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Projects in Turkey, Costa Rica and Morocco UNL programs span the seas

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

Last month NU President Ronald Roskens took a trip to Turkey. He didn't have time to sightsee or buy souvenirs, he left on June 18 and returned on June 19, but he did have a chance to see NU's most successful overseas outreach.

Thirty years ago the Turkish government decided that the eastern portion of their country needed a major university. They wanted to model their institution on the American land grant universities, that is, they wanted the university to be open to the population at large, with an extension program designed to benefit the region in more ways than just through education.

The Turkish government contacted the Agency for International Development, a federal agency, which then contacted NU. Over the next several years at least 15-to-20 Nebraska professors went to Turkey, not only to help plan the fledgling university, but also to teach its first classes.

This June, Ataturk University held commencement exercises for its 25th

graduating class. Roskens went to Erzurum, Turkey to attend the ceremonies and receive an honorary degree. Roskens said that ties between the two universities have remained close. Many Ataturk graduates come to NU for their doctorates and many Ataturk faculty members hold degrees from Nebraska.

Currently Ataturk University has 25,000 students and covers 10,000 acres. Thirty years ago, Roskens said, "it was flat ground. It's really a remarkable achievement."

"There is a very intense feeling of gratitude," toward NU in Erzurum, Roskens said.

Although the Ataturk University Project was NU's biggest recent project, many overseas outreach programs are presently going on.

Most of NU's current overseas projects involve the College of Agriculture. Two of the biggest are in Costa Rica and Morocco.

The Costa Rica project is a joint venture with California Polytechnical and Rutgers University. Using funding from AID emissaries, these institutions are creating an Agriculture School. "There's a real need in Central America

to have trained people who can move right in to frontline ag jobs," said Glen Vollmar, associate dean and director of international programs.

The Costa Rica project is two years old. Currently the land is purchased and a curriculum committee has been formed. The school will have a technical, hands-on approach, Vollmar said. The school is scheduled to be completed in 1989, he said.

NU's outreach extends from the jungles of Costa Rica to the Sahara Desert, where NU has its Dryland Research Center.

The Dryland Research Center in Morocco, with a staff of 16 Americans, is a project of the Mid-America International Agricultural Consortium. Five universities take part in MIAC, but NU has the leadership of the Morocco project. The center started in 1980, and is currently being renewed for another six years, Vollmar said.

Dryland research not only benefits the famine-plagued Sahara, Vollmar said, but also benefits American dryland farmers, because "if it grows (in Africa) it will probably grow better here," Vollmar said.

NU's Kathman strives for fun while improving on tennis court

By Chuck Green
Sports Editor

For Joe Kathman, fun is the name of the game.

Kathman, a sophomore international business major from Vechta, West Germany, and a member of Nebraska's tennis team, doesn't only have fun on the courts. He tries to work it into every aspect of his lifestyle.

Fun on the tennis court, though, is the most important thing to him.

"I always want to have fun playing the game," Kathman said. "It's always nice to improve your game, but as long as I feel happy on the court, that's all I want."

Kathman, 22, said he never planned to come to the United States for college. After spending a mandatory two-year stint with the Luftwaffe, the West German Air Force, Kathman came to the United States to visit some friends of his family's who lived in Omaha. That visit in May 1985, changed Kathman's life.

"I always wanted to go to America," he said. "I wanted to get to know the people, the culture, the country. After I went to Omaha for the summer, they (his friends in Omaha) asked me if I would stay and go to school in Lincoln. I thought, 'Why not?'"

Kathman spoke with one of Nebraska's foreign student advisers and made arrangements to attend the university in the fall of 1985. Kathman also met with Cornhusker men's tennis coach Kerry McDermott.

"I met Kerry in Omaha a few months before, when I played in the Nebraska Open," he said. "He saw me play and said that he could use me on the team."

Kathman said he thinks tennis competition in the United States is tougher than it is in West Germany. He said the reason for this is the early preparation American tennis players receive.

"Everybody here (in the United States) plays tennis at an early age,"

Kathman said. "There are courts all over the country. Also, America has high school programs, which we don't have in Germany, and college programs, which we also don't have."

One player, Boris Becker, is helping to popularize the sport in Germany, Kathman said. Becker is Kathman's favorite player, because of his edge on



Kathman

the court and because of the way he handles himself during competition.

"He behaves better than (John) McEnroe," Kathman said.

Kathman said he feels that his forehand return is the best aspect of his game, while the ground-strokes and quickness are the things he'd most like to improve on. He also said he would like to improve his consistency and his concentration on the court.

Kathman said he has had few major problems adapting to life in the United States because "the cultures are pretty much the same."

Even so, Kathman said, the driving habits of the two countries aren't so similar.

One year ago last December, Kathman said, he was on his way to Omaha after his last fall semester final exam. He was driving on Interstate 80 at

about 85 mph when a car began moving closer and closer to him from behind.

"I figured the guy wanted to go faster, so I went faster," he said.

It wasn't a smart choice. "All of a sudden, I saw flashing red lights behind me," Kathman said. "It was a cop."

Not wanting an expensive ticket for speeding, Kathman had to think quick.

"When he got to my window, I began speaking German to him," Kathman said. "I asked him (in German) if he spoke German. He didn't. Then I pointed to my tennis bag (which was in the front seat) and said 'airport . . . home.'"

The state patrolman, apparently not knowing what to do, tried to make Kathman understand what was happening.

After a few moments, Kathman gave the patrolman his German driver's license, German passport, German I.D. card and his international driver's license.

"After that, the cop went back to his car and sat there for about 15 minutes, probably trying to figure out what I had given him," Kathman said.

Finally, the patrolman came back and handed Kathman a warning. Along with the warning, he tried to instill one final word of advice.

"He was motioning to me and saying really slow, 'Please driver slower!' in English," Kathman said.

After dodging one bullet, Kathman said, he has decided to drive slower when state patrolmen might be around.

After graduation, Kathman said, he would like to travel to Spain or Mexico to work on his third language, Spanish. His real goal, however, is to work for a large company and then start his own business.

"I want to make my first million dollars before I turn 40," Kathman said.

Whether he does or not, he'll have fun trying.

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