

Castleberry Peace Institute University of North Texas Spring 2017 Newsletter



The Castleberry Peace Institute enjoyed another eventful and productive year I am pleased to report. Professor Kimi King and I spent the month of June, 2016 presenting the final results of our years-long study of witnesses who testified before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We presented at the ICTY and The Hague Institute for Global Justice in The Netherlands. We also presented the results of our research to stakeholders in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo, as well as at a conference in Slovenia. The report was well received and can be read on line at http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/Registry/Witnesses/Echoes-Full-Report_EN.pdf.

We are also so very proud that our founding CPI Director, Professor David Mason won UNT's most prestigious faculty award - The Eminent Faculty Award!

The Castleberry Peace Institute also hosted a number of speakers from the University of North Texas and from other universities around the US, including UNT alum, Professor Geoff Dancy of Tulane University and Professor Jacqueline McAllister of Kenyon College.

One of the most exciting developments at the Castleberry Peace Institute has been our emerging collaboration with our colleagues in Medellin, Colombia. We are planning a major international conference on the Colombian peace and justice process in October of 2017.

Amalia Pulido, one of our outstanding graduate students, who accompanied Professor David Mason and I has written a great story in this newsletter about what we learned on our visit.

I must also mention that we continue to raise funds for our scholarship to be named in honor of our namesake, Vivian Castleberry. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to endow this scholarship so it can support our best, brightest and most deserving students. If you would like more information, please contact me at the email address below. Or you can contribute on-line at [Vivian Castleberry Trailblazer Scholarship](#)

We look forward to many new and exciting initiatives this year as we work to better understand the causes and consequences of peace and violence. If you would like to get in touch with us or pass along a story, please do at one of the contact points below.

Thank you for all of your support.

Professor James Meernik
Director, Castleberry Peace Institute



email: meernik@unt.edu

[Send Us Mail](#)

[1155 Union Circle #305340
Denton, Texas 76203-5017](#)

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Peace and Justice in Colombia

by Amalia Pulido

On September 26, 2016, the government of Colombia and the rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed an historic peace treaty that would end over 50 years of violent conflict, kidnappings and instability. While since that day there have been problems with finalizing the peace, such as the narrow rejection of the peace agreement in a public referendum in October of 2016, the government and the rebels have forged on and re-negotiated the peace treaty that was then approved by the Colombian government. In late March of 2016, a team from the Castleberry Peace Institute traveled to Medellin, Colombia to learn more about this peace process and to explore the potential for collaboration with local universities and Museum of Memory.

Professors James Meernik and T. David Mason and I (Amalia Pulido, a PhD. graduate student), went to Medellin for a life-changing experience. Our team not only established research and teaching ties with other universities, we also met people from different social sectors: from government officials to victims of the conflict. We were always received with a warm welcome and a cup of *tinto*. As Dr. Meernik told me, “the image of Medellin that we saw in front of us is far from being that city we read about in the 80’s, Medellin is no longer the city controlled by dangerous criminals, like Pablo Escobar and other drug kingpins”.

The trip involved meetings with other scholars, government officials but the most interesting part of the trip was experiencing the culture and the reality of Medellin in 2016. We learned about Medellin’s history and culture, we tried the *bandeja paisa*, we used the *metro cable*, we enjoyed the taste and smell of every cup of Colombian coffee, but even more, we got a more realistic view of a country that we knew primarily through the news. One day in particular symbolized the transformation of Medellin, Colombia and the journey from violence to peace. On March 30, while we were having lunch in the center of Medellin with a group of peace activists from the UN program *Preparémonos para la paz*, we watched the announcement of President Manuel Santos that the Colombian government would start the peace dialogue with the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second largest Colombian guerrilla group. Dr. Mason was really excited about what we were watching on the TV. He looked at us and said, “we are being part of history, this is a historical moment”. Everyone smiled and we felt that our trip was worth it. Although Colombia is involved in complex violent conflicts, we saw the hope and the belief that there would be a better future for the Colombian people. As other Latin American cities, Medellin is full of life, colors, flavors and warm people. The journey of the Castleberry Peace Institute into the Colombian peace process started with this trip. We are confident our collaborations with the local universities and the Museum of Memory can help contribute to peace in Colombia.

