Defying corporate gods

Human rights leader calls for federal wage hike

IU Alumni for Human Rights co-founder Professor Fran Quigley joins a nationally coordinated strike on 15 October 2013 to demand for a $15 federal wage hike.  Photo courtesy: ©2013 Ashley Simmons

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI FOR HUMAN RIGHTS co-founder Professor Fran Quigley took up the cudgels for workers struggling for a federal wage increase in what could be a long drawn-out battle in the streets and the halls of US Congress.
On 15 October 2013, in solidarity with fast food chain workers, Professor Quigley picketed McDonald’s at the corner of 16th and Meridian streets in Indianapolis, Indiana. He clutched a streamer that says: “Huelga por 15” or “Strike for 15,” the amount of federal wage that workers are asking for in order to cope with skyrocketing costs of living.

Founder and director of IU McKinney School of Law’s Health and Human Rights Clinic, as well as director and faculty advisor of its Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Human Rights Law, Professor Quigley boldly took his advocacy for workers’ human rights to the streets. An international human rights lawyer, activist, author, and journalist, Professor Quigley stood resolutely in the frontlines with striking workers and courageously articulated their legitimate demand for a just and decent wage.

Here’s Pilgrims... A Human Rights Journey’s interview with Professor Quigley.

P: What’s the current situation of federal wage earners? What is the significance and correlation of the federal wage issue to workers’ human rights as well as their families’ human rights?

PROFESSOR FRAN QUIGLEY: The current U.S. minimum wage is $7.25 per hour for wage-only workers, just $2.13 per hour for tipped employees. The real purchasing power of the current minimum wage is lower than it has been in past decades. The minimum wage of $1.60 per hour in 1968, for example, would have a value of about $10.56 today. The smart way to remedy that problem, and to keep from revisiting the minimum wage debate every few years, is to index the wage to inflation, as is already done with Social Security benefits. Judged by another measure, the current minimum wage is even further behind the times. The productivity of the U.S. workforce has increased substantially in recent decades, but wages have not kept up. The Center on Economic and Policy Research estimates that the minimum wage would be a whopping $21.72 per hour if it had been indexed to worker productivity.
Instead, the benefits of that productivity spike have gone to the richest Americans. So a real benefit of increasing the minimum wage would be to chip away at one of the most disturbing trends in U.S. economy: the rapidly growing gap between the rich and the poor. In the years since 2008, while the incomes of the bottom 99% declined, the incomes of the richest 1 percent of Americans increased by over 11 percent.

That disturbing trend illustrates the fact that there is a question of basic fairness that has animated the minimum wage debate since the beginning. Corporations for almost 100 years have opposed the minimum wage with the same sort of unleash-the-market rhetoric they used to argue against child labor laws, Social Security, and environmental regulation. But they were met head-on by a compelling moral force. As far back as the beginning of the 20th century, a coalition of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish clergy and activists pushed for laws that respected the basic humanity of hard work yielding a living wage. Public opinion polls show that argument still resonates with most Americans today, and over 140 living wage ordinances have passed in cities and states across the country.

But there is still a strong corporation-funded lobby against raising the minimum wage, saying that an increase would reduce jobs and only apply to teenage part-time workers. History and data undercut those arguments. Minimum wage increases historically do not decrease the number of jobs. The Center for Economic and Policy Research recently compiled the results of scores of studies conducted about the minimum wage, with the weight of the evidence showing that increases have boosted incomes while causing no negative effect on employment. Hundreds of economists, including multiple Nobel Prize winners, have called for a minimum wage increase indexed to inflation. So do many business owners large and small, from Costco’s CEO to fast food franchise owners. They recognize that increased pay for low-wage workers translates into reduced employee turnover and more dollars spent in the local economy.

