50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
Asian Law Center
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON | SCHOOL OF LAW

LEADERS FOR THE GLOBAL COMMON GOOD
THE IDEA OF TACKLING COMPARATIVE RESEARCH IN ASIA’S DIVERSE LEGAL SYSTEMS WAS A BOLD ONE IN 1961.

A PROGRAM BUILT ON FIRSTS

1961
Ford Foundation grants the UW School of Law $170,000 to start the Asian Law Program, envisioned by professors Cornelius Peck, Ansel Morris and Ralph W. Johnson

1962
Dan Ferro Henderson hired as advisor (later director) of the Asian Law Program
When distinguished Japanese scholar Dan Fenno Henderson took over as director of the new Asian Law Program at the University of Washington School of Law in the early 1960s, the state of Asian law studies in America was, in his words, primitive. There were no other university programs in the country focused solely on developing competence in U.S.-Asian law problems, despite a crying need. And few, if any, materials existed to support such a program.

“There was virtually no treatment of Japanese and Chinese law in the English literature or in the United States law schools, and thus no experience to guide us,” reported Henderson.

The “Father of the UW Asian Law Program” rolled up his sleeves and got to work, laying the foundations for a pioneering program that, fifty years after it recruited its first international mix of students in 1963, has been recognized worldwide as a pre-eminent center of classical scholarship, teaching, and public policy work on Asian and comparative law.

“My role was to put together an entire group of fundamental resources that in most disciplines would be found in a bookstore. But what we needed was not in the bookstore and we had to write them ourselves.”

Dan Fenno Henderson, Director of the Asian Law Program, 1962-1988
The impact of the program—renamed the Asian Law Center at the turn of the 21st century—is today felt around the globe, with multiple generations of LL.M. and Ph.D. graduates serving as high-level politicians, practitioners, policymakers, judges, academics, and corporate business leaders in Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Afghanistan, the United States, Europe, and other countries.

Many return home to influence profound economic, political, academic, and legal reforms in their own countries. “These graduates are people with a well-developed social conscience and a real sense of public service,” said Senior Advisor Veronica Taylor, former director of the center.

Alumni join an international network of legal expertise that is rooted in both deep scholarship and friendship—relations forged over rigorous study, lively debate, and multi-lingual, multi-cultural exchanges at the center. “When we bring in our entering class at orientation, I always tell them, ‘You are becoming part of a large extended family and, throughout Asia, it’s a strong family,’” said Jon Eddy, a 1969 UW law school graduate and current director of the center. “I tell them ‘Take time to build friendships, to meet your fellow students.’”

1967
First students graduate from Asian and Comparative Law master’s degree programs
Chinese law courses piloted

1969
The Asian Law Series, in cooperation with UW Press, publishes over 20 leading monographs on Japan, China and Taiwan (1969-2010)
Those bonds, he said, “become a living, continuing legal education program as our graduates interact over the years among themselves and with us.”

The graduates leave the Asian Law Center uniquely prepared for the complexities of a global society, well-versed in the nuances of comparative law. Instead of functioning in a single legal system, they learn to navigate among many. “When you look at legal issues or legal structures or legal institutions across several different societies, you start to appreciate how much the law and institutions are embedded in a people’s economy, culture, history, and values,” said Eddy. “There are a lot of moving parts to the way a law functions in its settings.”

The idea of tackling comparative research in Asia’s diverse legal systems was a bold one in 1961. That was the year UW School of Law professors Cornelius Peck, Ralph W. Johnson, and Arval Morris, with the support of Dean George Neff Stevens, received a five-year Ford Foundation grant to create an international law program with an Asian emphasis.

The program needed a leader, someone fluent in Japanese who was an outstanding scholar, a first-rate teacher, professionally networked, and recognized in Japan. Henderson hit every mark. He had practiced private law in Tokyo and had already built a solid reputation as a leading scholar in Japanese law. He also had a keen interest in training practitioners working internationally to build mutual understandings that allowed “two sides to play by the same rules.”

The warm, charismatic scholar—who would lead the program for close to three decades and remain a professor emeritus until his death in 2001—had a strong vision for the program. It would be a community of spirited intellectual exchange, led by a faculty involved in creative and influential scholarship. The program would be interdisciplinary, with cross-campus collaborations that allowed students to immerse themselves in UW studies of Asian history, literature, government, politics, and language to supplement program curricula.

