Launching the Institute for Global Legal Studies

On November 17–18, 2000, the Institute for Global Legal Studies officially opened its doors. Our inaugural event, open to the public, was a colloquium entitled "The United Nations and the Protection of Human Rights."

One would be hard pressed to find a more suitable inaugural topic. More than any other organization, the United Nations simultaneously embodies the dreams and the failures of the world’s collective efforts in pursuit of peace, prosperity, and justice. And perhaps more than any other subject, human rights law raises fundamental questions about the respective roles of the individual, the state, and the international community in shaping a rule-ordered world that protects and advances the dignity of the human spirit.

The opening keynote speaker was Judge Patricia Wald, formerly chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and now a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The title of her address was "The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia Comes of Age: New Law and Old Rights."

Judge Wald’s speech was followed by those of several other luminaries:

- Justice Richard Goldstone, now a member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, was the first chief prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. He spoke on "The Role of the United Nations in the Prosecution of International War Criminals."

- Dr. Francis Deng, formerly the Sudanese ambassador to the United States, is now the United Nations Secretary General’s special representative for internally displaced persons. His topic was "The Global Challenge of Internal Displacement."

- Ambassador Aída González Martínez of Mexico chairs the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established by the Women’s Convention. Her speech (delivered in her absence) was entitled "Human Rights of Women."

- Mr. John Anderson, formerly a member of the U.S. Congress and in 1980 an independent candidate for president of the United States, is now the president and chief executive officer of the World Federalist Association. He spoke on "Global Governments and Democratization."

Patricia M. Wald and M. Cherif Bassiouni
Mr. Richard C. Hottelet was a CBS foreign correspondent in Edward R. Murrow’s bureau and is a longtime expert on the United Nations. Mr. Hottelet’s paper (delivered in his absence), entitled “Ups and Downs in U.N. History,” provided historical vignettes on great moments and crises in the life of the United Nations.


Professor M. Cherif Bassiouni of DePaul University College of Law was nominated in 1999 for the Nobel Peace Prize. A distinguished diplomat, Professor Bassiouni is the father of the International Criminal Court, the former head of the U.N. fact-finding mission in Sarajevo, and director of the International Human Rights Law Institute at DePaul. His topic was “Appraising U.N. Justice-Related Fact-Finding Missions.”

Thomas M. Franck is the Murry and Ida Becker Professor of Law and director of the Center for International Studies at New York University School of Law. An eminent and prolific scholar and may be purchased for $10. For details on how to obtain it, please contact Ms. Teri Dent, administrative coordinator of the journal, at Washington University School of Law, One Brookings Drive, Campus Box 1120, St. Louis, MO 63130-4899 USA (telephone: 314-935-6498, fax: 314-935-6493, e-mail: dent@wulaw.wustl.edu).

The conference was also video webcast. You can see and hear any or all of the speakers by visiting the Institute Web site at http://law.wustl.edu/gls/index.html. (Click on “Grand Inaugural Colloquium” and then “View the Conference.”) You can also access all of the written papers from the same Web site. (Click on “View the conference papers.”)

The Institute is grateful to Steven Cash Nickerson, Class of 1985, chairman and chief executive officer of Team Mucho, Inc., and to Evelyn Thomas Nickerson. Their generous gift made the conference and book possible.

More than any other organization, the United Nations simultaneously embodies the dreams and the failures of the world’s collective efforts in pursuit of peace, prosperity, and justice. And perhaps more than any other subject, human rights law raises fundamental questions about the respective roles of the individual, the state, and the international community in shaping a rule-ordered world that protects and advances the dignity of the human spirit.