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Law of the Jungle: More Than 150 U.S. Law Schools Now Have Courses in Animal Law. SUNY Buffalo Law School Was Among the First

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LAW *of the* JUNGLE



Endangered: Red Wolf

More than 150 U.S. law schools now have courses in animal law. SUNY Buffalo Law School was among the first

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The course was called “Animals (and the Law),” and in 1984 it was a brand-new field of study. Only at Harvard and at Buffalo, in the classroom of Professors **Elizabeth Mensch** and **Alan Freeman**, were students wrestling in a rigorous way with the legal and ethical issues of how human beings relate to their fellow creatures.

“We were both interested in some of the philosophical questions,” says Mensch, now retired. “It also came out of our experience in dealing with a really badly behaved dog, to whom we felt some obligation but couldn’t figure out why. One of the things that challenges ethical systems are the questions at the margins – they have a way of causing one to examine the fundamental nature of the ethical obligation.”

Those questions persist. Now viewed as an innovative and fast-growing field, animal law is taught at more than 150 U.S. law schools. And at SUNY Buffalo Law, the combination of faculty scholarship and the interests of students and staff members have made animals both wild and domestic an important part of the educational enterprise. Their work, ranging from wild life and ecosystems to animal protection, celebrates the unique bond – sometimes loving, sometimes fraught – we share with the animals.



SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Emerita Elizabeth Mensch was a pioneer in the field.

Endangered:
Golden Lion
Tamarin