Initial work in the graduate program would focus on Japan. By narrowing the focus at the outset, Henderson reasoned, the program could maximize its resources and its impact.

The young program faced enormous challenges. It was hard to recruit supporting faculty with both superior Asian language and foreign law skills, and equally difficult to find interested students who were both bilingual and licensed in law. Henderson decided his first class would be a small cohort of visiting scholars from Asia.
With a paucity of English-language materials on Asian legal systems, Henderson and research associates had to create their own, translating Asian-language documents and mimeographing hundreds of pages to create new textbooks and teaching materials. They also had to build their own base of English language scholarship.

In 1963, Asian Law Program faculty and research associates began a series of five symposia published by the Washington Law Review on law in Japan and the Philippines. They took over editorship of the journal Law in Japan: An Annual in 1968. They also helped start a journal of Japanese studies, in partnership with the UW's Jackson School of International Studies, and helped launch the Asian Law Series, in cooperation with the University of Washington Press.

By the late 1960s, anchored by a second round of Ford Foundation funding, the young program was beginning to gain international academic acclaim. Its list of “firsts” was long and impressive:

Faculty and research associates had authored the first English-language teaching materials for the comparative study of American and Asian law. They had produced some of the first classical bilingual scholarship on comparative Asian law.

They had, in 1966, introduced the first introductory course on Japanese law taught in the United States. The first introductory Chinese and Korean law courses would follow in the ‘70s.

In 1967, the program began to offer graduate level courses leading to a Masters of Comparative Law (M.C.L.) for foreign lawyers studying U.S. law and to a Masters of Laws (LL.M.) for U.S. lawyers studying Japanese law. The program’s focus on the legal aspects of doing business abroad and especially on private transaction in and with Asian countries attracted rising legal professionals from the United States and Asia such as Tasuku Matsu M.C.L. ’69, who later founded the law firm of Matsu & Kosugi in Tokyo and became one of the most prominent legal professionals in Japan.

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The first introductory Chinese and Korean law courses would follow in the ‘70s.

1975
The program had also set the foundation for the country's first Ph.D. program in Asian and Comparative Law, intended to produce an elite group of scholars and practitioners who could make significant contributions to legal development in their countries. Many of those graduates later assumed leadership positions and went on to transform legal education and legal scholarship in their home countries: Erman Rajagukguk LL.M. '84, Ph.D. '88, for example, became dean of the University of Indonesia Faculty of Law and has led law reform efforts while appointed to several senior government positions. Tay-sheng Wang LL.M. '90, Ph.D. '92, a Lifetime Distinguished Professor at National Taiwan University, obtained international renown for his studies of Taiwanese legal history and development.

Henderson's reputation was beginning to pull bright young Asian scholars from top universities into the program. One was a Yale Law School graduate who joined one of the Asian Law Program's first LL.M. classes. His name was John O. Haley.

AN ACADEMIC POWERHOUSE

1987

Rob Britt hired by the East Asian Law Department to work with Japanese legal materials

1988
John O. Haley becomes director of Asian Law Program
Donald C. Clarke joins faculty as China law specialist (1988-2004)
Daniel H. Foote joins faculty as Japan law specialist (1988-2000)
Over the next two and a half decades, Haley would become a powerful force in growing the program, expanding its vision in East Asia, strengthening its ties with international law faculties and overseas practitioners, and consolidating the UW’s scholarly standing in comparative approaches to Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese law.

He would also help build one of the world’s best library collections on Japanese law outside of Japan. “More than half of our collection was acquired during Professor Haley’s stay here,” reported Rob Britt, Coordinator of East Asian Library Services at the UW Gallagher Law Library.

One of those hires was Chinese law specialist Donald C. Clarke. The second was Japanese scholar Daniel H. Foo, whose reputation would ensure the law school maintained its strength in Japanese law after Henderson’s retirement.

