

9-8-2014

## Newsroom: Senior U.S. Diplomat Returns to RWU Law

Roger Williams University School of Law

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### Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Newsroom: Senior U.S. Diplomat Returns to RWU Law" (2014). *Life of the Law School (1993- )*. 410.

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# Newsroom

## Senior U.S. Diplomat Returns to RWU Law

Following three years as First Secretary at The Hague Conference on Private International Law, a founding faculty member brings vast experience home to Bristol.



**BRISTOL, R.I., September 8, 2014:** Professor Louise Ellen Teitz – a founding faculty member at Roger Williams University School of Law and one of its most prominent practitioners internationally – has returned to full-time teaching after spending the last three years abroad as a senior U.S. diplomat.

From 2011 until earlier this year, Professor Teitz served as First Secretary at The Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Netherlands, leading that organization’s efforts on a range of global family law conventions, treaties and projects, on topics ranging from parental child abduction to child protection, from cross-border custody to domestic violence issues, and encompassing legal systems worldwide, including traditional Islamic law. Professor Teitz is only the second American (and fourth woman) to have held the leadership position since the organization’s founding in 1893.

“Professor Teitz has never been the type of academic to live in an Ivory Tower,” said Dean Michael J. Yelnosky, who has worked with her since both joined RWU Law’s founding faculty 21 years ago. “She regularly engages with the legal profession, both domestically and abroad, and puts her expertise to practical and important use. Now with her return from the Hague, our students will benefit from the important and practical experiences she had at the highest levels of international law and policy-making.”

Professor Teitz also looks forward to bringing her overseas experience into the classroom.

“I am excited about sharing these experiences with RWU students,” she said. “Increasingly, lawyers find themselves dealing with events and transactions that touch on more than one legal system. When I first started teaching Transnational Litigation, people thought of it as an esoteric subject that most people had no use for. Today, it’s essential to be aware of other legal traditions – as part of understanding the nature of our own legal system, and as a means of helping clients deal with situations that now routinely have international elements.”

Professor Teitz has taught Civil Procedure to an entire generation of lawyers, including a large percentage of the Rhode Island Bar (current Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin '98 was among her many students).

“With RWU Law’s support, I now have the opportunity to share cutting-edge developments in the area of cross-border and international law,” she said, “bringing these topics into my regular courses, such as Conflicts, International Business Transactions, and International Litigation.” Professor Teitz also plans to teach a seminar on International Developments in Private Law in the spring, and is working to develop an International Family Law course.

Her work in international law has frequently led to high-profile domestic involvement, such as testifying before the U.S. Senate and serving on U.S. State Department delegations and a United Nations commission. In 2012, Professor Teitz was awarded the ABA Section of International Law’s prestigious Leonard J. Theberge Award for Private International Law in recognition of her career contributions in the field. She has authored numerous articles and two books, one of which, *Transnational Litigation*, was one of the earliest treatises in the field.

“The opportunity to have an immediate impact on child protection and human rights was an amazing experience,” she said of her time at The Hague. “To help an abducted child be returned to a parent cross-border gives personal meaning to my academic and diplomatic work.” Professor Teitz also hopes to “open doors for my students through contacts I made in Ministries of Justice and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in over 100 countries and at numerous international organizations.”