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Introduction: Bringing It Home: Building International Human Rights Law, Advocacy and Culture, A Conference to Mark the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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INTRODUCTION

Penelope E. Andrews†

On May 1, 1998, about 140 legal academics, practitioners, activists, judges, and law students from around the United States and the globe gathered at the City University of New York School of Law to attend *Bringing It Home: Building International Human Rights Law, Advocacy and Culture, A Conference to Mark the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This conference was organized to honor Haywood W. Burns, the former Dean of the school. Dean Burns was a prominent civil rights advocate who believed that the struggle for civil rights in the United States was integrally linked to the global struggle for human rights. His life activities reflected this view, from his engagement with the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, to his support for the struggles of the people of East Timor for autonomy.

For three days, the delegates to the conference considered the meaning of human rights for individuals and their symbolic and substantive contribution to improving the lives of people. They interrogated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its progeny, including the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Race Discrimination Convention, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

At the core of their analyses was the reception and application of human rights in domestic courts; bringing human rights home. Case studies from abroad provided a valuable backdrop to the consideration of these issues in the courts of the United States.

The contributions to this volume provide a glimpse of the thoughtful and rich discussions that typified the conference. They reflect the range of perspectives and approaches to analyzing both the possibilities and limitations of international human rights law and their application in the domestic setting. In addition, the articles and addresses combine theory with practice and highlight some strategies that may be useful to academic and practicing lawyers.

This volume is part of the ongoing global discourse about rights; we hope you find it engaging and informative.

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