Leila Nadya Sadat will address “An American Vision of Global Justice” in her September 7, 2004, installation as the Henry H. Oberschelp Professor of Law. Sadat is a leading authority on international and comparative law, human rights law, and the International Criminal Court (ICC). A widely published expert on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals and their Vichy collaborators, she has written numerous articles on international and comparative law subjects, as well as The International Criminal Court and the Transformation of International Law.

The body of international criminal law built up since Nuremberg on war crimes and crimes against humanity can now be applied to terrorists, she notes. A strong supporter of the ICC, which she believes is both morally desirable and pragmatic, she has been active in trying to turn around the federal government’s opposition to the court.

Sadat serves as vice president of the International Law Association and the International Association of Criminal Law. She was recently invited to participate in an International Bar Association project to train Iraqi lawyers, judges, and prosecutors in human rights. Congress previously appointed her to serve on the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom; Sadat and other commissioners met with President George W. Bush in fall 2003 to present their report.

Sadat believes that law school should equip students to handle issues that spill over national borders. International law is not just of growing importance, she says, but intellectually challenging: “You have all the same issues as in domestic cases, with multiple dimensions of complexity.”

As faculty adviser to the Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Team, she helps students hone their skills for this worldwide competition. She is also working to establish a Summer Institute for Global Justice, a joint project with Case Western Reserve Law School to send students to the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, for the summer of 2005.

When I went to law school, people were so skeptical about international law that I was strongly advised not to study it," Sadat recalls. "It’s so wonderful to be teaching in an era where these programs are appreciated."

Sadat’s new chair is named in memory of Oberschelp, AB 1896, LLB 1898, who was a prominent St. Louis attorney. A bequest from his daughter, Vera Oberschelp Howes, AB ‘24, made this chair possible.
Frances Foster Becomes the Foote Professor

Frances H. Foster, a leading expert in trusts and estates and in the legal systems of socialist and former socialist countries, will be installed as the Edward T. Foote II Professor of Law on February 17, 2005.

As an undergraduate at Princeton University, Foster studied Russia, Cuba, and China. She then earned both her master’s degree in international relations and her law degree from Yale University in 1981. In 1987 she received her doctoral degree from Stanford University, where she wrote her dissertation on Soviet influences on pre-1949 Chinese law.

Now a member of the board of directors and executive committee of the American Society of Comparative Law and an associate member of the International Academy of Comparative Law, Foster is recognized as a pre-eminent comparative law scholar. She has written extensively on United States and Chinese inheritance reforms, and produced the first comprehensive Western analysis of China’s trust law. She also has written on freedom-of-the-press issues in post-Soviet Russia, China, and Hong Kong. In addition, she has examined approaches to the restitution of expropriated property in post-socialist countries and possible lessons for Cuba.

“Most comparative law scholars ‘render the foreign familiar,’ ” she says. “I do the opposite. I use another country’s system as a lens to re-examine our own.”

For instance, writing about Chinese inheritance law led her to question some long-held American assumptions. In cases where a person dies without making a will, the court divides up the property according to degrees of family proximity. But does such a cut-and-dried approach make sense in a society where the nontraditional family is on the rise? These rules often reward relatives who neglected the deceased and punish a caregiver who doesn’t happen to be as close a blood relative. Shouldn’t American courts have discretion to right such injustices, as Chinese courts traditionally have?

“I care deeply about the human impact of legal rules and doctrines,” Foster says.

In the classroom, she uses teaching materials that emphasize the human side. Her students also cannot simply refer to plaintiffs and defendants; they have to know the names and their places on the family tree. Far from a “musty” course in estate law, students find themselves reading celebrities’ wills and studying cases about eccentrics who left millions to their pets, families in long and bitter feuds, and lawyers so inept they botched their own wills.

The teaching she treasures most is supervising seminar research papers. She enjoys seeing students choose a topic that fascinates them, plunge into research, and learn how to craft a written argument. More than 20 of her students’ papers have been published in law reviews.

“T heir commitment is wonderful to see,” Foster says. “They continually surpass my highest expectations.”

New Chair Honors Former Dean

The new Edward T. Foote II Professorship is named in honor of Tad Foote, who served as the School of Law’s dean from 1973 to 1980.

After graduating from Georgetown University Law Center in 1966, Foote practiced law at Bryan Cave in St. Louis. In 1970 he became vice chancellor, general counsel, and secretary to Washington University’s Board of Trustees.

Then, as dean, he strengthened and increased the law faculty from 19 to 28 by recruiting both prominent, established scholars and promising young faculty members. Foote also expanded efforts to recruit talented students. Another hallmark of his tenure was the launching of the Clinical Education Program.

In 1980-81 Foote served as special adviser to Chancellor William Danforth and the Board of Trustees.

He then served as president of the University of Miami from 1981 to 2001, chancellor from 2001 to 2003, and now chancellor emeritus. He continues to serve on numerous civic and professional boards.

Edward “Tad” Foote