They also recognize that a minimum wage increase is not likely to affect small businesses as much as large, profitable corporations. A study by the National Employment Law Project showed that two thirds of low-wage workers are employed at large corporations, with WalMart, Yum Brands (Taco Bell, KFC, etc.) and McDonald’s coming in as the top 3 low-wage employers. And, although some people think of minimum wage jobs as starter positions for teenagers, analysis from the Economic Policy Institute shows that most workers who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage are adults.

\[ P: \text{In what way can the IU Alumni for Human Rights and the rest of society get involved in this federal wage issue? Are there actions that you encourage us to take?} \]

PROFESSOR FRAN QUIGLEY: I encourage members of the IU Alumni for Human Rights to join our new organization, Raise the Wage Indiana, https://www.facebook.com/RaisetheWageIN. Our organization will be working with national groups supporting an increased minimum wage, will be supporting state and local efforts to raise wages, and will stand in solidarity with workers like the Fight for 15 fast-food strikers. \[ P \]
Peace education, key to end wars?

INDIANA UNIVERSITY McKinney School of Law’s pro bono human rights trainer and graduate studies program manager said that “peace education” serves as the key to end war and “create a world that’s founded on healing, human rights and spirituality.”

On the occasion of the UN-declared International Day of Peace, IU Alumni for Human Rights co-founder Perfecto ‘Boyet’ Caparas told a gathering of artists, professionals, students, and peace advocates at the City Market West Plaza in Indianapolis on Saturday, 21 September 2013, that “the key to stopping war is peace education.”

“The masses need to be able to think for themselves independently and critically,” Caparas said in his extemporaneous speech titled *Ahimsa and Karma – Principles of Peace Struggle*. Paraphrasing Master Choa Kok Sui, modern founder of pranic healing and arhatic yoga, Caparas pointed out that “war happens because people are gullible.”

“They are ‘easily manipulated by dubious religious, military and political leaders,’” said Caparas, who serves as the head, founder and trainer of IU McKinney’s Pro Bono UN Human Rights Reporting Program. “As a human rights advocate,” Caparas explained, “we should realize that the law of karma and the principle of ahimsa are actually interconnected.”

Caparas underscored the importance of *ahimsa* or non-violence – as employed by freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi – and *karma* as principles for our peace struggle. Citing the “ancient law” of karma, Caparas said: “We cannot harvest what we did not sow.”

“If we want peace, we should sow the seeds of peace.”

“If we want our human rights to be respected by others, we need to respect the human rights of other people.”

“If we want to be treated with dignity and respect, we should also treat other people in the same breadth,” he urged.

“What goes around comes around. You sow wind, you reap a whirlwind.”

“That is a fundamental law,” he stressed. “In each and every person, at the core, lies the Divine Spark – the divinity underlying each person’s own humanity,” he continued. “We cannot pursue peace without recognizing that divinity exists in each and every one of us.” This, he said, serves as “the foundation of a new era of peace.”

“We can develop internal qualities that will help create a world that’s founded on healing, human rights and spirituality.” To do this, he added, “We should stress our own common humanity.” Quoting Master Choa Kok Sui further, Caparas said that *ahimsa* means non-injury or absence of cruelty or ill-will. “We should practice ahimsa in the level of thought or consciousness… physically, mentally, as well as verbally.” Humanity, he noted, yearned for peace “both internally as well as externally.”

Caparas examined and addressed peace issues in his master’s thesis titled *Enforcement and Implementation of The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (available at https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/3409 ), which was individually and independently critiqued and given the highest mark by three international law faculty experts from the University of Hong Kong, where he obtained his LL.M. Human Rights degree, with highest honors, in 2001. A year earlier, *The Asia Foundation* awarded Caparas a human rights fellowship for his grassroots and international human rights lawyering, advocacy, and leadership.

Other speakers during the globally observed event were Dr. Derek Barber King Sr., Jena Myers and Jerry Titus. Musicians Veso Lukovic and James Pruitt, Brent Elias, Luka Music Luka Raykovich, Steven D Feldman, Kurt and Marjorie Young performed live. Mid-eastern belly dancer Stacie Jones gave a performance. Elena Miller and her fellow volunteers organized the event. In 1981, the UN General Assembly established the International Day of Peace to promote conflict-resolution. ☀️
IMPASSIONED by the issue of workers’ rights in the global supply chain, Heidi moved to Shenzhen, China after graduating with a J.D. from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis in 2009.

