



NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Contact: Heather Murphy
Telephone: (602) 452-3656
Cell: (602) 448-8412
hmurphy@courts.az.gov

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Court of Appeals Judge Winthrop Provides Guidance on Judicial Ethics to the Republic of Macedonia

PHOENIX – Arizona Court of Appeals Judge Lawrence F. Winthrop was recently invited to the Republic of Macedonia to discuss judicial ethics and the methods by which judges are disciplined in the United States and Arizona. The visit was sponsored by the US Department of State through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

Macedonia, in southeastern Europe, gained its independence in 1991 after the breakup of the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

“Although steeped in a long history dating back thousands of years, Macedonia is a relatively new country and a new government. As a result, the country’s leaders have an opportunity to shape its judicial system using models that have proven effective elsewhere,” said Judge Winthrop. “A recent report highlighted a need for more consistent judicial ethics and accountability. The judges were interested to hear about ways to enhance the public’s perception of judicial integrity by improving their judicial system and code of ethics.”

A report by the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) cited a number of areas for improvement on both the judicial and prosecutorial side. Judge Winthrop addressed some of the report’s findings at a two-day anti-corruption conference in the Macedonian city of Ohrid. His presentations focused on methods by which judges are selected, codes of conduct, ethics, and Arizona’s disciplinary system for judges and attorneys.

One of the fundamental shifts in the Macedonian legal system has been the shift in the role of judges from inquisitor to gatekeeper of an adversarial form of justice, Judge Winthrop said.

“Judges used to be the inquisitor – they asked the questions in the search for truth and determined the sentence or penalty,” Judge Winthrop explained. “Now prosecutors and defense lawyers do the questioning while the judges allow the search for truth to unfold, giving each side the opportunity to present their case. These are very different roles but the judges I met were united in the desire for a structure that promotes public confidence in a fair judiciary.”

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