Annual Red Clay Conference addresses green sustainable commerce

Georgia Law’s 21st Annual Red Clay Conference explored the question “Does going green equal making green?” and offered a wide spectrum of views from the private legal sector, the corporate/business arena, and government and public interest groups.

The goal of this day-long event was to examine green environmental initiatives in a variety of industry settings and to explore the balance struck between the corporate bottom line and compliance with environmental regulations as well as the aims of environmental stewardship.

“This year’s conference featured an impressive group of speakers who discussed environmentally friendly commercial practices,” second-year law student and conference co-organizer Kelly A. Christian said.

The first keynote address – “Sustainable Commerce: Georgia’s Next Economy” – was delivered jointly by Georgia Law Associate Professor Peter A. Appel and President of Registry Consultants and UGA College of Pharmacy Adjunct Professor Dr. T. Rick Irvin (J.D.’08).

Stephen E. O’Day, who leads the Environmental Law Section and Sustainability Practice Group at Smith, Gambrell & Russell in Atlanta, delivered the second keynote address, titled “Benefits of Sustainability in a Recession.”

Green building, green forestry, green corporate environmental initiatives and the growing tide of green investment were also explored through panel sessions.

The panelists were as varied as the topics discussed and included Georgia Forestry Commission Senior Forester Joe Burgess, Coca-Cola Environmental Manager Ben Jordan, Delta Environmental Sustainability Manager Michael E. Morgan, Doraville City Councilman Bob A. Roche and Coca-Cola Senior Environmental Counsel Vail T. Thorne as well as others from law firms and academe.

IJTP celebrates 10th anniversary; hosts record group from Brazil

The International Judicial Training Program celebrated its 10th anniversary last December by training a record group of 50 members from the Brazilian judiciary and two from the Argentine judiciary on the workings of the U.S. legal system.

“I feel privileged to have been able to co-direct this program since its inception in 1998,” Dean Rusk Center Associate Director María E. Giménez (LL.M.’89) said. “It is very fitting that we were able to mark this special occasion with a record number of participants from the Brazilian judiciary, since Brazil was the first country to participate in the IJTP.”

According to Giménez, not only was this the largest group the IJTP has hosted from any country, but it was also the most national participation for the Brazilians with members from 10 different states and the federal judiciary taking part.

“The geopolitical strategic position of Brazil is considered, with India, China and Russia, as one of the future economic forces in the world, making it more important than ever for the law school to be engaged in this high-level training program,” Giménez said.

The IJTP, which is co-sponsored by the Georgia Institute of Continuing Judicial Education, is designed to introduce foreign judges and court personnel to the U.S. judicial system as a potential model for their own countries, allowing participants to gain ideas and insights on possible ways to strengthen their own judicial systems.

“We respect all judicial systems throughout the world; however, America’s system is one of the best,” Fernando Cerqueira, a justice for the State Supreme Court of Pernambuco and coordinator of the program for the Brazilians, said. “So, we have come to learn from the best. We want to give the population of Brazil what they need – justice.”

Cerqueira said that since participating in the IJTP, the Brazilian judiciary has engaged in modernizing drug courts as well as creating a domestic violence program and a national council for the Code of Judicial Conduct. He added that while it is always difficult to implement new ideas into a system, the face of the Brazilian judiciary is “very slowly beginning to change.”

“These programs have helped us improve our system and improve our work with the Brazilian population,” Cerqueira said.

Since the IJTP’s inception, more than 300 judges and court personnel from Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Egypt and Ghana have participated in the program.