

AALS Annual Meeting Workshop
A Search for Balance in the Whirlwind of Law School
Thursday, Jan. 5, 2006

2 p.m. Concurrent Session: Connection to Purpose
Stephanie M. Wildman (Santa Clara University School of Law)

The topic of this Concurrent Session, Connection to Purpose, naturally raises the question, “What purpose?”

In my experience of over 30 years as a legal educator in a number of different educational settings, I have seen many students who come to law school because they care about justice. For some, they ask, as they are graduating, “Where was the class about justice?” So from my current role as Director of the Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara University, the connection to purpose that is my focus, not surprisingly, is a commitment to social justice.

Connecting to Social Justice

Protecting democracy by combating inequality is the task of social justice lawyers. The practice of democracy mandates inclusion of the diverse populations of this nation into the social order. Social justice lawyers seek to give meaning to democratic ideals in the daily lives of individuals and communities that are marginalized, subordinated, and underrepresented. Social justice lawyering envisions the practice of law both on behalf of and alongside of subordinated peoples, with the efforts and achievements of members of the community a crucial aspect of the work. While lawyers are not the complete solution, lawyers remain a key ingredient needed in social justice work.

Leaders in legal education and the bar have been calling on law schools to make consciousness about social justice pervasive in law schools and accessible to all students, even those who might choose other career paths. As the gatekeepers for the profession, law schools play a critical role in educating students for social justice. Two groups of students attend law school: those who wish to pursue careers in public interest and social justice work and the rest of the student population, who need to understand that access to justice is the province of all lawyers. Legal education need not dissociate students from the aspiration for justice that motivated many of them to choose law as a profession.

This session will discuss ideas for helping first-year students stay connected to social justice. See description and reading for Social Justice Thursdays on the next two pages.

For more information beyond the first year, *see*:
Stephanie M. Wildman, *Democracy and Social Justice: Founding Centers for Social Justice in Law Schools*, 55 J. LEGAL EDUC. 252 (2005), also available at
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=831424.

Stephanie M. Wildman, *Instilling Purpose: Courses in Justice Need To Be a Part of Every Law Student's Legal Education*, California Law Business insert in S.F. Daily Journal, Feb. 5, 2001, Page 18, also available at
http://www.scu.edu/law/socialjustice/directors_page.html.

Fall Social Justice Thursday Reading List

Many students come to law school because they care about justice. Yet, many first-year students become dispirited, feeling that issues of public interest, social justice, and legal ethics get lost in a thicket of technical knowledge. Get re-inspired and remember why you came to law school by coming to "Social Justice Thursdays!"

This Center for Social Justice and Public Service discussion series enriches the first year curriculum by providing first-year law students with a forum in which to discuss public interest/ social justice issues of all kinds, alternative perspectives on legal education, and first year subject areas. All first-year students are encouraged to attend. The fall series will emphasize issues of race, ethnicity, and gender.

Introduction to Legal Education

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, *Foreword: Toward a Race-Conscious Pedagogy in Legal Education*, 4 S. CAL. REV. L. & WOMEN'S STUD. 33 (1994) and
Jerome McCristal Culp, *Autobiography and Legal Scholarship and Teaching: Finding the Me in the Legal Academy*, 77 VA. L. REV. 539 (1991).

Introduction to Legal Education (cont.'d)

Stephanie M. Wildman, *The Classroom Climate*, in LOOKING AT LAW SCHOOL (Stephen Gillers ed., 1997).

Criminal Law

Margaret E. Montoya, *Máscaras, Trenzas, y Greñas: Un/masking the Self While Un/braiding Latina Stories and Legal Discourse*, 15 CHICANO-LATINO L. REV. 1, 2-26, 17 HARV. WOMEN'S L. J. 185, 186-209 (1994).

Property/Contract Law

Patricia J. Williams, *Alchemical Notes: Reconstructing Ideas from Deconstructed Rights*, 22 HARV. C.R. C.L. L. REV. 401 (1987).

Civil Procedure/Constitutional Law

Robert S. Chang, *Toward an Asian American Legal Scholarship: Critical Race Theory, Post-Structuralism, and Narrative Space*, 81 CAL. L. REV. 1241, 1 ASIAN L.J. 1 (1994).

Torts William L.F. Felstiner, Richard L. Abel, Austin Sarat, *The Emergence and Transformation of Disputes: Naming, Blaming, Claiming . . .*, 15 LAW & SOC. REV. 631(1980-81).

Spring Social Justice Thursday Reading List

Many students come to law school because they care about justice. Yet, many first-year students become dispirited, feeling that issues of public interest, social justice, and legal ethics get lost in a thicket of technical knowledge. Get re-inspired and remember why you came to law school by coming to "Social Justice Thursdays!"

Patrick Schiltz, *On Being a Happy, Healthy, and Ethical Member of an Unhappy, Unhealthy, and Unethical Profession*, 52 VAND. L. REV. 871, 871-73, 881-920 (1999).

Thomas B. Stoddard, *Bleeding Heart: Reflections on Using the Law to Make Social Change*, 72 N.Y.U. L. REV. 967, 969-87, 990-91 (1997) and Nan D. Hunter, *Lawyering for Social Justice*, 72 N.Y.U. L. REV. 1009, 1011-13, 1017-22 (1997). Sumi Cho and Robert Westley, *Critical Race Coalitions: Key Movements That Performed the Theory*, 33 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 1377, 1377-80, 1388-99 (2000). William Quigley, *Reflections of Community Organizers: Lawyering for Empowerment of Community Organizations*, 21 OHIO N.U.L. REV. 455, 455-79 (1994). Julie A. Su, *Making the Invisible Visible: The Garment Industry's Dirty Laundry*, 1 J. GENDER RACE & JUST. 405, 405-17 (1998).