Law schools have long had the potential within their faculties to elevate the profession's understanding of immigration law and to attract students to a subject too-long dismissed as robotic and unimportant. With the publication of *Immigration: Process and Policy*, the tool to realize that potential is at hand.

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**Ask John Jackson**

*He has the answers on international trade law*

by George White

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Editor's note: the following article appeared in the Detroit Free Press business section earlier this year. It is reprinted in edited form with permission of the Free Press.

When the phone rings in John Jackson's campus office, there's always a chance the White House is calling.

Then, again, it might be the U.S. State Department, the Treasury Department, the Department of Commerce, or a United Nations agency.

Jackson gets a lot of calls from Washington and around the world because of his expertise on international trade law. He's been considered for White House trade posts by the Johnson, Nixon, and Carter administrations. But Jackson, a 53-year-old lawyer, prefers to teach international trade law at the University of Michigan Law School—a post he has held since 1966.

Jackson's interest in international trade law developed at the University of California at Berkeley in the early 1960s.

"I decided that I liked the idea of teaching when I was a student in law school (at the U-M)," said Jackson. "Teaching gives me a chance to pursue my intellectual curiosities—not just the problem-solving that a client would pay for. It's a way to contribute to knowledge and policy."

Jackson, a native of Kansas City, MO, has made contributions to both. One of his books—*World Trade and the Law of GATT*—is the world's most respected treatise on trade law, said Gary Holmes, a White House aide in the U.S. Trade Representative's office. "It's a prized possession in our...office," Holmes said. "They call it the bible of international trade law."

When a technical question arises at a GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade) gathering, the institution's members—delegates from the nations who observe and make international trade law—often seek answers in Jackson's book, said Michael Aho, another foreign trade expert.

Aho and Jackson advised the Senate Finance Committee on trade issues in November—for Jackson, the most recent of about a dozen Congressional appearances on legal trade issues. Aho, a senior economist at the New York City-based Council on Foreign Relations, said Jackson is renowned for his understanding of international trade law.

"John is one of a handful who have been most influential in studying and commenting on the international trading system," said Aho, a former legislative aide to New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley, one of the Senate's trade experts. "He could do well working in other forums—like government or GATT—he's very esteemed."

Jackson is on the steering committee of the council's International Trade Project, an effort designed to identify and examine the world's most important international trade issues. He is also analyzing past U.S. trade negotiations and future negotiating options. The project, financed with a Ford Foundation grant, is being directed by Robert Stern, a U-M economics professor.

"He (Jackson) has a profound understanding of the background and the heart of issues," Stern said. "He has a very incisive mind which enables him to articulate essential points verbally and in writing. He's always filled with
ideas. He's not bashful about making his views known.

Another Jackson passion is computers. He creates his own programs and has a computer in his office and one at his home.

Jackson has enhanced his knowledge of trade law and trade issues by taking leaves from the U-M to work elsewhere.

"My approach to legal scholarship is very empirical," he explained. "It's important to be involved to make direct observations. That's why I spent a little time working in business, in government, and for GATT."

As general counsel to the White House special representative for trade in 1973 and 1974, Jackson served the government during a tumultuous time. He left in June, two months before Nixon resigned.

"The experience was enormously beneficial," said Jackson, who describes himself as an independent-minded Democrat. "It contributed a great deal to my teaching, and I was able to develop contacts that I maintain today."

Such contacts help "ensure that my research and writing are in touch with reality," Jackson said. The experience was also frustrating, he said. The Nixon administration was trying to get a mandate from Congress to negotiate a new trade agreement with other nations. The mandate normally comes in the form of a bill that outlines the major trade problems Congress wants solved.

Congress was reluctant to give Nixon a mandate because the shadow of the Watergate scandal loomed, Jackson said. It was given to Nixon's successor, President Ford, who negotiated a multinational GATT agreement that lasted until 1980.

Negotiations for another GATT agreement are expected to begin later this year. The Reagan administration has urged a new round of negotiations. Its agenda: fight protectionism, strengthen the world trading system, and liberalize and expand trade in goods and services. The Reagan administration, however, has not asked Congress for a mandate, Jackson said.

"Reagan needs a mandate from Congress," Jackson said. "The president can negotiate anything, but Congress must implement any agreement. Foreigners don't like to negotiate with the U.S. without a Congressional mandate."

A new trade agreement is important to the Reagan administration because the nation has a trade deficit of about $150 billion—the highest in its history.

"The deficit means we are having trouble selling abroad," Jackson said, "and, that means a loss of jobs."

Among the U.S. products most affected by foreign competition are textiles, shoes, steel, machine tools, and two mainstays of the Michigan economy—agricultural products and automobiles.

Jackson generally opposes new protectionist measures in the United States because he believes they would block the entry of some cheaper foreign goods, and reduce the pressure on U.S. companies to become more competitive and efficient.

"Some auto executives have told me that they wouldn't have taken measures to become more efficient, if not for Japanese imports," said Jackson, who wants the government to try to knock down harmful trade barriers around the world through GATT negotiations.

Some trade barriers are hidden, Jackson said. For example, the French government requires all imported video cassette recorders to be handled at an understaffed office in a small French town—intentionally creating a bottleneck to slow the flow of imported VCRs into the French market. President Reagan also espouses a free trade philosophy, but

the administration has not always been consistent in practice, Jackson said. For example, the Reagan administration negotiated the voluntary restraint agreement that set limits on Japanese auto imports. The restraints expired in March, but the Japanese government unilaterally set new limits.

JACKSON has the following views on other trade-related subjects:

**On the Reagan administration's trade record:** "It's pretty good...but in some areas they've deviated from the (free trade) policy... Some industries are hurt by free trade. I think the government bears a responsibility to help the affected adjust. The administration hasn't realized the importance of this."

**On Japanese trade policy:** "The Japanese have several levels of trade barriers, but so does the U.S.... What the Japanese do goes on in other countries— including European nations.... If it were not for the (Japanese) trade surplus, people wouldn't be pointing the finger at Japan."

**On American use of economic sanctions against countries:** "It's very hard to make sanctions work unless you have international agreement and support.... The president feels that he must have some diplomatic tool.... We're stuck with that whether we like it or not."