Museo Casa de la Memoria (Museum of Memory). The first stop in our visit to Medellin was the Museo Casa de la Memoria. This museum is situated in the west zone of Medellin, close to the 8, 9 and 10 comunas, which are known for having high levels of violence. The museum was located in this dangerous area to offer a safe space to the community for reliving and creating memories about the Colombian conflict. The museum has valuable and original archives, pictures, videos and testimonies from victims of the many conflicts in Colombia, from the period of *La Violencia* in the 1950’s to the violence of the drug trade in the 1980’s and to the war with the FARC. Looking at those pictures and listening to the testimonies was a breathtaking experience. We saw that behind each casualty in the data sets that we use as social scientist, there was a story to tell, there was a father, a daughter, a mother, a human being. Someone who paid the ultimate price for the violence that just never seemed to end. After our visit to the museum, we held several meetings with the museum team to discuss future projects, including the digitalization of their archives and testimonies that we continue to work on.

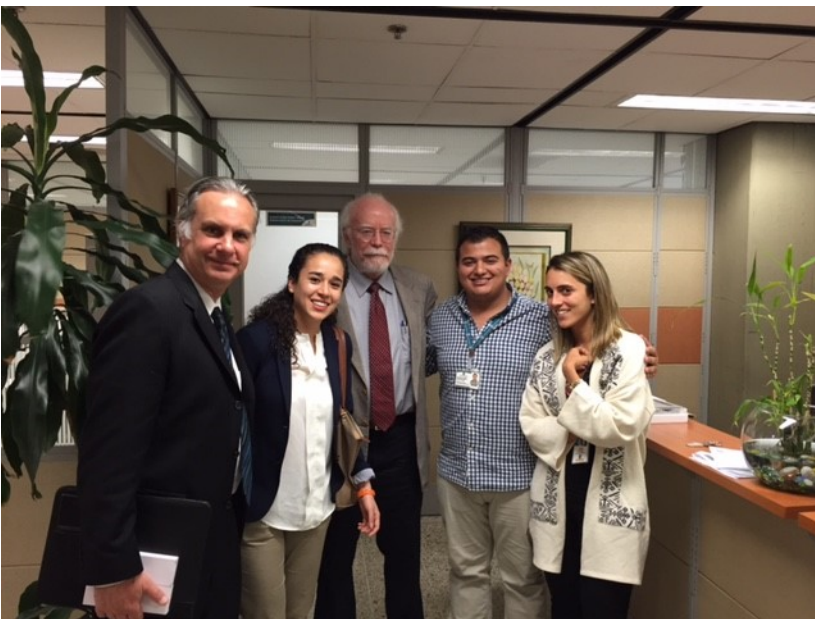
Visiting Medellin: The City of Eternal Spring. We also spent part of the trip visiting communities and talking to different social organizations that work with and for the victims of the conflict. The team visited two places: the Moravia neighborhood and the Comuna 8. These two places are full of stories and testimonies from victims of the conflict like people who have been displaced from their hometowns. We visited the Cultural Center of Moravia “*La casa de todos*” which is situated in Moravia, a neighborhood that used to be a landfill. This neighborhood emerged in the 1950’s and since then has experienced several violent conflicts. However, the Cultural Center has done amazing work to help change this situation by offering a safe place where people from all ages can spend their time learning art, reading and engaging in other type of recreational activities. This Center is a sanctuary where people from this neighborhood can find a space to forget the violence and poverty, if only for a little while. While we were in the center, we saw children playing soccer, reading books and having fun. We walked the neighborhood; I was surprised by the fact that I did not see any police. Then, we learned that different groups control different neighborhoods. In the case of Moravia, paramilitary groups aka *combos* have a strong presence.

