10-1-1991

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Law School Receives Ford Foundation Grant

The UB Law School has received a $95,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to support the school's program in public international law.

The grant, which will be awarded over two years, provides research fellowships and summer internships for law students specializing in public international law, and funds student-initiated activities in the field. The grant also funds a U.S.-Canadian moot court competition for first-year students, and UB student participation in subsequent competitions.

UB was one of 24 law schools to receive grants, which were awarded on the recommendation of a group of distinguished legal scholars from a range of academic and professional backgrounds.

Public international law governs relations between governments and includes the United Nations charter and human rights laws.

"The Ford Foundation funding will provide a major impetus to our international law program and permit us to encourage students interested in the field," said Dean David B. Filvaroff.

Franklin A. Thomas, president of the Ford Foundation, noted that despite great interest in the subject, American law students receive relatively little exposure to public international law.

"These grants will attempt to address that lack by training students who can become future faculty in public international law," Thomas said. "They also will expose a larger cadre of interested students to the field, thus equipping them for the international dimensions of many legal careers."

The Ford Foundation has launched this major program to support teaching and scholarship in public international law in light of the increasing importance of the field, said Lucinda Finley, professor of law at UB and a project director for the UB grant.

The Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict, increasing international trade and the development of the European Economic Community all have stimulated interest in public international law, Finley explained.

In awarding the grant to the University at Buffalo School of Law, the Ford Foundation referred to the "substantial contributions made to the field of public international law by Professor Virginia A. Leary," as well as to the UB grant proposal's focus on support for women, minorities and first-year students.

Leary will serve with Finley as a project director of the UB grant.

Vice president of the American Society of International Law, Leary has authored numerous works on the international protection of human rights. A UB faculty member since 1976, she co-directs, with political science Professor Claude E. Welch, the university's interdisciplinary Human Rights Center. She currently is on sabbatical leave in Geneva, Switzerland, where she is a visiting fellow at the Graduate Institute of International Studies at the University of Geneva.

Finley, a noted scholar in the field of feminist legal studies, has been on the UB faculty since 1989. A graduate of Barnard College and Columbia University Law School, she was an associate professor of law at Yale University, a visiting lecturer at the University of Sydney in Australia and practiced privately with Shea and Gardner, a Washington, D.C., firm, before coming to UB.