With a fellowship grant from the Hong Kong government, she has studied the development of corporate social responsibility and the global labor movement. Heidi is completing her Ph.D. degree at Hong Kong Polytechnic University’s Department of Applied Social Science. She is currently working with the Audencia Nantes School of Management in the area of responsible management education.

The school was the first in France to sign the U.N. Global Compact and has committed itself to promoting the universal principles of human rights, labor standards, and environmental stewardship.
EDYE TAYLOR is a licensed attorney with an international human rights background who has worked for Indiana University since November 2008. She previously worked for numerous human rights-focused NGOs in England, Belgium, and Zambia, as well as presented twice to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, both in New York and Switzerland, all as a part of her education and dedication to international human rights.

At IU, she began focusing on the role of human rights in health and has worked at the Human Subject Offices on both the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses, the Indianapolis Grant Services office, and now in the Clinical Research Compliance Office aiding in quality assurance and compliance matters including managing accreditations, research integrity, internal auditing and managing consultation projects involving outside entities. She completed her Masters of Arts in Philosophy with a concentration in International Research Ethics in 2012, and was the program manager for a National Institute of Health one year grant to aid in creating a joint international institutional review board (IRB) in conjunction with IU’s existing Moi University medical school partnership in Kenya and the IU Center for Bioethics, which has expanded her ability to assist and consult in compliance matters globally. Additionally, she teaches at IU McKinney School of Law and the IU Fairbanks School of Public Health in Indianapolis, as well as continues to develop health law compliance curriculum initiated by herself and colleagues for their Hall Center for Law and Health in conjunction with the School of Public Health, and served in a pro bono capacity in their Health and Human Rights Clinic.
ALUMNI FOR HUMAN RIGHTS member Duncan Ojwang successfully completed his Ph.D. in Law and Policy degree at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law on 19 November 2013.


After earning his LL.M. International Human Rights Law degree from IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law, Ojwang pursued doctorate studies at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law’s Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program. 
MATTHEW TRICK graduated from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in 2010. He currently serves as Assistant Public Defender in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Matthew previously held positions at Mercy Corps, an international aid and development agency, and the Internal Revenue Service.
### Thanksgiving 2008

1. Philip Aka, J.D., LL.M., Ph.D., S.J.D. Candidate
2. Tuinrese Edward Amuzu, LL.M.
3. Jacqueline C. Ayers, J.D.
4. Emily A. Benfer, J.D.
5. Thomas H. Benner, J.D.
6. Perfecto `Boyet´ Caparas, LL.M.
7. Christin E. Cogley, J.D.
8. Adil A. Daudi, J.D.
9. Sarah M. Dillinger, J.D.
10. Wele Elangwe, LL.M.
11. Tiffany K. Girard, J.D.
12. Emina Hadzic, J.D.
13. Todd Edward Hassee, J.D. †
14. Kat Hendrix, J.D.
15. Ayesha F. Johnson, J.D., LL.M.
16. Marc S. Kaliser, J.D.
17. Lun Kham, J.D.
18. Raio G. Krishnayya, J.D., LL.M.
19. Matthew Ryan Kubal, J.D.
20. Bobby Y. Lam, J.D.
21. Monica C. Magnusson, J.D.
22. Robert Masbaum, J.D.
23. Lena F. Masri, J.D.
24. Zoe M. Meier, J.D.
25. Sean A. Monkhouse, J.D.
26. Julia T. Mudd, J.D.
27. Kevin Munoz, J.D.
28. Emily Anne Munson, J.D.
29. Philemon A. Nkafu, LL.M.
30. Fran Quigley, J.D.
31. Waseem Ahmad Qureshi, S.J.D. candidate
32. Heidi Reed, J.D.
33. David Rothenberg, J.D.
34. Jhon J. Sanchez, J.D., LL.M.
35. Seema R. Shah, J.D.
36. April F. Shaw, J.D.
37. Nicole S. Steward, J.D.
38. Kavinvadee Suppaongtevasakul, LL.M.
39. Simeon P. Sungi, LL.B. (Honors), LL.M., Ph.D.
40. Nelson Taku, LL.M.
41. Edye T. Taylor, J.D.
42. Shalva Tskhakaya, LL.M.