Our second field trip was to the Comuna 8, where the CPI team met and talked with members from Casa Diversa, a social organization that defends LGBT rights and victims of the conflict. The team listened to different testimonies and learned about the activities that this organization provides for their community and the challenges that they have. Once again, we found that there was a great desire for change and a better way of life that has inspired many people to become citizen activists for peace and take matters into their own hands.

Working with the Universities in Medellin. We also met several scholars from both private and public universities to exchange thoughts about the conflict and to establish academic ties. The team met scholars from EAFIT University (Escuela de Administración, Finanzas e Instituto Tecnológico) and the Pontifical Bolivarian University (UPB). Professors Mernik and Mason gave an overview of the Castleberry Peace Institute and talked about the research that the Institute has done, especially in the area of conflict resolution and transitional justice, and our Colombian counterparts described their work. They agreed that establishing academic ties and setting an academic agenda would contribute toward helping the world, as well as the people of Colombia, understand and explain the conflict. We agreed to work together on several projects. The first of these will be a conference that will take place in October 2017.

The Colombian Universities, the Museum of Memory and the Castleberry Peace Institute will host an international conference in the city of Medellin. The main goal of this conference is to discuss three topics: 1) the Peace Agreement and Peace; 2) Strengthening of the State and 3) Transitional justice. The International Conference will bring international and Colombian scholars together to discuss their findings about what strategies for peace and justice work best around the world, what are the critical challenges facing the Colombian peace process today, and what can past efforts at creating peace in Colombia tell us about the future. We are also pleased that two, UNT PhD graduates and currently faculty members from the Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace, Madhav Joshi and Jason Quinn, will attend the Conference presenting their outstanding project "Peace Accords Matrix".

Government of Medellin. We also met some of the leaders working in the mayor's office in Medellin. They described their projects aimed at creating an environment of peace and security. Medellin has many challenges, not the least of which is that it is a destination for many people displaced or escaping from the violence of the surrounding region. They were especially proud of a government program called *policías comunitarios*, where the police work in the neighborhoods and try to be a much more visible presence than in the past. They are hoping that this increased police presence will help improve social trust and to create social networks to fight criminal activities. We learned that one of the biggest problems in Medellin is the emergence of criminal organizations. We were told that former paramilitary groups emerged as criminal organizations, threatening peace and stability.



We all came back from this trip with a great sense of optimism for the future of Colombia and excitement for the many opportunities we will explore in the coming years to collaborate with our colleagues in Colombia. Our plans for the conference continue to move forward and we are excited about the prospects of publishing a book from the conference presentations. While peace with both the FARC and ELN will take years to cement and become self-sustaining, the future looks incredibly bright for Colombia and we look forward to returning many times to Medellin.

Faculty and Student News

We are very pleased to announce this year's winners of the Castleberry Peace Institute and Department of Political Science Research Fellows competition. Josue Barron, Hannah Frosch, and Ian Layden were each awarded the \$1000 scholarship. Josue will be working on project regarding the punishments delivered by international criminal tribunals. Hannah Frosch will be studying the treatment of Native Americans in the US court system, and Ian will be researching how the US Congress responds to controversial Supreme Court decisions. Each student will be working with a faculty supervisor and will co-author research papers together.

Current CPI/PSCI Research Fellow Kyle Allen will be defending his Honors thesis on Russian foreign policy during the spring, 2017 semester and plans to continue working on his Russian language and statistical skills this summer. CPI/PSCI Fellow Weston Dunham will be presenting a poster board of his research on state refugee policy and resettlement at University Scholars Day at UNT. Wes and his mentor, Professor Regina Branton will be presenting their research at the State Politics and Policies (SPPC) in St. Louis this June. Wes has been accepted into the University of Copenhagen and will start there this fall!

Also in the news, Professor Marijke Breuning received the Quincy Wright award from the International Studies Association's Midwest Region and at the most recent ISA meeting in Baltimore, she received the Susan Northcutt Award and the Foreign Policy Analysis section's Distinguished Scholar Award. Well done!