

**Conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws
On
Professor Judith Resnik
Tuesday 3 July 2018 – UCL Laws Graduation Ceremony**

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| <p>President and Provost, I beg leave to present to you Professor Judith Resnik for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Laws, <i>honoris causa</i>.</p> |
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It gives me particular pleasure to deliver this oration, since our Honorary Graduand today is a scholar for whom I have the deepest possible professional respect and considerable personal affection.

Professor Judith Resnik is the Arthur Liman Professor of Law at Yale Law School. She is an academic and legal practitioner of outstanding productivity and distinction, whose interests range very widely across constitutionalism, the impact of democracy on government services, court procedure and adjudication, prisons, gender, citizenship and access to justice. Despite the breadth of her interests, the unifying and motivating objective of her teaching, research and litigation work is her profound commitment to equality and social justice. The arc of her career and her unrivalled achievements reflect the scale of her interests, but also her ability to integrate her focus on civil rights, courts and democracy and equal treatment through all three aspects of her professional life.

At the earliest stage of her career Professor Resnik demonstrated her desire to combine practical working in the justice system with academic life. After graduating from Bryn Mawr College in 1972 and from New York University Law School in 1975, Professor Resnik taught law for a year at NYU and clerked for a judge in a District Court in New York – experiencing the realities of court procedure and adjudication from the judicial side of the bench. She then moved to a clinical lectureship at Yale Law School where she worked from 1976-1980. She taught criminal justice and supervised law students representing inmates at a federal prison who had no other legal representation. In 1980 she moved to the University of Southern California Law School, where, over the next 17 years, she built an international reputation as a leading scholar of justice system procedure, large-scale litigation, the federal courts, and gender.

In 1997 she returned to Yale as the first Arthur Liman Professor of Law, Directing the Liman Center for Public Interest Law dedicated to serving the needs of people and causes that might otherwise go unrepresented. With very modest assistance Professor Resnik has built an internationally famous and unique programme encompassing a wide range of projects that enable students to work with scholars, lawyers, and judges on advancing access to justice within the US civil and criminal justice systems. One practical example of the work of the Liman Programme was a campaign to support a right to disposable nappies for low income families in order to

keep children healthy. The Liman Programme also organizes Annual Access to Justice Seminars and colloquia on public interest topics.

Some years ago I had the honour of contributing to one of the Annual Liman Seminars and was struck not only by the deep respect that Judith's colleagues and students have for her, but also the universal wonder at her energy, dynamism and extraordinary ability to get things done.

As a scholar Professor Resnik has had global influence on the legal academy, transforming thinking and prompting vigorous debate. Many of her most influential works focus on the relationship between democracy, courts and adjudication. I, for one, had devoured her writing for many years before I had the delight of meeting Judith. One of her most extraordinary scholarly achievements is the book ***Representing Justice: Invention, Controversy, and Rights in City-States and Democratic Courtrooms***, which she co-authored with her husband, Yale Law Emeritus Professor Denny Curtis (who I am delighted is with us today). One of the central arguments of the book is that the establishment of public courts and adjudication - with independent judges, obligations to be publicly accessible, and availability to women and men of all backgrounds and colour - is a relatively modern invention, the product of egalitarian social movements. A central theme of the book, and one that Judith has developed in subsequent writing, is that many of the features of courts that we value are under threat – through privatisation of justice, limitation on access, and, most recently, through the move to digitised and online courts where physical congregation before a judge in public becomes the exception rather the rule and the right.

The exposition of the thesis is accomplished via an analysis of the way that the art and iconography of justice reflects the impact of democracy on courts. The scope of the book is breath-taking. The combination of haunting and often visceral imagery with powerful analysis makes the book both a joy to read and an inspiration. We held a wonderful seminar to celebrate the launch of the book in 2011 at UCL with Baroness Hale. The outstanding critical and scholarly success and impact of the book is reflected in the profiles of Judith that have appeared in the international media, the prizes awarded to the book and invitations to give presentations around the world. The book was chosen by the Guardian as one of the best “legal reads” of 2011, and it received many awards, including two Awards for Excellence given by the Association of American Publishers, Outstanding Academic Title by Choice Magazine, and the Scribes 2012 Book Award given by The American Society of Legal Writers.