### Thanksgiving 2009

1. George Aduhene, J.D.
2. Natalia Taylor Poppeliers
3. Simeon P. Sungi, LL.B. (Honors), LL.M., Ph.D.
4. Eric Phillippe
5. Christopher Magno, Ph.D.
6. Matthew Trick, J.D.
7. Yen Chen, J.D.
8. Kalli McBride, J.D.
9. Kristen Hunsberger, J.D.
10. Amy Nicholas, J.D.
11. Will Lawson, J.D.
12. Angela Joseph, J.D.

### Thanksgiving 2012

1. Macarena Foitzick, S.J.D. candidate
2. Avril Rua, LL.B, LL.M.
3. Mr. Ntsika W. Fakudze, LL.M.
4. Amber Malcolm, J.D.
5. Basim Najeeb, LL.M.
6. Sukrat Baber, J.D. candidate
7. Leontiy V. Korolev, J.D.
8. Jacqueline C. Williams, J.D., LL.M.

### Thanksgiving 2013

1. Benjamin Keele, J.D., Research and Instructional Services Librarian
2. Moussa M Diakite Karressy, LL.M. Candidate
3. Guang Yang, J.D. Candidate 2014
4. Ryan Naylor, J.D. Candidate
5. Timothy Weber, J.D.
Dignity for All

Human Rights Pilgrims’ Objectives

- Establish a diverse, cohesive volunteer, independent, nonpartisan, and educational group of IU alumni committed to fortify the rule of international human rights law.
- Address human rights issues through the human rights-based approach from multidisciplinary perspectives, and by means of active nonviolence.
- Provide mutual support and develop individual and group capacities among IU constituencies—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—to engage in any and all forms of activism (nonviolence) to ensure the respect for, protection, and fulfillment of the universal, inalienable, independent, and indivisible economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of all persons.
- Proactively respond to any and all human rights challenges on an immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term basis, at the IU, local, national, regional, and international levels, by means of action-oriented, impact-generating, and strategic initiatives, programs, projects, activities, and campaigns.
- Initiate and support any and all efforts to develop, protect, and assist IU international human rights lawyers, scholars, and defenders.

Indiana University
School of Law – Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana
United States of America
Thanksgiving Day
November 27, 2008

We commit to uphold the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, also known as the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups, and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms per U.N. General Assembly Resolution 43/173, 1989.

Coordinator:
Prof. Dr. “Boy” Caprara, Program Manager
Program in International Human Rights Law
Indiana University School of Law

Human Rights Center
Room 255-A
Law Library
530 W. New York Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Email: pcp@iu.edu
Dear fellow IU alum:

Am inviting you to please serve as a co-founder of the IU Alumni for International Human Rights Law.

We are going to launch this on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 27 (Indianapolis time).

We shall henceforth pilgrimage into the 21st century's human rights challenges.

Your being a co-founder and fellow human rights pilgrim will greatly contribute to our collective advancement of the cause of human rights.

As IU human rights pilgrims, our objectives, as set forth in the attachedPdf, are as follows:

Establish a diverse, cohesive volunteer, independent, nonpartisan, and educational group of IU alumni committed to fortify the rule of international human rights law

Address human rights issues through the human rights-based approach, from multidisciplinary perspectives, and by means of active nonviolence

Provide mutual support and develop individual and group capacities among IU constituencies—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—to engage in any and all forms of ahimsa (nonviolence) to ensure the respect for, protection, and fulfillment of the universal, inalienable, interdependent, and indivisible economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of all persons

Proactively respond to any and all human rights challenges on an immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term basis, at the IU, local, national, regional, and international levels, by means of action-oriented, impact-generating, and strategic initiatives, programs, projects, activities, and campaigns

Initiate and support any and all efforts to develop, protect, and assist IU international human rights lawyers, scholars, and defenders

Please email me back right away if you agree to serve as our co-founder.

Your name will be immediately added to the list of founding members as soon as you send in your confirmation.

IU alumni and soon-to-be alumni may join.

Thank you very much.

