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DEDICATION TO VIRGINIA A. LEARY

The 2009-2010 staff proudly dedicates this volume of the *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review* to Virginia A. Leary, a former international scholar, human rights activist and University at Buffalo Law School Professor of Human Rights. Professor Leary died in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2009, and is remembered fondly by the University at Buffalo Law School faculty, alumni and her contemporaries in the human rights field.

A U.B. Distinguished Service Professor, Leary wrote the forward to the first volume of the *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, which at the time was called the *Buffalo Journal of International Law*, and offered her support for the journal at its inception. In that inaugural issue she remarked that students’ initiative created the journal, recognizing the increasing importance of the internationalization of law. It is in the same spirit that today BHRLR members aim to promote human rights discourse through the compilation of this volume.

Professor Leary’s career was that of a lawyer, professor, scholar and human rights activist. Her list of accomplishments and contributions to human rights missions and dialogues are vast. Leary received her B.A. from the University of Utah, a J.D. degree from the University of Chicago, a doctoral degree from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, and the diploma of The Hague Academy of International Law. While at the University at Buffalo she co-founded the U.B. Human Rights Center and helped raise the school’s awareness of human rights issues. After teaching law at University at Buffalo and the University of California-Hastings, she moved to Geneva, where she was a founding member of the International Council for Human Rights Policy and served on the Advisory Board of the Program for the Study of International Organizations at the University of Geneva’s Graduate Institute of International Studies. Leary engaged in missions on behalf of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists. She was also a consultant to the World Health Organization and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and served on the Board of Human Rights Watch Asia, Centre on Housing and Evictions, Human Rights Advocates and the International Labor Rights Forum. She was a former Vice-President of the American Society of International Law, a renowned organization that recently honored her memory with a round table discussion of her contributions to human rights and international law at their 104th Annual Meeting.

Professor Leary was ahead of her time in arguing for a rights-based approach to health care in the early 1990s. In her article “Defining the Right to Health Care,” which was published in the book, “A Human Rights
Approach to Health Care Reform,” she encouraged the reformation of the health care system and pointed out how we Americans in not having a right to health care stood alone among the industrialized nations of the world.

Leary believed that “some social policies should be adopted because they are morally right and cannot be solely judged on the basis of cost-benefit analysis, particularly those conducive to greater respect for the individual person.” She explained that a cost-containment approach to health care is based on a perception of very limited resources for the allocation of health care. Recognizing a right to health care focuses special attention on the needs of vulnerable groups (mainly the poor, minorities and children) and that it was feasible in America, Leary predicted that the persistent and pervasive criticisms of the present American health care system would lead to reforms and she advocated for an equity and individual entitlement approach to healthcare. It is unfortunate that Leary did not live long enough to see the passing of the health care reform bill in March 2010, which creates an entitlement to health care insurance.

The BHRLR acknowledges and appreciates the scholarship and activism of Leary, and others like her, who through their energy and efforts promote human rights.

Sinead Daly,
Co-Editor-in-Chief