1989
Bill McClay hired to head East Asian Law department and expand the Chinese and Korean materials collections

1990
Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal established with first issue published in 1992

PROFESSOR JOHN HALEY LL.M. ’71, (FOURTH FROM RIGHT) WITH FORMER STUDENTS AND CURRENT PROFESSORS (L TO R) LAWRENCE REPETA J.D. ’79, LEON WOLF LL.M. ’96, MARK LEVIN LL.M. ’90, TAY-SHENG WANG LL.M. ’90, PH.D. ’92, TOSHIKO TAKENAKA LL.M. ’90, PH.D. ’92, VERONICA TAYLOR LL.M. ’92, JODY CHAFEE J.D. ’91
The esteemed four worked with a remarkable support faculty that included international law experts Steven M. Dickinson (trade and investment in East Asia), Linde S. Hume (international and comparative commercial law), Richard O. Kummert (U.S. – Japan corporation law), and two experts in comparative intellectual property, Paul Liu and program alumna Toshiko Takenaka, now Director of the law school’s Center for Advanced Study and Research on Intellectual Property (CASRIP). Professor Marjorie Rombauer, the first non-librarian, tenured female faculty member at the law school and author of “Legal Problem Solving: Analysis, Research and Writing,” introduced Asian students to U.S. methods of research and analysis.

Foote describes the era following his hire as “The Golden Years.” Growing numbers of students from as far away as Germany and Australia worked alongside students from Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, and Taiwan. They helped edit the program’s influential new law review, *The Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*. Coursework was cutting-edge: No other U.S. law school would boast as broad or as varied a curriculum in East Asian law. In classrooms, professors promoted interaction and inquiry. “We strived to engage students, to ask them questions,
to allow them to explore different points of view, instead of telling them how to think,” said Affiliate Professor Dan Foote, who today sits as the Chair in Sociology of Law at the University of Tokyo.

Scholarship flourished. “It was a very exciting time and a hugely important time for me personally because almost all of my major research, every book that I have written, this is where it not only started, but this is where it was finished,” said Haley, whose seminal works include “The Myth of the Reluctant Litigant,” “Authority Without Power: Law and the Japanese Paradox,” and “The Spirit of Japanese Law.”

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John O. Haley, Director of the Asian Law Program, 1988-2000

These influential publications secured a reputation that today marks Haley as one of the most important scholars in international and comparative law. In June 2012, he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon from the Emperor of Japan in recognition of his outstanding contributions to friendship between Japan and the United States. The same year, as celebrations of the Asian Law Center’s 50th anniversary commenced, the law school held a festschrift conference in his honor titled “Law in Japan and Its Role in Asia: Between East and West.”

Haley had entered the Asian Law Program in his 30s, a young protégé in Japanese scholarship. He left it in his 60s, to take a professorship at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis.

Shortly after his departure in 2000, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the eyes of the world began to focus on new corners of the Asian world. So did the eyes of the program’s incoming director, a brilliant, multilingual Australian scholar and Asian Law Program alumna named Veronica Taylor. “Suddenly everyone was interested in Muslim countries,” said Taylor. “There was a surge of interest in places like Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and particularly, Afghanistan.”

It was time, she decided, to extend the program’s geographic reach.
THE UW PROGRAM THAT HAD HELPED ESTABLISH ASIAN LAW AS A SERIOUS DISCIPLINE HAD ALSO PRODUCED SOME OF THE WORLD’S MOST SOUGHT-AFTER ACADEMICS. BY THE TIME TAYLOR STEPPED INTO THE DIRECTORSHIP, BOTH HALEY AND FOOTE HAD BEEN HIRED AWAY. “THE PROGRAM WAS, IN MANY WAYS, A VICTIM OF ITS OWN SUCCESS,” SAID TAYLOR.

EXTENDED HORIZONS

2001
Veronica Taylor L.M. ’92, appointed director of Asian Law Center, formerly Asian Law Program

2003
Asian Law Abstracts, an electronic publication on the Legal Scholarship Network, edited by Veronica Taylor and Donald Clarke
The forward-looking academic set out to rebuild the program. Taylor was determined to preserve the strong bilateral focus on Japan, Korea, and China, but also knew that, to survive, the program would have to adapt to changing international realities. "Successful lawyers and practices are nimble and adapt to changes in the world around them. So do successful organizations," she said. "It can be a painful process, but the organizations with longevity are the ones that reinvent themselves."

