

Pepperdine Law Professor Jim Gash Receives International Lawyer of the Year Award



Jim Gash, professor of law at the School of Law, has been honored with the Warren M. Christopher International Lawyer of the Year Award by the International Law Section of the State Bar of California. The award is presented annually to a California lawyer for achievement in international law and will be presented at a reception during the State Bar's annual meeting in San Jose, California, in October 2013.

"I'm just a law professor who became involved in a project that got really big unintentionally," says Gash. "I'm honored and humbled to be recognized by my peers as doing something

valuable. It's interesting that, if you're willing to show up and advocate for change and develop relationships necessary to allow people to trust you to implement change, you can have an impact."

The award comes on the heels of Gash's 11th trip to Uganda, when, in June, he oversaw a pilot program in an adult prison of a criminal justice reform structure he and his team designed and implemented in early 2012 in the juvenile realm. In a prior trip this year, Gash argued an appeal in an effort to overturn a murder conviction and clear the record of a young man he met three years ago.

Gash first traveled to Uganda in January of 2010, when he, along with former Global Justice Program director Jay Milbrandt (MBA '07, JD '08) and two School of Law alumni, journeyed to prepare juvenile cases ahead of trial. There, at a juvenile remand home, Uganda's version of a pretrial prison in Masindi, Gash met Henry, one of the juveniles being charged with two crimes, one of which involved the death of another juvenile at the remand home.

Henry's trial attorney represented both him and an adult also accused in the case and failed to present a defense on Henry's behalf. On appeal—the first ever argued by an American—Gash contended that the attorney's conflict of interest invalidated the conviction. The judgment is expected to be announced soon. If unfavorable, Gash vows to appeal to the Supreme Court of Uganda.

We take new attorneys each time we go to Uganda and give them an opportunity to get their hands dirty working with Ugandan lawyers and law students and American law students, giving prisoners an opportunity to have their cases heard," Gash explains. "We hope it might inspire a larger effort to get more groups of attorneys to go to Uganda and multiply the effect of what we're trying to do."

Warren M. Christopher had a long and distinguished career both as a lawyer and statesman. Among his many accomplishments as the 63rd Secretary of State, Christopher brokered the Bosnian Peace Agreement during President Bill Clinton's first term in office. For many years, he was a senior partner at the law firm of O'Melveny & Myers LLP in the firm's Century City office.

The award commemorates Christopher's lifelong commitment to the furtherance of international law and democracy around the world.