Regards,

Perfecto "Boyet" Caparas
Co-Founder and Coordinator
IU Alumni for International Human Rights Law
First wave of IU human rights pilgrims

1. Philip Aka, J.D., LL.M., Ph.D.
2. Tuinese Edward Amuzu, LL.M.
3. Jacqueline C. Ayers, J.D.
4. Emily A. Benfer, J.D.
5. Thomas H. Benner, J.D.
6. Perfecto Caparas, LL.M.
7. Christin E. Cogley, J.D.
8. Adil A. Daudi, J.D.
9. Sarah M. Dillinger, J.D.
10. Wele Elangwe, LL.M.
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40. Nelson Taku, LL.M.
41. Edye T. Taylor, J.D.
42. Shalva Tskhakaya, LL.M.

In memoriam

+ Todd E. Hassee, 29

Co-Founder
Indiana University Alumni for Human Rights
2012 J.D. Graduate
IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Passed on, 15 July 2013
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW
Came into force on January 21, 2009 following its ratification by AHR members

I. Objectives
The objectives of the organization are as follows:
A. Establish a diverse, cohesive, volunteer, independent, nonpartisan, and educational group of IU alumni committed to fortify the rule of international human rights law
B. Address human rights issues through the human rights-based approach, from multidisciplinary perspectives, and by means of active nonviolence
C. Provide mutual support and develop individual and group capacities among IU constituencies—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—to engage in any and all forms of ahimsa (nonviolence) to ensure the respect for, protection, and fulfillment of the universal, inalienable, interdependent, and indivisible economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of all persons
D. Proactively respond to any and all human rights challenges on an immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term basis, at the IU, local, national, regional, and international levels, by means of action-oriented, impact-generating, and strategic initiatives, programs, projects, activities, and campaigns
E. Initiate and support any and all efforts to develop, protect, and assist IU international human rights lawyers, scholars, and defenders
F. Uphold the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, officially known as the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms per UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144
G. Promote the human rights provisions of the United Nations Charter
H. Promote pro bono international human rights legal services with racial and gender perspectives, and
I. Promote the values of volunteerism, simple living, hard work, and self-reliance

II. Principles and Methodology
The following principles and methodology shall guide the organization’s officers and members:
A. The cross-section of soon-to-be alumni and alumni comprising the membership of the organization shall function to assist soon-to-be alumni and students in initiating and undertaking career-enhancing and development activities and services in the fields of international human rights law, international criminal law, and international humanitarian law
B. The organization shall practice the human rights tenets and principles of consultative, participatory, transparent, accountable, and democratic decision-making and ensure that these principles are institutionalized in the various mechanisms and systems of the organization
C. A system of checks and balances shall be instituted internally
D. The racial and gender perspectives shall be integrated into the internal systems and operations of the organization, such that racial and gender equality and nondiscrimination shall be institutionalized and entrenched
E. The need to proactively respond to human rights challenges in a timely, relevant, and meaningful fashion shall be balanced with the practice and observance of the abovementioned tenets and always subject to the principle of accountability

III. Officers
The following officers shall constitute the Board of Trustees:
A. President – shall direct and manage the affairs of the organization as well as oversee and guide the work of the various committees
B. Internal Vice President – shall develop the organization’s capabilities and proper coordination to achieve its objectives and assist the President and various committees in their work
C. External Vice President – shall be responsible for liaising and networking with Indiana University alumni groups, local, national, regional, and international human rights groups. The External Vice President shall coordinate with the Networking and Coalition-Building Committee.
D. Secretary – shall disseminate information to the officers and members, call meetings, prepare minutes of meetings, and keep the records of the organization
E. Treasurer – shall be responsible for the finances of the organization and maintain bookkeeping records and systems strictly in accordance with current accounting and auditing standards and procedures
F. Auditor – shall oversee the financial affairs of the organization and ensure that the principle of financial transparency is practiced and that the system of checks and balances is properly established and operationalized
G. Public Relations Officer – shall prepare and disseminate press statements, coordinate with media, establish, operate, and direct the organization’s public information machinery, through online tools, publications, and various means. The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for the regular publication of an online newsletter. The Public Relations Officer shall coordinate with the Publications and Communications Committee

IV. Members
Indiana University alumni and soon-to-be-alumni are eligible for membership in the organization.

V. Rights of Members
All members, including soon-to-be alumni, are entitled to vote and be voted for any position.
Any member shall be eligible for election, regardless of their place of residence and/or work.
Any member shall be entitled to volunteer and/or be appointed by the Board or any committee head to serve in any capacity in any committees.

