



(l-r) Sharon Alles, Geoff Brouwer, Justine Vandergrift, and Dean of Arts Arlette Zinck have worked to get Omar Khadr returned to Canada.

King's Linked to Guantanamo Trial

The King's University College, a school supported by members of the Christian Reformed Church, has become involved in the case of Canadian Omar Khadr, a 22-year-old prisoner at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on trial for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed an American soldier in Afghanistan in 2002.

Khadr was born in Canada, eventually moving with his family to Afghanistan. He was 15 at the time of the incident for which he is charged and was also seriously wounded in the fight.

He has been held at Guantanamo for seven years, the youngest prisoner and the only citizen of a Western nation that has not been returned to his country of origin.

The fact that Khadr remains in Cuba has been controversial in Canada, with news media editorials across the country calling on the Canadian government to repatriate him, largely on the grounds that he was 15 and should be considered a child soldier under international law.

The Canadian government has refused repatriation on the grounds that Khadr is facing a judicial process in the U.S.

According to Ken Schwanke, director of marketing and media relations at King's, the Edmonton, Alberta, college's involvement in the case started in 2008, when Khadr's lawyer spoke on the campus at an interdisciplinary-studies conference.

After more research, a group of students expressed concern for Khadr, especially because of his age. Schwanke said the students organized an off-campus rally that drew more than 700 people. And they wrote letters to Canada's prime minister, urging him to repatriate Khadr, as well as letters of encouragement to Khadr himself.

Rev. Roy Berkenbosch, director of the college's Micah Center, said that a group of students and faculty have gathered weekly to pray for Khadr and his lawyer for the past two years, as well as for others who suffer injustice.

The college's tie became more public when Dean of Arts Arlette Zinck, who had been working with the students, was named as a possible witness for the defense in the mitigation phase of the trial.

College president Harry Fernhout said that Zinck's possible testimony would be based on her expertise in assessing Khadr's

readiness for post-secondary studies, not as an official spokesperson for the school.

Several news reports stated that the college had committed to enrolling and supporting Khadr, but Fernhout said that was not true.

"The college has a policy for mature student applications," he said. Khadr would need to meet those criteria to be admitted.

But that possibility is down the road, according to Fernhout. "There is a trial underway that will determine his innocence or guilt and sentence. Once that is completed, he will have to make choices about his future."

"Omar Khadr's story surely cries out for healing and reconciliation," the president said. "Some of our students and faculty have taken up this challenge in relation to a prisoner who remains a fellow human being and a fellow Canadian.

"If he comes to western Canada, choosing to leave behind his family and radical elements of Islam, if he is looking for a second chance at life, we are an institution that follows a gospel that is all about second chances."

—Gayla R. Postma

 Check *thebanner.org* for the expanded story.

IN MEMORIAM



Rev. Marvin P. Hoogland

1935-2010


Rev. Marvin Hoogland, a thoughtful theologian, able counselor, and loving family man, died June 15.

Hoogland graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary, completed his Th.D. at the Free University of Amsterdam, and entered the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in 1966.

He served congregations in Iowa and Illinois before leaving parish ministry to start a counseling ministry at the Chicago Christian Counseling Center. He served there for the rest of his career, including 10 years as director. He retired in 2000.

Hoogland's life and ministry were marked by a high degree of intellectual honesty. Already as a seminarian he asked unsettling questions with reference to the Christian Reformed Church's understanding of infallibility as applied to Scripture.

He championed the causes of justice and mercy. He will readily be remembered for his sense of humor, his sincere godliness, and his thoughtful interest in people's well-being.

Hoogland is survived by his wife, Thelma, four children and their spouses, and four grandchildren. 

—Louis M. Tamminga