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INTRODUCTION: THE ADOLESCENT YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

D. Christopher Decker
Editor-in-Chief

It has been about fifty years since the passage of the major human rights instruments. The venerable Louis Henkin entitled his authoritative book the *Age of Rights*, appropriately describing this era of growing and expanding rights. The concept of internationalizing rights in this period was new. Concepts of international human rights were in their infancy and needed time to grow and expand. The international community needed to learn about these rights, become acquainted with them, and embrace them. Similarly, governments needed to accept their existence and honor them.

Scholars and governments differed greatly in their approach to rights schemes. While the West cultivated civil and political rights, the East advanced economic and social rights. In a Solomonesque move, the human rights corpus was cut in two. Although this division did not kill the movement, it may have caused the corpus to develop much more slowly. The two views grew distinctly apart and at different rates. Most states gave rhetorical prominence to one set of rights over the other.

Scholars and practitioners of human rights are now focusing on what the next fifty years will bring the human rights movement now that it is passing from adolescence to adulthood. It is at this critical junction that I am pleased to present the *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, which is published by students of the University at Buffalo School of Law. The *Review* realizes that many areas of the world still suffer from violations of fundamental human rights and will continue to publish articles concerning those areas to draw attention to the plight of people living there. However, the *Review* seeks to further the rights discourse in areas of the human rights movement which are either under-represented or have received inadequate attention.

While the *Review* is not a new journal, its change in focus is symbolic of the sweeping changes occurring within the human rights program at the School of Law. There have been fundamental changes concerning the human rights program over the past two years at the School of Law and the *Review* is but one of them. The Human Rights Center has hosted numerous human rights scholars, practitioners, and government dignitaries; including the Honorable Abdullah Omar, Minister of Justice for the Republic of South Africa; Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for

Human Rights; Mark Gibney, Belk Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at the University of North Carolina-Asheville; Paul Magnarella, Professor of Anthropology, University of Florida, Legal Researcher for the International Criminal Tribunal Rwanda, and former Expert-on-Mission for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The Human Rights Center and the Baldy Center for Law and Policy hosted Adrien K. Wing, Professor of Law, University of Iowa; Thomas Farer, Dean of the Graduate School in International Relations, University of Denver; and Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, Constitutional Court of the Republic of South Africa to teach short courses as visiting scholars on human rights. The Human Rights Center has also focused on placing students with leading human rights institutions around the world. Students have interned in places as diverse as TOHAV (The Foundation for Social Jurisprudence Research), Istanbul, Turkey; The Human Rights and Peace Centre at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda; The International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, Switzerland; and the Bulawayo Legal Projects Centre, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The internship program has been incorporated into the new international law curriculum. This year, for the first time, the School of Law awarded certificates in the International Law Concentration. The Human Rights Center, the *Review*, and the internship program have become integral parts of the new human rights program. Through these vehicles, the School of Law is quickly becoming a leader in the area of human rights.

The *Review* would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. The guidance and assistance of our Faculty Advisors, Professor Makau Mutua and Professor Claude Welch, Jr. have been invaluable. I would also like to thank the members of our Editorial Advisory Board for assisting the *Review* in selecting the articles for this publication. Furthermore, the *Review* extends great thanks to Dean R. Nils Olsen, Jr., for his continuing and generous support of the *Review* and the human rights program in its entirety. In addition, this issue could not have been possible without the hard work of this year's Editorial Board. The dedication of this group of individuals was truly outstanding. The *Review* also owes special thanks to Dawn Fenneman whose assistance was invaluable. Lastly, I would like to thank Professor Philip Alston for writing the foreword and for his tireless work that has inspired many human rights students.

After three years of immersion in human rights, it my great pleasure to see this inaugural issue of the *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review* come to fruition.