VI. Elections
The abovementioned officers shall be elected by secret ballot.
Voting may be done electronically.
The integrity and impartiality of the conduct of elections shall always be safeguarded.

VII. Term of Office
The officers shall serve for a period of one year.

“Address human rights issues through the human rights-based approach, from multidisciplinary perspectives, and by means of active nonviolence”
Any officer shall be eligible for reelection or appointment to or to serve in any capacity and position.

VIII. Committees
The following committees shall be created:
A. Special Projects – undertake programs, projects, and activities to promote the organization’s objectives

Advocacy and Campaigns – undertake various human rights advocacy efforts and activities using the international human rights law framework, such as petition-signing and other forms of ahimsa (nonviolence) to address various human rights issues

B. Recruitment, Membership Coordination and Mobilization – shall consult and gather ideas, input, suggestions, and recommendations from officers and members and involve them in any and all of the organization’s undertakings

C. Recruitment – shall develop and implement strategies to expand the organization’s membership

D. Finance – shall raise and manage funds according to the principles of financial transparency and accountability with emphasis on preparing and managing cost-effective human rights budgets

E. Networking and Coalition-Building – shall liaise and develop collaborative undertakings with various local, national, regional, and international organizations for human rights promotion and defense on an immediate-, short-, medium-, and long-term basis

F. Training – shall respond to the training needs and requests of various IU constituencies for engagement in various human rights initiatives

G. Research and Documentation – shall develop, organize, and maintain the organization’s database for easy retrieval and use for human rights undertakings

H. Publications and Communications – come out with various media tools to pursue human rights objectives, including regular issues of an online newsletter

I. International Human Rights Defense Unit – shall focus on developing capacities to participate in various local, national, regional, and international human rights mechanisms, including those of the United Nations, African Union, Organization of American States, European Nations and others, by means of shadow reporting and individual complaints

Members may be appointed or elected to serve as head of any committee.

IX. Finances and Budget
The organization shall practice the human rights tenets and principles of consultative, participatory, transparent, accountable, and democratic decision-making in the acquisition, management, disbursement, and reporting of any and all its funds.

The organization shall prepare, keep, and maintain records and establish bookkeeping systems in accordance with current accounting and auditing systems.

The organization shall be regularly subjected to external and independent audit by an impartial and professional auditor.

The members of the public shall have full access to the financial books of the organization, which the organization shall provide either at its own initiative or upon request by any party, public or private.

X. Name
The name of the organization shall be the Indiana University Alumni for International Human Rights Law.

The name IU Alumni for Human Rights may be used interchangeably for brevity.

The acronym AHR may also be used to refer to the organization.

XI. Logo
The organization shall have a logo symbolizing its human rights principles and objectives.

XII. Slogan
The organization shall have a slogan that embodies and symbolizes its principles and objectives.

XIII. Ratification
This Constitution shall take effect immediately upon ratification by majority of the members casting their vote electronically or by any practical means.

XIV. Amendment
This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by majority of the members casting their vote electronically or by other practical means.

Indianapolis, Indiana, United States.
"Dignity for All" Thanksgiving - “Human rights pilgrims” launch IU alumni group

THEY call themselves “human rights pilgrims” for “active nonviolence.”

On Thanksgiving Day, IU pilgrims will be launching the IU Alumni for International Human Rights Law “to pilgrimage into the 21st century’s human rights challenges.”

Describing themselves as “IU pilgrims for the cause of human rights,” the founders from the Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis vowed to pursue “action-oriented, impact-generating, and strategic initiatives, programs, projects, activities, and campaigns” to achieve “dignity for all.”

