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WEDNESDAY
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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF LEGAL SCIENCES OF UKRAINE UNANIMOUSLY ELECTS PROFESSOR WILLIAM BUTLER TO MEMBERSHIP

March 8, 2013

William E. Butler, the John Fowler Distinguished Professor of Law and International Affairs at Penn State, has been elected to the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine. A state-funded research institute, the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine is the most senior academic unit in the Ukraine and publishes several law reviews and funds research studies; Professor Butler is the first American and only the sixth foreign jurist to be elected to membership.

"This was quite a surprise and I am of course honored," said Professor Butler, who explained that the organization is highly selective in what they do and can go decades without voting to admit new members. The National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine is comprised of full members and corresponding members, limited by statute to 52 and 81 people, respectively. Vacancies among those groups are created only upon a member's death. Foreign members are admitted at the discretion of the entire organization, and Professor Butler was elected as a foreign member when the organization met in Kharkiv, Ukraine last week. His election was unanimous through all three levels of the organization.

A prolific scholar of Russian and former Soviet legal systems, Professor Butler recently finished a major translation project on Ukrainian law when he translated a five-volume, 3,600-page work on the past, present, and future of Ukrainian law from Russian into English. "Perhaps this is what recommended me to them," he remarked, explaining that the project took him about 1,200 hours to translate. It was not the first honor he received for work on Ukrainian law. The Supreme Court of Ukraine awarded Professor Butler its highest medal "for fidelity to law" at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev in November 2012.

Professor Butler is the author, editor, or translator of more than 120 books on Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, and other CIS legal systems and is serving his fourth term as a member of the Russian International Court of Commercial Arbitration. He is also an international commercial arbitrator.

Professor Butler was elected to the National Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine in 1992. He is the only foreign lawyer to be elected to both academies. He teaches or has taught LL.M. and J.D. students as well as graduate students in the School of International Affairs.