

German Immersion

Studying abroad leads to successful career and honorary consul position.

By Annie Flachsbarth

Paul Maricle has maintained a passion for Germany, the German language, and German culture since he was a high school foreign exchange student. He wasn't formally trained in the German language before he went abroad, but was immersed in the language and the culture immediately – an experience that shaped his career today.

While **Maricle, BA '76, JD '79**, was attending Washburn University, he returned to Germany for a year as a Rotary International Scholar. Maricle received a full scholarship to study at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn, Germany. After that year, he received his modern language degree and then worked as a German teacher's assistant while attending Washburn University School of Law. Teaching wasn't his passion since law school was always the plan; nor did he focus on any international work. After law school, he had a rewarding experience clerking for Justice **Richard Holmes, JD '53, H '91**, on the Kansas Supreme Court, and during that time he was

approached by **William Langdon, BBA '86, and Carol Vogel, BA '67**, about an opportunity to study abroad once again. He was one of six American lawyers selected to participate in a program for foreign lawyers to study the German and European Union legal systems sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service. When the program ended, he stayed and worked in Germany for another year and a half where he expanded connections with many European lawyers and friends.

When he returned to the US, he put all of that experience to work building a career in Denver, Colorado, representing small to medium-sized business with international business transactions – particularly with German businesses entering the U.S. market.

Due to his significant background and experience working in Germany and his continued efforts back in the states, Maricle was appointed honorary consul for the Federal Republic of Germany in 2015. As honorary consul, he is responsible for helping to



Left: Paul Maricle (right) with a client in front of the Wittenberg Castle in Wittenberg, Germany. Right: Paul Maricle with an intern from Germany in the Honorary Consulate. Photos submitted

encourage networking between the residents of Colorado, Wyoming, and Germany, facilitating business opportunities and cultural exchange. He offers assistance to U.S. and German citizens and companies with legal and consular issues related to Germany.

“I answer to the consul general in Los Angeles for Colorado and in San Francisco for Wyoming. We renew passports, authenticate signatures, register births, deaths, and marriages for German citizens,” said Maricle. “It’s a lot more work than you would expect, but luckily I have an assistant who is Austrian and spends at least 50% of her day helping me help German citizens.”

While the role is an unpaid role, being an honorary consul is a huge honor to Maricle.

“You do it because you want to do it. I do it because I want to give back,” said Maricle. “While in Germany, so many people took an interest in me and provided me with many great experiences and opportunities. I’m always willing to return the favor.”

As an honorary consul, Maricle gets to make connections and host other dignitaries – one of his favorite parts of the job.

“It’s really interesting because I’m involved in all of the international activity going on in the Denver area – and I am asked to speak on a regular basis on a variety of international topics.”

In his time, Maricle has had the pleasure of making a variety of important connections, including connecting the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra with the Bavarian Philharmonic as well as setting up meetings with German dignitaries and the governor of Colorado.

In addition to his consul work, Maricle is a partner at Castle Lantz Maricle, LLC, in Denver, Colorado. There he conducts corporate and real estate work with a client base of German and Austrian companies doing business in the Colorado area. According to Maricle, speaking German and a familiarity with how the German legal system works is a huge factor to his success.

“Connecting the German language with a law program was really a turning point because I figured out a way to use my law degree to be involved with Germans on a daily basis,” he said. “I travel to Germany twice per year and maintain a broad network of lawyers and friends there who help keep me in business – and that’s what makes practicing law really fun for me.”

When asked how to get where he is by young lawyers interested in international law, Maricle always starts by asking them how long they’ve lived in another country. If it’s only a semester, he says that’s not enough.



Paul Maricle in Brussels, Belgium. Photo submitted

“The reason you need all of this experience is because there are European students who speak three languages fluently and have studied in England, France, or Hong Kong, and they’re head and shoulders more qualified in foreign languages than most lawyers coming out of U.S. universities,” said Maricle. “Speaking a little bit isn’t going to cut it. You really have to speak it fluently. You have to be able to write a letter that’s grammatically correct. You have to understand the culture so you know how deals are done, and that all takes more than a semester abroad.”

Maricle said the German language didn’t come easy to him. However, if you fully immerse yourself and learn the language and culture, there’s an acceptance that happens.

“I’ve reached a stage of my career where I get to really enjoy what I’m doing,” Maricle said. “I enjoy the cultural part of it. Germans say and think about things in a different way than we do. The end point is the same, but the path is different. Understanding the differences is fascinating.”