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Prologue

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PROLOGUE

CLAUDIO GROSSMAN*

It is with great pleasure that I write the prologue for this special issue of the *American University International Law Review*, which features the winning papers of the 2009 Human Rights Essay Award, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (“Academy”) of the Washington College of Law (WCL).

The Academy created the annual Human Rights Essay Award in 2003, in the spirit of encouraging and promoting scholarly work in international human rights law. This initiative has been extremely well received, attracting first-rate essays year after year from lawyers around the world who possess extensive knowledge of, and experience in, international human rights law. Papers are solicited in English and Spanish, and awards are given to the best work in each language. Each award has its own Honor Jury, comprised of scholars with the highest credentials in international human rights law. Awardees receive a full scholarship to attend WCL’s Academy, including tuition, travel, and living expenses.

The themes for this year’s Human Rights Essay Award were “60 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Its Contemporary Normative Impact” (for English submissions), and “60 Years of the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man: Its Contemporary Normative Impact” (for Spanish submissions). These timely topics elicited 36 submissions from individuals representing 20 different countries. On behalf of WCL, I would like to thank and commend all of the participants for their tremendous effort and commitment to this important scholarly initiative.

The winner of the 2009 Award in English is Uché Ewelukwa Ofodile of Nigeria, for her article on *The Universal Declaration of*

* Dean, American University Washington College of Law, and Raymond Geraldson Scholar for International and Humanitarian Law.

*Human Rights and the African Child Today: Progress or Problems?*¹

Ms. Ofodile is an Associate Professor at the University of Arkansas School of Law, where she teaches courses in International Human Rights Law, Terrorism, National Security and Human Rights, Intellectual Property Law, International Trade Law, and International Business Transactions.

Honorable mentions in the English category were awarded to Adrienne Anderson of New Zealand for her paper, *On Dignity and Whether the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Remains a Place of Refuge After 60 Years*,² and Kathleen Renée Cronin-Furman of the United States for her paper on *60 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Towards an Individual Responsibility to Protect*.³

The winner of the 2009 Award in Spanish is Julio José Rojas Báez of the Dominican Republic, for his article on *El Establecimiento de la Responsabilidad Internacional del Estado por Violación a Normas Contenidas en la Declaración Americana de los Derechos y Deberes del Hombre*.⁴ Mr. Rojas Báez received his LL.M. degree from WCL and is currently studying to earn his Máster en Derecho de la Administración del Estado from the Universidad de Salamanca in the Dominican Republic.

Honorable mentions in the Spanish category were awarded to Zamir Andrés Fajardo Morales of Colombia, for his paper on *La Plena Vigencia de la Declaración Americana de los Derechos y Deberes del Hombre: Una Utopía por Construir*,⁵ and to José Antonio Arcila Cano of Colombia, for his article on *La Declaración Americana y Los Derechos de los Familiares de la Víctima*.⁶

Our institution congratulates these individuals for their superb articles and appreciates all of the submissions to the Academy's 2009 Human Rights Essay Award Competition. I would like to extend our community's gratitude to my fellow Honor Jury Members: Catalina Botero, Andrew Clapham, Felipe González, Hina Jilani, Frank La

¹ 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 37 (2009).

² 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 115 (2009).

³ 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 175 (2009).

⁴ 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 7 (2009).

⁵ 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 77 (2009).

⁶ 25 AM. U. INT'L L. REV 145 (2009).

Rue, Claudia Martin, Cecilia Medina, Manfred Nowak, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, Hélène Ruiz Fabri, and Fran Viljoen.

The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law was created to help address the need for specialized legal training in international human rights law. A natural outgrowth of WCL's longstanding commitment to human rights and humanitarian law, the Academy enables participants to acquire specialized knowledge on vital issues in international law, thereby enhancing and expanding their understanding of the practical significance of human rights rules and mechanisms. Promotion and advancement of human rights require a community of professionals who are equipped with extensive knowledge and experience with which to better address the pressing needs of human beings in the international community.

The Academy's Specialized Human Rights Program takes place in Washington, D.C. each summer, and features an impressive group of distinguished scholars and practitioners. The Academy's engaging course offerings cover numerous topics such as: women and international human rights law; impunity and international justice; economic, social and cultural rights; litigation and activism; regional approaches to human rights law; the implementation of human rights in domestic law; and many more.

The Academy's Program offers numerous panel discussions and debates to further enrich the participants' experiences. In 2009, panel topics included "A Retrospective Look at the Work of the Commission," "Freedom of Expression: A Key Issue on the Commission's Agenda," and "A Look at the Future of the Commission: How will it Evolve?" The Academy also arranges visits to international institutions in the metropolitan area such as The World Bank and the International Trade Center.

The Academy's unwavering commitment to strengthening human rights around the world is shared by numerous programs and initiatives at WCL. These include, for instance, the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Clinical Program, United Nations Committee against Torture Project, Office of Public Interest, War Crimes Research Office, Summer Law Program in the Hague, Impact Litigation Project, annual trilingual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition, and the Israeli Civil Rights Program, among many others, together with numerous student-run

publications, organizations, and internships and externships in human rights.

All of these efforts reflect our community's unyielding commitment to the notion that the rule of law plays a significant role in promoting and strengthening the values of human dignity. We believe that law schools can foster and inspire this dedication in future generations of lawyers. WCL will continue to fulfill our commitment to human rights through ingenuity, dedication, creativity and collaboration with countries, institutions, and programs around the globe. The *American University International Law Review*, which consistently provides meaningful contributions to international human rights law scholarship in both English and Spanish, continues to advance this vital objective.