Despite the plaudits for her scholarship, Professor Resnik is no ivory tower academic. When recently asked by an interviewer writing a profile of her to define the governing philosophy of her career, her concise and strikingly powerful answer

was ‘to be as useful as possible.’ She feels strongly the need in her activities to integrate theory with practice in efforts to advocate for social justice.

An eloquent and persuasive orator, Professor Resnik has testified before judicial committees and Congress, dealing with issues ranging from the nomination of Supreme Court Justices to federal procedural rules and women prisoners’ access to minimum-security facilities.

Professor Resnik is also an occasional litigator. Maintaining her membership of the Bar throughout her career, she is prepared, when asked, to take on cases that resonate with her scholarly preoccupations and principles. An example is a Californian case concerning the exclusion of women from Rotary Club membership. She successfully argued the case before the US Supreme Court which unanimously held that the Rotary Club was not permitted to discriminate against women. When I questioned her about her willingness to undertake occasional litigation (given the many demands on her time) Professor Resnik answered firmly that she believes ‘it is important to inhabit the institutions that you write about.’

Judith’s work and reputation has had exceptional impact. One of the Liman Center projects that she led was on the use of solitary confinement in American prisons. In reaction to it, President Barack Obama took the step of writing a commentary in the Washington Post in January 2016 citing this research and calling for a nation-wide rethink of the practice of solitary confinement. The Annual Global Constitutional Law Seminar that Judith organizes every year is probably the most exclusive event of its kind, bringing together constitutional and Supreme Court judges from across the world to sit in closed sessions for a few days and discuss leading public law themes.

Professor Resnik has received awards too numerous to list for her scholarship, and for her work on gender equality and the promotion of women within the legal profession. To pick out one or two, in 2013 she was given the Arabella Babb Mansfield Award, the highest honour presented by the National Association of Women Lawyers. In 2017 she was honoured by former Liman Fellows with the establishment of the Resnik-Curtis Fellowship in Public Interest Law. Most recently, in April 2018 Judith’s distinction was recognized again by the award of a prestigious Andrew Carnegie Fellowship – conferred each year to a very small group of extraordinary scholars and writers. The Fellowship will enable Judith to write a book on punishment – looking at what happens **after** sentencing and in prison – and questioning what democratic governments should be able to inflict as punishment for crimes.

Aside from her scholarly activities it may not be well-known that Professor Resnik is also a film star. She had a cameo role in the thriller *Fair Game* in 2010 (Directed by Doug Liman – Director of the Bourne Identity) starring Naomi Watts and Sean Penn as well as Judith Resnik. The film was an expose of the misuse of government

power –one of Judith’s preoccupations. Judith was required to audition for the role of a University Professor and happily she was deemed to be sufficiently credible to be given a speaking role.

At a personal level, I think it is fair to say that Judith is one of the most vigorous, focused and effective scholars I have ever known. She has legendary abilities to collect together the most outstanding judicial, academic and practitioner minds. But despite her global reputation and impact, Professor Resnik is a woman without a shred of pretension who is exceptionally generous in devoting time to colleagues and students at Yale and around the world, including UCL. Professor Resnik has been a great friend to our Faculty, where she has held an Honorary Professorship for a decade. She has been instrumental in promoting the collaboration between Yale and UCL Law Schools and has worked closely with several of the Faculty’s Institutes and Research Centres. In May this year she gave a dazzling Keynote Lecture on the need for openness in courts at a conference on the Future of Justice and just last week contributed to a panel discussion on the Rule of Law with Dean Eeckhout and Professor Philippe Sands.

Judith has always been willing to make herself available to Faculty members, sharing her own work and generously giving her time to give constructive feedback on work in progress. Her involvement in Faculty life is greatly valued by both senior and junior members alike and we are honoured to have a colleague of such international distinction. The Faculty is grateful for the contribution that Professor Resnik has already made to our activities and to UCL more broadly, and we look forward to a long and even deeper relationship in the future.

President and Provost, I present to you for the award of Doctor of Laws *Honoris Causa* a scholar, teacher and litigator of supreme ability and humility who has devoted herself to the cause of equality and social justice - Professor Judith Resnik.