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CENTER NEWS

In addition to its usual activities, the Center and WCL have recently hosted a plethora of conferences, lectures, and panel discussions.

In March, the LL.M. Board at WCL hosted guest lecturer, Jamal Benomar, Chief of the Advisory Services, Technical Assistance and Information Branch of the UN Centre for Human Rights. The subject of this luncheon presentation was **United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights**. Mr. Benomar spoke particularly on the tremendous growth over the years of the Centre's role in providing countries with technical assistance and training in human rights standards.

The WCL International Legal Studies Program, Human Rights Watch Asia, and the Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights sponsored a conference in March entitled **Hong Kong: Preserving Human Rights and the Rule of Law**. Distinguished representatives of Hong Kong's legal community, legislature, media, and NGO community spoke, along with members of the Washington corporate, legal and policy-making communities about the upcoming reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. Panelists discussed current trends and upcoming changes to the democratic process in Hong Kong and its formerly independent judicial system. Students at the City University of Hong Kong took part via a live video hookup.

As part of its Founders' Day festivities, WCL sponsored a conference on **African Americans and the Law**. This day-long conference considered complex social issues such as immigration reform, education, affirmative action, voting rights, environmental discrimination, and welfare reform, their impact

on the African American community, and the contributions of that community to the legal profession.

Also in March, WCL's International Legal Studies Program and Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights jointly sponsored a program on **Islam and Justice: Debating the Future of Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa**. The panel discussion was based on the new report released by Lawyer's Committee, "Islam and Justice," which illuminates potential areas of common understanding between Islamists and others concerned with promoting international human rights standards in the Middle East and North Africa.

In April, WCL's Women and the International Law Program hosted a symposium entitled **Gender, Culture, and National Identity: The Impact of Immigration and Welfare "Reform" on Women in Immigrant Communities**. The panel examined how recent immigration and welfare "reform" and current discourse regarding citizenship, immigration, and national identity, affect women.

WCL's International Human Rights Clinic, the International Legal Studies Program, and the Federal Bar Association sponsored a discussion on **International Human Rights Under Attack**. Ambassador Daniel L. Spiegel, former U.S. Ambassador to the UN in Geneva spoke about the present state of human rights in the international arena and the problems generated by opposition groups.

Also in April, a half-day conference on **People, Profit and Pachyderms: The Role and Responsibility of Lawyers in Planning Investment Transactions** was sponsored by WCL's International Legal Studies Program and the Center for International Environmental Law. The conference focused on how lawyers can inte-



Jamal Benomar (center) with WCL LL.M student Raj Purohit (left) and Libby Cooper.

grate business, environmental, and human rights issues into the advice given to clients in planning investment transactions.

The Federal Bar Association and WCL sponsored an all day conference in April on **Immigration Reform & The New Immigration Legislation**. The program focused on the changes brought about by the new immigration law, and featured speakers from government agencies responsible for implementing it.

A panel discussion on **Asian Women, the Sex Industry, and International Remedies**, sponsored by the Asian-Pacific American Law Student's Association and the Women's Law Association, was held in April.

WCL's Mental Disability Rights International and Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law sponsored a symposium on **International Human Rights Advocacy for People With Mental Disabilities**. This presentation was organized to mark the U.S. release of "Human Rights & Mental Health: Hungary."

Also in April, the Center, in cooperation with the International Labor Organization (ILO), sponsored a meeting on **Human Rights and the Workplace**, with guest speaker Lee Swepston, Chief of the ILO's Equality & Human Rights Coordination Branch in Geneva. The panelists discussed current ILO concerns within the context of the role of worker's rights in developing the full protection of human rights. Experts from the U.S. Department of State and



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Department of Labor as well as the AFL-CIO and U.S. Council for International Business participated in the discussion following the presentation.

War Crimes Tribunal Research Office

In February, Kitty Felde of *Monitor Radio* spoke at a luncheon sponsored by the War Crimes Research Office and the Coalition for International Justice at the ABA. Ms. Felde, who spent a year at the Hague covering the first trial of the ICTY against the accused war criminal Dušan Tadić, discussed her views on why the international media has largely ignored the most important international legal proceedings since the Nuremberg Trials.

Team Represents WCL at European Moot Court Competition

For the fourth consecutive year, WCL was the only U.S. law school to compete in the René Cassin Human Rights Moot Court Competition. Delegations from 51 law schools in 20 nations sent teams to the competition, held each

year in Strasbourg, France. WCL students Maria Louisa Kalorides and Christian O'Connell competed, with LL.M. student Sylvain Vité serving as the team's legal and linguistic advisor and LL.M. alumna Claudia Martin, attorney from the Center's Inter-American Human Rights Digest Project, serving as coach. The team earned 7th-place honors in the overall standings, eclipsing all fourteen French delegations to achieve the best finish by an American team in the competition's history.

Named after the French recipient of the 1968 Nobel Peace Prize, the *Concours René Cassin* was created in 1984 and is the largest moot court competition in which competitors' pleadings and oral arguments are entirely in French. The focus of the competition is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This year's competition centered around a complex hypothetical case involving, *inter alia*, issues of environmental pollution, government-sponsored terrorism, fair trials and suffrage rights. Competitors were evaluated on the form and content of



Photo courtesy of Maria Louisa Kalorides

WCL was represented at the *Concours René Cassin* by Maria Louisa Kalorides (right center) and Christian O'Connell (right). They were assisted by Sylvain Vité (left), who served as legal and linguistic advisor, and the Center's Claudia Martin, who served as coach.

the written memorial, rhetorical quality of the pleadings, knowledge of the Convention and its case-law, and the relevance and logic of legal argumentation. ☉

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Taiana, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The judges for the Preliminary and Semi-Final Rounds of the Competition included distinguished human rights practitioners and scholars. President Reina led the Honor Panel of Judges that also included Ambassador Carmen Moreno de Del Cueto, Mexican Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS); Ambassador Brian Dickson, Q.C., Permanent Mission of Canada; Ambassador John Donaldson, President, Inter-American

for Washington, D.C.; Judge Andrew Sonner, Maryland Court of Special Appeals; Ambassador Christopher Thomas, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS; Jose Miguel Vivanco, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch/Americas; and

Maria Elisa Gallo, and argued on behalf of Petitioners. La Plata was represented by Maria Isabel Ricciardi and Pablo Trevisan, and argued for the State. Tucuman won first place honors as well as Best Memorial. Calliari of Tucuman won Best Oralist.

The coordinators of the competition were pleased to see several people who participated last year return to D.C. this year as either competitors or coaches. They hope to see many of this year's participants again next year for the Third Annual Inter-American



Photo courtesy of Hilary Schwab

The Honor Panel of Judges during the Final Round of the Competition.

Commission of Human Rights (IACHR); WCL's Dean Claudio Grossman, Member, IACHR; WCL Professor Robert Goldman, Second Vice-President, IACHR; Ambassador Alicia Martinez Rios, Permanent Mission of Argentina; Ambassador Sonia Picado Sotela, Costa Rica; Judge Vanessa Ruiz, Court of Appeals

Professor Leo Zwaak, Netherlands Human Rights Institute.

The two teams that successfully navigated their way into the Final Round were Universidad Nacional de Tucuman and Universidad Nacional de La Plata, both of Argentina. Tucuman was represented by Aldo Federico Calliari and

Moot Court Competition. ☉

* For the full text of the 1996 hypothetical, see the *Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition* Internet site at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/pub/human-right/mcourt/mcourt.html>.