Dear Graduates and Friends,

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, “We are created to live in a delicate netwok of interdependence, and we are different precisely in order to know our need of one another.” In this issue of JD, we look at how the University of Maryland School of Law is working to foster cross-cultural understanding, here in Baltimore and with our colleagues around the world. More of our students, faculty, and alumni are working and studying in other legal systems and other nations than ever before. Each year we offer new international courses, host important global conferences, and welcome distinguished foreign visitors to share their intellectual, legal, and cultural traditions with us.

This past semester, two distinguished international visitors helped us think more broadly and develop new perspectives. The visit of José Zalaquett, former President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and now a Professor of Law at the University of Chile, strengthened our exchange program with that country’s leading law school. We also welcomed Dennis Davis, a professor at the University of Cape Town Law School and a judge on Cape Town’s High Court. To further our law school’s longstanding engagement with South Africa, I traveled there myself last spring. It was inspiring to visit the country’s Constitutional Court and see how a young democracy is struggling to create its own jurisprudence. The visit was also an opportunity to formalize our exchange program with the University of Cape Town Law School, creating tremendous opportunities for our students and faculty.

What is important about our international focus is its reciprocal nature. Just as we welcome visitors from around the world to our law school, we also send students and faculty abroad. Through the David S. Brown Fellows Program, our students are working and learning at the Law Reform Commissions of England, Ireland, Australia, and Hong Kong, at public service agencies in South Africa, at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Costa Rica, and at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. We have also established an exciting new exchange program with the law school of the leading business university in Beijing, China.

Through this collective exchange of people and ideas, differences dissolve, understanding deepens, and in Desmond Tutu’s words, we come to know our need of one another. This issue of JD celebrates the School of Law’s membership in a truly international community. We are committed to creating the best educational opportunities for our students, whether in Baltimore or Beijing. In either case, it is your support—as alumni and friends—that makes this work possible.

Thank you for sharing the School of Law’s commitment to excellence. We look forward to our continued partnership as we begin a new academic year ripe with possibility.

Best wishes,

Karen H. Rothenberg
Dean and Marjorie Cook Professor of Law