



## Center News

**WASHINGTON, DC** – We are pleased to announce that **Walter Scott, Jr.**, of Omaha, NE, is the new chair of the Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees. Scott brings civic and business leadership, international vision, and experience with exchanges to this position. He is the chair of Level 3 Communications, Inc., a former CEO of what is now Kiewit Corp., and a Berkshire Hathaway board member. Having ably served as an Open World trustee since 2004, Scott already knows our program well. We are privileged to have him at the helm.



*New Open World board chair Walter Scott, Jr., left, with outgoing founding chair James Billington, who remains an ex officio Open World board trustee as Librarian of Congress.*

## In the Field

**UKRAINE** – In May, 11 members of the **Friendship Force of Lincoln (NE)**, an Open World host organization, spent nearly three weeks in Kyiv, Odessa (pictured), Boyarka, Dnipropetrovsk, and Sumy, Ukraine, on a trip modeled on Open World. Alumni of Open World exchanges hosted by the Lincoln Friendship Force club helped plan a rich professional and cultural itinerary for the Nebraskans, and also home hosted them for part of their stay. The visiting group also learned how alumni had applied ideas from their Open World visits in workplaces ranging from a school to a mayor’s office.



## Hosting Corner

**KANSAS AND MISSOURI** – Five women in the forefront of efforts to improve the lives of special-needs children in Samara Region, Russia, found themselves in especially well-qualified hands during their May Open World visit to the Kansas City area. Their local host, **Avila University** President and Rotarian **Ron Slepitz** (pictured with the delegates and their facilitator), partnered with Avila social work department chair **Elaine Wright**—who had done research in Samara on its social work system—to develop a program that exceeded the delegates’ expectations.

Slepitz brought expertise in leadership training, strategic planning, and community engagement to his hosting of the Russian team, which included two regional administrators and three university professors, two of whom also work directly with children with disabilities. Sessions at Avila were

supplemented by site visits to schools and social-services agencies in Kansas and Missouri, resulting in an ideal balance of theory and practice, according to the delegation’s facilitator. Because Russian social service providers increasingly need to draw on private support, Slepitz and Wright also put fundraising on the agenda.



A specially designed Avila mini-course, Comparative Systems of Social Services: Russia & the USA, was held in conjunction with the Open World visit. “Delegates and Avila social work

students learned from each other and benefited from each other’s perspectives,” Slepitz says. “There were many deep and powerful conversations.”

As International Committee chair of the **Leawood (KS) Rotary Club**, the local host organization, Slepitz also organized the Russians’ after-hours activities—which included introductions to Kansas City jazz and barbecue—and did triple duty as a home host. Having previously hosted a judge from Samara for Open World, Slepitz already knew about his guests’ region. His and Wright’s familiarity with Samara, and the warm welcome the delegation received everywhere, no doubt explain why the women reported feeling so “at home,” despite being so far away from their Volga River region.