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## Study blends two cultures

### John Marshall and school in Shanghai open new research center on aging

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**A**ging populations of the U.S. and China will be the subject of a new, cooperative research center that links The John Marshall Law School and the East China University of Political Science and Law (ECUPL).

The new center is called the Sino-American Research Center on an Aging Population.

It is believed to be the first collaborative project between two law schools on aging, said Barry A. Kozak, director of the Elder Law Program at John Marshall. A spokeswoman for John Marshall said the project is also believed to be the first collaborative project of its kind between China and the U.S.

China has 67 million people over the age of 60 and nearly 19 million over 80, Kozak said.

Shanghai has about 3 million people who are 60 or older. It is estimated that people over 60 will account for a third of the city's population by 2020, Kozak said. ECUPL is in Shanghai.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is aging, too.

"China and the U.S. share similar demographics" on aging, said Charles P. Golbert, deputy Cook County Public Guardian who supervises the adult guardianship division. Golbert is also a member of the advisory board for John Marshall's Elder Law Program.

"As baby boomers age, a larger and larger share of our (U.S.) population is going to be in need of more medical care and long-term care and we'll have more legal needs," Golbert said.

A traditional population triangle shows a lot of young people and middle-age people at the bottom

and middle and fewer older people at the top. But as young people have smaller families in the U.S., the triangle is becoming inverted, Golbert said.

This "is even more profound in China because of the one-baby policy," he said.

The genesis of the Sino-American Research Center on an Aging Population, Kozak said, was a conversation involving John Marshall's dean John E. Corkery; Dorothy In-Lan Wang Li, co-executive director of the Asian Alliance Program at John Marshall; and officials of ECUPL last year at a graduation program.

A group of students in China were getting LL.M. degrees from John Marshall in intellectual property law, part of a cooperative program between John Marshall and China's patent office.

The conversation turned to the idea that "everyone's getting old," Kozak said.

Corkery and Li said the same was true in the U.S. and added that John Marshall had developed a curriculum dealing with elder law.

Next, Kozak was invited to go to Shanghai to visit ECUPL and explain American policies for the elderly, such as advanced health directives, guardianships through the court, Social Security and Medicare.

"It's kind of new to them to be thinking about," Kozak said. "The sense is that's why they developed this research center with us as their partners."

Kozak is now co-director of the joint Sino-American Research Center on an Aging Population.

He said he hopes the center will develop teams of Chinese and American scholars who will attack single issues and publish collaborative papers.



**Barry A. Kozak, director of the Elder Law Program at The John Marshall Law School, posed here in Shanghai at the opening ceremony for a joint, Chinese-American research center on aging involving John Marshall and East China University of Political Science and Law.**

The collaboration could be through Skype and other online systems plus through scholars and students traveling between the two countries, he said.

For example, Kozak said he is currently finishing his own study of "filial responsibility laws" in the U.S.

Pennsylvania, New Jersey and California have laws that say "if a child can afford to pay for mom's nursing home and long-term care expenses, they have to," he said.

He would like to collaborate with Chinese scholars on a similar study. "The tradition in China is, well, of course children take care of their parents," Kozak said.

Children are expected to take care of their parents' financial, physical and "spiritual" needs, Chinese scholars have told Kozak.

By "spiritual" needs, Chinese scholars mean "mental well-being," Kozak said. "The job of the son is to keep mom happy and ... in good spirits."

But Kozak said some recent empirical studies in China have shown that "children are moving out of the farm land and are not taking care of their parents financially, spiritually and physically as tradition holds they should."

The Chinese are beginning to realize tradition may need the support of laws, he said.

Abuse of the elderly is also "a big issue in both China and America," both financial exploitation and emotional abuse, he said.

At the opening ceremony in Shanghai in April for the Sino-American Research Center on an Aging Population, Kozak and two Chinese scholars spoke. Without planning to, "we all kind of touched on elder abuse," he said.

Golbert, who will be an adviser to the joint research center, said "it makes a lot of sense ... that the first international research center on aging issues would be based here" in Chicago and at John Marshall.

Chicago is on the cutting edge of geriatric medicine at both Northwestern Memorial Hospital and at Rush University Medical Center.

In addition, both Kozak and Golbert said John Marshall is one of only four law schools in the U.S. to offer a law degree certificate in elder law.

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