bread and Salt Ceremony, the visitors will be presented with bread, which represents hospitality, and salt, which symbolizes eternal friendship, in a custom dating to at least the Middle Ages.

The visit to the Supreme Court of Ohio is part of a 10-day visit to the United States organized through the congressionally sponsored Open World Leadership Center and the Russian American Rule of Law Consortium (RAROLC). Prior to their arrival in Columbus, the Ukrainian delegation will be in Washington, D.C. for orientation meetings with federal officials. Ohio will be represented at the Washington meetings by Judge Judith L. French of the 10<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals.

RAROLC is a group of legal communities working together to develop the rule of law in Russia and Eastern European nations through the development of legal institutions such as bar associations and judicial and lawyer education programs. RAROLC also provides training in the use of technology, and assists in the adoption of alternative dispute resolution methods. RAROLC is unique in that it depends almost exclusively on the volunteer activities of legal professionals.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Chief Justice Moyer worked with judicial leaders of Ukraine to develop an independent judiciary. The Ohio Ukraine Rule of Law Project involved numerous exchange trips by Ohio judges and lawyers to introduce Ukraine to concepts related to the rule of law. He also has worked with the US Department of State in conducting education programs for judges and lawyers in Argentina and Chile.

Ukrainian dignitaries visiting the Court include:

**Serhiy Oleksandrovych Didenko**, Head of the Dobropilsky District Court

**Oleksandr Dmytrovych Hanzya**, Head of the Romny City District Court

**Pavlo Oleksandrovych Gvozdyk**, Head of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Court of Appeal

**Valentyna Volodymyrivna Trakalo**, Judge of the Appellate Court of Kyiv Region

**Ohla Mykhaylivna Vynohradnyk**, Judge of the Dnipropetrovsk Economic Court of Appeal

**Mykhaylo Yosypovych Vilhushynskyy**, Judge, First Deputy Head of Court, Appellate Court of Kyiv City

**Tetyana Mykhaylivna Bezruk**, Judge of the Economic Court of Poltava Region

**Halyna Borysivna Suprun**, Judge of the Brovary City Court, Kyiv Region

**Galina Vasilivna Kaluzhna**, Assistant professor, technology instructor, director of the Center for English Academic Writing, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

**Lesya Oleksiyivna Yakovenko**, Specialist, Ministry of Economy and European Integration of Ukraine, Department of Cooperation with the WTO.

For more information about the Bread and Salt Ceremony or other activities with the Ukrainian delegation, please contact the Office of Public Information at 614.387.9250