
Noting that some of the worst atrocities of the last 100 years have taken place in the last decade, former United States presidential candidate John B. Anderson, now president and chief executive officer of the World Federalist Association, endorsed the 1998 Rome treaty for establishing an international criminal court.

Erika Elizabeth Feller, director of the Department of International Protection of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, described the crucial work of the department in preventing and responding to refugee crises.

United Nations’ peacekeeping operations and the use of force were the focus of a panel discussion featuring Ruth Wedgwood, professor of law at Yale University and senior fellow for international organizations and law at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Thomas M. Franck, the Murry and Ida Becker Professor of Law at New York University and former president of the American Society of International Law.

Although unable to attend in person, Ambassador Aída González Martínez of Mexico, who chairs the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and Richard C. Hottelet, a veteran CBS foreign correspondent and one of the original “Murrow Boys,” submitted papers relating their experiences and observations. González Martínez outlined the problems of discrimination against women and the work the United Nations is doing to eliminate the problems, while Hottelet provided glimpses into some of the great crises in the history of the United Nations.

The colloquium was made possible by a gift from Steven Cash Nickerson, JD ’85, the president and chief executive officer of Mucho.com, and his wife, Evelyn Thomas Nickerson.
All the papers presented at the 2000 colloquium on human rights will be assembled and published by the Journal of Law and Policy, a student-run journal at the School of Law, this spring.

More than an Academic Endeavor

“The Institute is not merely an academic endeavor,” says Legomsky, the Institute director. “We want to contribute to the solutions of major world problems.”

That is welcome news to John Anderson and Richard Goldstone, two of the colloquium’s participants.

“Globalization is not simply an economic term,” Anderson says. “There are political and humanitarian dimensions as well. The Institute is a logical focal point for launching discussion and studies that throw out new ideas that will put a different cast on what globalization is about and that hopefully will radiate out and energize civil society to press governments to make the changes that have to be made.”

Noting that the United States used to be the leading proponent of international justice for victims of genocide and crimes against humanity, Goldstone calls the Institute a welcome response to a growing isolationist trend that has compromised national leadership in human rights. “If the principles of fairness and justice, for which the United States has always fought so hard, are to be universally applied, this country must reassert its leadership role,” he says.

Well-informed citizens, Goldstone continues, are required. “It is in that context that the establishment of this Institute is so important and timely.”

Legomsky explains that, by having “global” in the Institute’s name, he has in mind not only the growing body of international law, but also foreign and comparative law. And by having “legal studies” in the title, he means to include more than technical legal doctrine. “Law reform works best when lawyers join hands with their colleagues in other fields. The work of our new Institute will be not only international, but also highly interdisciplinary. The possibilities are endless.”

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Stephen Legomsky

Leading human rights experts from around the world joined the School of Law in celebrating the inauguration of the new Institute for Global Legal Studies.

Future Institute Themes

Annual international conferences on practical themes of contemporary importance will be one of the core activities of the Institute for Global Legal Studies.

The November 2001 conference will focus on the roles of constitutional courts in both emerging and established democracies. Stanley L. Paulson, the William Gardiner Hammond Professor of Law and professor of philosophy, and Lee Epstein, the Edward Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor of Political Science and professor of law, are organizing this conference.

Stephen Legomsky, director of the School of Law’s Institute for Global Legal Studies and the Charles F. Nagel Professor of International and Comparative Law, says the likely theme for the 2002 conference will be international antitrust law.