Co-founder Fran Quigley, Director of Indiana-Kenya Partnership, lauded the establishment of the group, which he described as an “important organization.” Quigley praised his fellow pilgrims for their “leadership in protecting human rights and for continuing to build IU's reputation as an institutional advocate for dignity and freedom.”

The organizers vowed to pursue the following objectives:

- Establish a diverse, cohesive, volunteer, independent, nonpartisan, and educational group of IU alumni committed to fortify the rule of international human rights law
- Address human rights issues through the human rights-based approach, from multidisciplinary perspectives, and by means of active nonviolence
- Provide mutual support and develop individual and group capacities among IU constituencies—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—to engage in any and all forms of ahimsa (nonviolence) to ensure the respect for, protection, and fulfillment of the universal, inalienable, interdependent, and indivisible economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of all persons
- Proactively respond to any and all human rights challenges on an immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term basis, at the IU, local, national, regional, and international levels, by means of action-oriented, impact-generating, and strategic initiatives, programs, projects, activities, and campaigns
- Initiate and support any and all efforts to develop, protect, and assist IU international human rights lawyers, scholars, and defenders

As their way of commemorating Thanksgiving Day, the founders committed themselves to uphold the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. On March 8, 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration, officially known as the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The alumni adhered to the Declaration as one of their key founding documents.

The list of founding members continues to grow, as alumni from various parts of the U.S. and the globe expressed their willingness to form the group. Twiinese Edward Amuzu, an LL.M. Human Rights alum, served as founding "pilgrim" from Accra, Ghana, where he works as executive director of the Legal Resources Centre. From his UN office at The Hague, The Netherlands, Sean Monkhouse, J.D., also joined hands with his fellow alumni in celebrating Thanksgiving Day by forming the group. Monkhouse works as court officer of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

While busy pursuing her human rights studies at the University of Hong Kong and interning with
Amnesty International–Hong Kong Section, Heidi Reed, J.D. candidate and IU–Bloomington alumna, also agreed to form the group. From strife-torn Georgia, Shalva Tskhakaya, LL.M., also joined his fellow alumni in forming the association.

An Indiana pro bono attorney, David Rothenberg helped pioneer the formation of the group. Rothenberg is currently helping law students with their United Nations shadow reporting projects on Australia and Chad.

Former interns of the Program in International Human Rights Law (PIHRL) mostly served as founders of the group. Prof. George Edwards founded the PIHRL in 1997, under the tutelage of then Dean Norman Lefstein, renowned champion of pro bono legal service.

Two other pioneer members, Robert Masbaum and Kevin Munoz, J.D., signed recently an agreement with the PIHRL to start a pro bono international human rights law education program for Indianapolis public school students on behalf of Human Rights Works, a nongovernmental organization.

The modern-day pilgrims also affirmed their “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small” as stated in the UN Charter.

The initial wave of “IU human rights pilgrims” include:

1.  Tuinese Edward Amuzu, LL.M.
2.  Jacqueline C. Ayers, J.D.
3.  Thomas H. Benner, J.D.
4.  Perfecto Caparas, LL.M.
5.  Christin E. Cogley, J.D.
6.  Adil A. Daudi, J.D.
7.  Wele Elangwe, LL.M.
8.  Kat Hendrix, J.D.
9.  Marc S. Kaliser, J.D.
10. Lun Kham, J.D.
11. Matthew Ryan Kubal, J.D.
12. Monica C. Magnusson, J.D.
13. Robert Masbaum, J.D.
14. Lena F. Masri, J.D.
15. Zoe M. Meier, J.D.
16. Sean A. Monkhouse, J.D.
17. Kevin Munoz, J.D.
18. Emily Anne Munson, J.D.
19. Philemon A. Nkafu, LL.M.
20. Fran Quigley, J.D.
21. Heidi Reed, J.D.
22. David Rothenberg, J.D.
23. Jhon J. Sanchez, J.D., LL.M.
24. Simeon P. Sungi, LL.M.
25. Edye T. Taylor, J.D.
26. Shalva Tskhakaya, LL.M.

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Perfecto "Boyet" Caparas  
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