

On SUNSGLOW's Fifteenth Anniversary, a Summer Greeting to The SUNSGLOW Board of Advisors and Associates

June 27, 2014

Dear All:

This is true. We have come a long way since our launch at the Nova Law Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It was May 1999, and the Board was presided over by a distinguished personality, the Honorable Judge Gregory Carman, the then Chief of the U.S. Court of International Trade, New York City. In recognition of that seminal event, Judge Carman received an honorary doctorate as we all stood applauding with pride.

Now our Chairman is another distinguished personality with many attributes among which is his nurturing of many charitable events and organizations, especially at St. Francis College, Brooklyn Heights, New York City. That is where I have been adjunct professor since 1997. It was there that the late Dr. Frank Macchiarola, informed me in his capacity as President, that I had been made a Volpe Scholar for one year. To do what? To help refocus the College's curriculum on globalization. That was a shot in SUNSGLOW's arm which helped our organization even before Tom Volpe became its chairman. Subsequently a SUNSGLOW internship for the college students was established.

Our evolution since then continued, especially after a Board decision to have the programs of SUNSGLOW create a connectedness with the programs of the Stein Center for Law and Ethics, Fordham Law, which is headed by our colleague Professor Bruce Green. A SUNSGLOW account was then established at Fordham Law; our cooperation with that great institution, where I continue to be an adjunct professor of law, went even beyond the Stein Center to include the Institute of Law and Religion and the LLM Program! And the experiences of SUNSGLOW in global training in the Rule of Law have been regularly passed along to my students in my graduate seminar in **"Islamic Law and Global Security."**

Yes, the economic downturn in the U.S. has adversely affected our funding. After all, we are a funded organization, not a funding organization. Our first 3 programs were funded by the U.S. Government and by a private benefactor. Of these, the U.S. funded two programs in Cairo, and the private benefactor funded a third program in the Bahamas. Otherwise, all overhead expenses have been funded on a monthly basis by a portion of my legal fees and teaching and lecturing income. I have never felt comfortable asking for funds for SUNSGLOW. This is not my forte.

However, funding in kind has never stopped: counsel by the Advisors, especially our Executive Committee; tremendous assistance by our Associates hailing from 44 countries, and constituting our volunteer staff; St. Francis' College's hosting the meetings of our Executive Committee once or twice a year, at no cost to us for the food; hospitality by Advisors/Attorneys at their law offices; and ad hoc donations to our account at Fordham Law. Some of our participants paid their way to our programs across international frontiers.

Thus we kept the flag of the SUNSGLOW mission flying, signaling our activities horizontally from Cairo to Canada, and vertically from Brooklyn to the Bahamas.

But I also made mistakes in two specific instances: Through Germany, the European Union had pledged 40,000 euros, and Fordham Law had pledged \$15,000. Hoping to raise matching funds, a hope that went a couple of years unfulfilled, the funds were withdrawn. But an important lesson was learnt. Go forward with what you got, and tailor the programs to fit the gift's size. Now this lesson is now being implemented as described below.

As of this year, we have embarked upon a program of evening panels. The aim is to time the topic with important events in the broadening field of human rights. The first was held on **"The Coptic Question"** on April 10, 2014 at the courtroom of **Hon. Judge Paul Gardephe** in Manhattan. The courtroom was packed and we greatly benefited by the co-sponsorship of Fordham's Institute on Law and Religion. The event benefited from the efforts of Vittoria Fariello, Esq., an Associate and Special Assistant, and of Alba Mikazu, a SUNSGLOW/St. Francis College intern.

That pilot project showed us in practice the value of limited timely events, in the form of 2-3 hours panels on timely issues. Fueled by that successful experience, we are now moving on to the **next event** which shall be hosted by St. Francis College on **October 7 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**. The topic is **"Civil Rights v. National Security,"** and shall be moderated by **Hon. Judge Gardephe**.

The **3rd panel** shall be held on **October 14 from 6:00 to 8:30 pm** at the new building of Fordham University School of Law. The topic is **"Islam and the State;"** the event shall be moderated by Scott Karson, Esq. of Lamb and Barnosky, who together with Jeffrey Dannenberg, Esq. of Kestenbaum, Dannenberg and Klein, have recently joined our Board of Advisors.

This particular event is also significant in that it is the first in an annual series on the same topic, dedicated to the first Saudi woman to be appointed University Dean. She is **Dr. Hend Al-Khuthaila**, one of the founders of SUNSGLOW. In support of this occasion, **Her Honor Chief Judge Preska** of the Southern District of New York, together with **H.E. Ambassador Abdullah Bishara of Kuwait** (the first Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council) will share the podium together with other dignitaries.

The **fourth event** of this year is now being organized by our Director of Operations, **Dr. Zahra Hend Shnayen**, in Toronto, Canada. The topic is “**Does Militant Islam Have a Future?**,” and shall be held in the evening of **December 4**. Our new director of the Toronto Regional Liaison Center, **Dr. Jonathan Krehm**, is assisting Zahra Hend in a variety of logistics.

Speaking of our Regional Liaison Centers, we now have 14 of them: NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS; MONTREAL, CANADA; TORONTO, CANADA; CAIRO, EGYPT; LYON, FRANCE; BAGHDAD, IRAQ; ROME, ITALY (AND THE EUROPEAN UNION); AMMAN, JORDAN; SAFAT, KUWAIT; TRIPOLI, LIBYA; MALTA; AMSTERDAM AND THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS; ISTANBUL, TURKEY; MIAMI, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

These Centers are our antennae for regional training needs and trends. Their existence does not require more than a noted personality with whom we can communicate without the need for a special office, a flag, staff, or even a sign-plate.

The commemorative evening panels shall resume in February 2015 beginning with an annual series dedicated to the **Hon. Gregory Carman**. The theme of the series shall be “**Human Rights**.”

These commemorative panels are dedicated to the names of those personalities with unique achievements. The cost per panel to the dedicators is \$5000, an amount intended to cover most of the overhead cost including that of a portion of my time. In this regard, we keep in view that **SUNSGLOW is a service organization**, not a profit-making institution.

This presentation cannot end without reference to two important operational factors: we shall continue with negotiations with Middle Eastern governments for holding programs for their legal and judicial communities to be funded by them or by others. (example: Libya). In addition, the locus of such training shall be in either the U.S. or Canada or Europe, in order to overcome the concerns for personal and operational safety.

Above all else, SUNSGLOW shall always remain a training vehicle. It is not an advocacy group, nor is it an ideological group. **Its central mission is training for the enhancement of the Rule of Law**. The reason we have deep penetration in the Arab and Muslim regions is our non-interference in the internal affairs of States, a stance which is backed up by our cooperation agreement with the League of Arab States.

Your being an integral part of the advisory machinery of SUNSGLOW, together with our great corps of Associates and Regional Centers, shall always remain the pulsing heart of SUNSGLOW.

Have a great summer and a very warm welcome to our newest advisor, Robert E. Michael, Esq., Inaugural Chairman, Committee on Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, New York City Bar Association, New York City.