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Conference: The Social Practice of Human Rights

2013

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Oct 3rd, 12:00 AM - Oct 5th, 12:00 AM

## Conference Brochure

University of Dayton

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BE PART OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT'S

# NEW FRONTIER

## THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

*Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy*

An international conference for human rights scholars and practitioners to bring about greater self-reflection and constructive critique within the human rights movement.

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON  
OCTOBER 3-5, 2013



The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy aims to bring about greater self-reflection and constructive critique within the human rights movement.

## WHY MUST WE EXPLORE THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

In the 65 years since the U.N.'s Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the human rights community has become a standard-bearer of normative behavior, influencing development and humanitarian organizations, multinational corporations and philanthropists. Though the movement is viewed as honorable and admirable, the certainty of its mission can inhibit introspection; a natural tendency is to prioritize rather than challenge prevailing assumptions.

## ARE THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES ENOUGH?

Research and dialogue can help propel the human rights community forward by facilitating introspection to improve both advocacy and action:

- Facilitating an exchange of ideas
- Encouraging analysis of methods
- Connecting research to practice
- Building collaborative relationships

## THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON: A LEADER IN HUMAN RIGHTS



The University of Dayton Human Rights Program has been a center of programming, education and dialogue on human rights for more than 20 years. The University is now expanding its work in applied research focused on advocacy, structural causes of human rights violations, and transformative solutions.

The University of Dayton, a top-tier Catholic research university, brings together human rights scholars and advocates for productive, thoughtful and compelling conversations on critical issues. These conversations have led to action — action that makes a tangible difference to the vulnerable and exploited: children, women, migrants, refugees and trafficked persons.

This conference is the academic component of a campuswide initiative on human rights and the arts.



# COME AND MEET THE DIFFERENCE MAKERS.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESSES



### **JUAN MÉNDEZ**

*U.N. special rapporteur on torture; formerly of Human Rights Watch and the International Center for Transitional Justice*

A native of Argentina, Juan Méndez came of age during a time of great upheaval in Latin America. Arrested, tortured and exiled because of his legal and advocacy work on behalf of political prisoners, he dedicated his life to protecting human rights. He and a colleague at ICTJ received a 2009 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship in recognition of work bringing about transition from conflict to reconciliation in more than 30 countries. He is the author of *Taking a Stand: The Evolution of Human Rights* (with Marjory Wentworth; Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Méndez has been a special adviser to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; a co-chair of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute; president of the International Center for Transitional Justice; and a scholar-in-

residence at the Ford Foundation. From 2004 to 2007, he was U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. In 2000, the University of Dayton presented him with the first Archbishop Oscar Romero Human Rights Award.



### **ALEX DE WAAL**

*Executive director of the World Peace Foundation; research professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University*

From 2009 to 2011, Dr. de Waal was senior adviser to the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan. He was also program director at the Social Science Research Council, with responsibilities for research programs on humanitarian issues, HIV/AIDS and social transformation. His academic research has focused on issues of famine, conflict and human rights in Africa.

## PARTICIPATING EXPERTS



**Jo Becker**  
children's rights advocacy director, Human Rights Watch



**Alison Brysk Mellichamp**  
Professor of Global Governance, University of California, Santa Barbara



**Larry Cox**  
former executive director of Amnesty International USA



**Sam Gregory**  
program director, WITNESS



**“Now is the time to focus on how human rights advocacy is simultaneously benefiting from and drawing on new opportunities driven by technology and the Internet, and being challenged by them ... from greater participation in documentation and organizing and greater volumes of human rights documentation to new ways of engaging traditional audiences of policymakers and the media. Bringing practitioners and advocates together to analyze, reflect and move forward is a key part of the learning that’s needed right now.”**

— Sam Gregory, *WITNESS*

## HOW CAN CRITICAL THINKING IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE?

The social practice of human rights is a translation of abstract moral values into concrete action — the work of human rights advocates and NGOs. At the conference, leading thinkers and actors in human rights will consider questions such as:

- What issues constitute human rights issues? Who decides, and on what basis?
- What criteria should be applied to validate new rights claims?
- How has human rights engagement been redefined?
- What determines best practices in advocacy?
- What calculations are involved in selecting targets and venues?
- How do organizational structures and resources impact strategy?
- How can advocates avoid unintended consequences?
- What standards of accountability apply to human rights actors?
- How do NGOs address systemic causes of violations and confront future challenges?
- What is the relationship between human rights, humanitarianism, development and environmentalism?
- Can activists employ social media to foster solidarity?
- What is the place of art, music and language in affecting and transmitting human rights ideas?
- What ethical demands and principles of conduct govern human rights organizations?

Conference proceedings will be documented and shared.

## REGISTER TODAY

Meet others in the movement. Hear the stories from the front lines of human rights. Contribute to the dialogue. Team up. Make a difference.

**Cost:** Registration for the weekend is \$200 and includes meals. Discounts will be available to emerging scholars and graduate students. A range of lodging options is available. For full details and more information, please visit our website.

Conference participants are invited to attend an on-campus concert featuring the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, which will perform two symphonies inspired by human rights themes on Thursday evening, Oct. 3. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased via online registration.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Email Joel R. Pruce:** [humanrights@udayton.edu](mailto:humanrights@udayton.edu)

**Web:** [go.udayton.edu/humanrightsconference](http://go.udayton.edu/humanrightsconference)

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**“This conference is an exciting opportunity to look at the practical lessons gleaned from the human rights movement and how both scholars and advocates can be more effective in advancing human rights.”**

— **Jo Becker**, children’s rights advocacy director, Human Rights Watch; author of *Campaigning for Justice: Human Rights Advocacy in Practice*