

As seen in *Fine Woodworking*

Notes & Comments

It's not just a class: it's an adventure.

Imagine being in the governor's mansion at six in the morning, practicing the finishing and restoration skills you learned in class when a hulking, shirtless Jesse "The Governor" Ventura walks past you. Instructor Mitch Kohanek and his students were stunned; "That guy is really big!"

The wood-finishing program at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount, Minn., offers students a chance to gain real-life experience refurbishing historic furniture. Kohanek believes that "working on a 200-year-old piece of furniture is a great confidence-builder" that will give students the hands-on experience needed to be successful after graduation. Besides the governor's mansions, Kohanek's students have honed their skills at Minneapolis' Supreme Court and the Basilica, St. Paul Cathedral, and the Glenshein mansion in Duluth. Class size is between 12 and 16 students that vary in age from 18 to retirees.



Take the bench.
Student Joseph Amaral spends his class time repairing the woodwork at the Supreme Court in Minneapolis.

The class begins every August and runs five days a week, five to six hours a day.

The program has been ongoing for 25 years, with Kohanek at the helm for 20 of them. Kohanek, who did his internship in furniture restoration at the Smithsonian

Institution, runs a tight ship. Asked if all of his students pass, he responded, "No. I give them all the information they need, and then it's up to them." But his teaching style seems to work. For the last three years the program's job-placement rate has been 100%. Many of the alumni have started successful businesses.

The tuition for this one-year, 36-credit program is \$2,700 for state residents and \$5,130 for out-of-state students. For more information, call (877) 937-3282 or visit the college's web site at www.dctc.mnscu.edu.

— *Chris Baumann, editorial assistant at Fine Woodworking*

Comment

We welcome news stories, anecdotes about the triumphs and pitfalls of woodworking, photographs of unusual work - anything that you think other woodworkers would like to know about. We pay for the material we use. Send submissions to Notes Comment, Fine Woodworking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506.