

OUR CLASSROOMS

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Brandon teacher visits Germany

Special to Rankin Ledger

June Hollis, a longtime teacher at Brandon High School, was one of 60 U.S. social studies teachers selected to participate in the Transatlantic Outreach Program.

The group was in Berlin from June 27 to July 10 and visited German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

The teachers were invited to Germany for study trips by the Transatlantic Outreach Program.

The program was initiated by the Goethe Institute in Atlanta and serves as a model public-private partnership initiative in which the Federal Foreign Office, Deutsche Bank AG and the Goethe Institute work together to convey knowledge of modern Germany.

The trigger for the program was the desire of American teachers to have more information available at schools about Germany as it exists today.

The program takes participants to Berlin, Leipzig, Dessau, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main, where they visit educational and political establishments and companies and talk



Longtime Brandon High School teacher June Hollis, second row, fourth from left, is pictured with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, front row, fourth from left, and 20 American teachers in Berlin. Hollis was one of 60 U.S. social studies teachers selected to participate in the Transatlantic Outreach Program. She and the other teachers were in Germany from June 27 until July 10.

with politicians.

On their return to the United States, the participants devise new teaching units and bring their experience to bear in further training events.

As a result, a highly efficient network of teachers and further-training facilities has emerged over the years, helping convey an image of modern Germany that is free from prejudices.

In the coming academic year, the TOP network will supply the 100,000th volume with teaching materials.

Hollis said a highlight of her trip was a visit to Wittenburg, a small village where Martin Luther hung his 95 theses on the cathedral door. The small town was not only historic, but very friendly.

While there, Hollis said she was walking down a street saw a Bass Pro Shop. She quickly learned to appreciate the euro, the new currency used in many countries in Europe.

"It was so much easier to keep up with and count the money under this new system," she said.

Members of the group often commented about how guilty they felt because the expenses were paid for by the German government; however, the group put many euros back into the economy, which has a 30 percent unemployment rate.

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Any teacher can apply, regardless of what grade or subject they teach. For more information, e-mail Hollis at jhollis@rcsd.ms.