

Nabisco Fellowship Award Enables Teacher to

Visit USSR

"Everyone in this country is always saying 'We've got to be as good as the Russians. We've got to be as good as the Russians.' So I've always wondered: Are the Russians really that great?"

The woman asking the question is Bobby Robinson, a social studies teacher at Carver High School.

This month, Robinson is getting the chance to witness firsthand what Russian life has to offer—thanks to a grant from RJR Nabisco, Inc.

Robinson is one of 15 teachers selected to participate in this year's RJR Nabisco Fellowship Program, which annually provides \$30,000 for teachers in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools to participate in professional development programs during the summer months. This is the 28th consecutive year the company has sponsored the program.

Robinson's trip to the Soviet Union, arranged through the Soviet-American Conference on Comparative Education, is something she has yearned to do since she read a book about the Russian revolution while in graduate school.

"I'm very excited," Robinson says. "I'll be going to several places. Moscow, of course. And I'll be going to Leningrad, and a province in Lithuania—a small city called Vilnius."

She'll also be spending a few days in Kishinev, the capital city of the Moldavian Republic in southwestern Russia.

During her 15 days in the Soviet Union, Robinson will study Soviet culture and education.

"I'm going to visit a collective farm and attend one of the Russian Ballets," she says. "One of the things they're really into is folk art, so I'll have two days to look at folk art and its influence on Russian culture."

She'll also get the chance to indulge one of her passions—visiting medieval castles.

"I'm really interested in that part, because in 1975 I had a Reynolds fellowship and I spent six weeks in Europe. Now I'm interested in seeing how the castles in the communist country compare to those I saw in Europe."

"I'm really into architecture," she notes. "I think architecture tells a lot about culture."

When she returns to school in the fall, Robinson intends to treat her students and colleagues to an old back-to-school theme—but with a new twist. This time it will be the teacher telling "How I Spent My Summer Vacation."

She should have a lot to tell.

"Another thing that we'll be doing that seems interesting is seeking an

exhibit of economic and scientific achievement—sort of like a Russian world's fair," she says. "That's in Moscow."

"The Russians like to parade their achievements, and I'm interested in seeing what they will consider their greatest achievement in science."

Robinson says she's thankful for the RJR Nabisco program. "It's an excellent fellowship," she says. "It's a tremendous opportunity for the teachers in Forsyth County. Reynolds has been very generous to us, and none of the other major school systems in North Carolina have anything like it."

She adds that the program benefits teachers and students alike. She cites an example from her 1975 fellowship in Europe.

"After the trip, I had slides to show my students of the places, and I could talk to them better because I had been there," she says.

"Students feel more in tune when you say, 'We're going to talk about



Bobby Robinson, a social studies teacher at Carver High School, is one of 15 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school teachers who are participating in special educational programs this summer thanks to a \$30,000 annual fellowship awarded to the school system by RJR Nabisco, Inc. Robinson's share of the fellowship money is taking her to the Soviet Union to study Russian art, architecture and culture.

Rome, but let me show you what Rome was like in '75," she adds. "I still use those slides. Then we look at the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. It's must more rewarding for the kids, because the minute you tell them you've been somewhere, it immediately sparks their interest."

The other teachers selected to participate in this year's RJR Nabisco Fellowship Program are:

- Judith Briggs, a health occupations teacher at South Park High School, who will study special education topics through the International Comparative Education Program at the University of London.
- Alice Dodson, a choral music teacher at Parkland High School, who will research choral music techniques of Africa and the Near- and Far East at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Vienna, Austria.
- Evelyn Henighan, a business and computer science teacher at the Career Center, who will take computer operator and user training sponsored by Data General Corp. in Massachusetts.
- Gail Howell, an exploratory home economics teacher at Wiley Middle School, who will study home economics education programs of urban and outback Australia.
- Jim Knight, a third-grade teacher of academically gifted students at Jefferson Elementary School, who will participate in an underwater research expedition in the British Virgin Islands. Knight will study marine ecosystems and oceanography to develop materials for elementary science instruction.
- Wesley Leiphart, a German and math teacher at Parkland High School, who will study German at the University of Salzburg while living with an Austrian family.
- Helen Lowry, an English teacher at East Forsyth High School, who will study British and American writers and fiction of women (1180-1930) at Cambridge University in Great Britain.
- Jackie Pierce, a kindergarten through 12th-grade teacher of visually impaired students, who will attend Appalachian State University to study methodology for teaching visually handicapped students who are multi-handicapped.
- Valderia Raynor, a teacher of educable mentally handicapped (EMH) students at Kernersville Elementary School, who will attend Appalachian State University to study methodology and curriculum for teaching EMH.
- Charlie Rowe, a German and Spanish teacher at Carver High School, who will study German language and culture at the Goethe Institute German Center in Deusseldorf and will live with German families in West Berlin and Muenster.
- Renee Schmidly, an English teacher at Carver High School, who will conduct a self-designed study of literature and history in Great Britain to develop language arts materials.
- Nancy Sherrill, a seventh-grade language arts/social studies teacher at

Ashley Middle School, who will travel with the Friendship Force to Nairobi, Kenya, to increase her understanding, knowledge and materials about African society and culture.

• Ursula Stephens, a reading coordinator at Old Town Elementary School, who will participate in the Teaching Reading Through Learning Styles Conference in San Francisco and develop social studies enrichment materials on regions, geography and cultural diversity.

• Carol Vogler, a social studies teacher at Parkland High School, who will study anthropology, archaeology, religion and art in Jordan, Syria, Israel and Turkey through Drew University.

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