Law in Japan
Conference Pays Tribute to Scholarship of Professor Haley

Professor John Owen Haley’s more than four decades of pioneering work in the fields of Japanese law and comparative law was the inspiration for a two-day conference hosted by Washington University Law School’s Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute in May 2008. “Law in Japan: A Celebration of the Work of John Owen Haley” brought together leading scholars who presented both on Haley’s groundbreaking contributions and on various current aspects of Japanese law.

As part of the conference celebration, Kent Syverud, dean and the Ethan A.H. Shepley University Professor, announced that Haley, then the Wiley B. Rutledge Professor of Law, was named the William R. Orthwein Distinguished Professor of Law. Haley is widely credited with having popularized Japanese legal studies in the American academy. A former director of the Harris Institute, Haley’s earlier career path included private practice in Japan. He also taught at the University of Washington for more than a quarter century, having served as associate dean of its law school, director of the Asian Law Program, and director of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

Haley’s many scholarly works span issues ranging from international trade policy and comparative law to Japanese land use law, Japanese and East Asian business transactions, and Japanese law and contemporary society. A member of the American Law Institute, he is the author or editor of nine books or monographs. His current scholarship includes continued work on issues of restorative justice, as well as a book on the evolution of modes of law enforcement.

Highlights of the conference included welcoming remarks by Dean Syverud; opening remarks by Leila Nadya Sadat, the Henry H. Oberschelp Professor of Law and Harris Institute director; a luncheon tribute by J. Mark Ramseyer (Harvard) on “John Haley and the Growth of Japanese Law as a Scholarly Field in the United States”; and four panel presentations by leading scholars in the field, such as honorary co-chairs Ramseyer, Curtis Milhaupt (Columbia), and Mark D. West (University of Michigan).

Paper topics ranged from Japanese regulation of blowfish to the changing role of lawyers in business, corporate regulation, and governance; and from restrictions on political activism of Japanese judges to the complex problem of medical malpractice in Japan. Many papers also paid tribute to the contributions of Haley to the study of Japanese law in the United States. The papers will be published in an upcoming issue of the Global Studies Law Review.

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Judge Hisashi Owada, International Court of Justice in The Hague, delivered the conference’s keynote address at a dinner reception, where Syverud, Sadat, and Nuremberg prosecutor and philanthropist Whitney R. Harris also spoke. Judge Owada discussed “The Rule of Law in a Globalizing World,” including his observations on the transition from a process-focused approach to law centered on the state to an end-oriented approach that focuses on individuals and human rights protections across international borders.