Human Rights and Legal History honors Simpson

No one who knows Professor A.W. Brian Simpson can remain unaware of his keen good humor and encyclopedic knowledge. During his distinguished career, he has written lucidly on the results of his complex scholarship and taken his academic reflections into the arena of human rights activism. Simpson seldom has visited a place or an idea without leaving significant footprints.

In recognition of Simpson's long and distinguished career, Oxford University Press has published Human Rights and Legal History: Essays in Honor of Brian Simpson, edited by Katherine O'Donovan and Gerry R. Rubin. Among the 13 contributors are two who are well known to the Law School community: Affiliated Overseas Faculty member Christopher McCrudden, a professor of law and fellow of Lincoln College, University of Oxford; and Nuala Mole, director of the London-based AIRE Center for Advice on Individual Rights in Europe. McCrudden, Simpson's successor at Lincoln College, regularly teaches at the Law School; Mole, Simpson's professional colleague in his practice at Strasbourg and his student at Oxford 30 years ago, speaks here often and provides job postings for law students interested in human rights work.

Editors O'Donovan and Rubin begin their book introduction: "For those fortunate to be acquainted with Brian Simpson, there can be no disputing that he is a remarkable individual. The biographical outlines are, of course, sketched out in his entry in Who's Who. A child of the rectory in Yorkshire, he was educated at Oakham School, Rutland, and was called up for national service between 1950 and 1951. He then entered Queen's College, Oxford,
graduating with a first class degree in Jurisprudence in 1954. He followed this by becoming a junior research fellow at St. Edmund Hall (1954-5), and then Fellow and Tutor in Law at Lincoln College, where he taught across a range of law disciplines for 18 years.

Simpson, the Charles F and Edith J. Clyne Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School, is highly regarded by scholars as a keen mind and welcome colleague. He also is well-known and popular among students. Leaders of the Student Funded Fellowships program, which provides awards for students in summer jobs, honored his support of the program last year by naming the A.W.B. Simpson Award after him and making him the first recipient. The award honors "members of the Law School community who provide unparalleled support for our efforts." (See related story page 6.)

Simpson's groundbreaking scholarship covers more than three decades and has produced books like In the Highest Degree Odious: Detention Without Trial in Wartime Britain, Leading Cases in the Common Law, Legal Theory and Legal History; A History of the Land; Cannibalism and the Common Law; A Biographical Dictionary of the Common Law; and A History of the Common Law of Contract. His book on the Human Rights Convention is to be published this year.

McCrudden, writing in the chapter "A Common Law of Human Rights? Transnational Judicial Conversations on Constitutional Rights," opens with a bow to Simpson's "intellectual curiosity" as well as his "insights and friendship." McCrudden writes: "Brian Simpson's unquenchable and infectious intellectual curiosity has resulted in his pursuing as wide a range of scholarly interests as any other legal academic of his generation. Two of these interests are reflected in this article: the role of precedent, and the pursuit of human rights. It is offered as an inadequate 'thank you' for the insights and friendship he has given my family and me over the years."

Mole, Simpson's student-become-colleague, traces the development of a human rights consciousness and legal structure, connects the Gulf War-time detention of Iraqis with publication of Simpson's In the Highest Degree Odious: Detention Without Trial in Wartime Britain, and discusses Simpson's role as expert in detention and other issues.

"In Odious," she notes, "he was deeply critical of the arbitrary way in which administrative detention was used before and during the Second World War." She adds that during the 1990s Simpson contributed "expert advice" on detention sentence history to the European Commission on Human Rights and was "one of the first academic contributors to the now well-established journal, the European Human Rights Law Review, with a scholarly paper on the detention of Archbishop Makarios during the Cyprus troubles." She also takes note of his efforts to help Law School students work at the AIRE Center or to do research on human rights cases in which the center is involved.

And, she concludes, "In January 1999, at an age and stage in his career when many would have opted for the comforts of retirement, he cheerfully joined a team in Albania in the depths of winter and, enduring the conditions of some privation, gave up his time to assist the University of Tirana with a pilot academic course on the history, law, and practice of the European Convention on Human Rights. His familiarity with the history of their country and particularly the detailed provisions of the Kanun of Lek Dukagjini (the complex code that regulates blood feuds) impressed both students and faculty almost as much as his detailed knowledge of the genesis of the ECHR [European Commission on Human Rights]."

**New symposium recognizes Phoebe Ellsworth**

A California college has honored Kirkland and Ellis Professor of Law Phoebe Ellsworth's pioneering work in the field of psychology and law by naming a new symposium for her.

Ellsworth was one of four speakers for the first annual Phoebe Ellsworth Psychology and Justice Symposium, held in March at Mount Saint Mary's College. Ellsworth discussed "Aversive Racism in Juror Decision Making."

Another Law School faculty member, Thomas G. and Mabel Long Professor of Law Samuel R. Gross, also spoke at the symposium, addressing "Racial Profiling on American Highways." Other speakers included Christine Littleton of the UCLA Law School, discussing "Gender and the Legal System," and Tom Lyon, a law professor at the University of Southern California, who spoke on "Child Witnesses and the Truth."

"When Phoebe Ellsworth began applying social psychological research methods to the study of the U.S. legal system in the 1960s, she probably did not realize she was founding an entirely new field of research," symposium notes stated. "Her enormous contributions to both the psychological and legal communities have continued unabated ever since, earning her widely held and well deserved respect and admiration."

Ellsworth, who also holds an endowed professorship in the University of Michigan psychology department, holds degrees from Harvard and Stanford. She taught at Yale and Stanford before coming to the Law School in 1987. She is a member of the Russell Sage Foundation's board of trustees and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science.