One of her first moves was to change the name of the program to the Asian Law Center. "I wanted to signal that this was an enterprise with education at its core, but that it was also very much engaged with research and in outreach and was able to do large-scale funded projects," she said. "It was a way of hanging out the shingle and saying 'We are not disappearing. We are open for business.' " Taylor slowly began to grow a new 21st-century faculty, adding talented academics with a wide world of interests and in-country experience.

"It can be a painful process, but the organizations with longevity are the ones that reinvent themselves.

Veronica Taylor, Director of the Asian Law Center, 2001-2010

2004

Clark Lombardi joins the faculty as Islamic law and comparative constitutional law specialist

Department of State grants Asian Law Center funding for a development project to support legal education in Afghanistan

2005

Jon Eddy, J.D. ’69, appointed project manager of the Afghan Legal Educators Program

Dongsheng Zang, visiting professor in Chinese law and Asian Law, joins the faculty full time in 2006

Asian Law Center hosts international research workshop: “New Directions in Japanese Law”
New faculty included Professor Jane K. Winn, a Chinese law researcher and leading international authority on electronic commerce law, Associate Professor Clark B. Lombardi, a specialist in Islamic law, Associate Professor Donghong Zang, focused on international trade law and the comparative study of Chinese law, and Assistant Professor Yong-Sung Jonathan Kang, a Korean law expert. The center was also drawing in other UW faculty with interests in Asia, as well as visiting professors. “We went from being one full-time Asian law faculty member — me — to having a core group of faculty all with really deep doctrinal and linguistic and country experience,” said Taylor.

The new director also hired a top-notch professional staff — all law school graduates and scholars in their own right — to help shape the program. They included Mie Murazumi, Academic Program Coordinator; Dana Raigrodski, Assistant Director (International); and Alice Stokke, Assistant Director (Projects and Finance). Recruiting them and working with them was one of the great delights of my experience at the UW,” said Taylor. “The center’s professional staff are world-class and they have provided enormous creativity and continuity.”

Taylor and associates began diversifying the center’s curriculum to draw in more J.D. students with an interest in Asian law. They also set about rebooting the Asian and Comparative Law Ph.D. program, which had only a handful of students. Within four years, it was on its way to becoming the highly competitive doctoral program that today draws academics from around the world.
Passionate about public service lawyering, Taylor wanted the center to actively engage in a wave of legal reforms sweeping Asian countries. She partnered with UW political science professor Susan Whiting on a U.S. Department of State-funded project that brought legal aid to some of China's poorest communities. She also helped secure a highly competitive U.S. Department of State grant aimed at helping legal educators rebuild legal systems and curricula in Afghanistan—a complex endeavor in a country where traditional and formal justice systems often conflict.

Leading the "Legal Education Support Program—Afghanistan" program was Jon Eddy, hired by the UW law school in 2005 and already known internationally for his work on economic development, transitional legal systems, and commercial law reform in Afghanistan, the Arabian Gulf, Ethiopia, and Indonesia.

In an innovative plan born of hallway brainstorming, Eddy and Taylor collaborated with colleagues in the UW’s Native American Law Center to introduce the Afghan students to Northwest tribes, giving the visitors a chance to see first-hand the different ways that one legal system can function within another. “Native American tribes also have issues reconciling traditional norms and external Western imports,” said Eddy, who still heads the ambitious Afghanistan program, now funded through 2017. “This was an instant success and has become a major part of the program.”
The Asian Law Program founded fifty years ago, with one faculty member and a singular focus, is today an international hub of legal thinking. It annually draws numerous researchers, senior practitioners, policymakers, and other visiting scholars from top Asian law schools and institutions. Its formal partnerships with law schools and legal institutions reach throughout Asia.

The center’s extended faculty today instructs and mentors more than fifty LL.M. and Ph.D. students in global business law, development and rule of law, Islamic law in context, and Asian and comparative law. These students hail from the far corners of the world. The current class is from Afghanistan, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. Recent rosters have also included students from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iceland, India, Iraq, Israel, Moldova, Nepal, Russia, Turkmenistan, the Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The students tackle 21st-century subjects as diverse as food safety regulations in China, self-governance by Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, antitrust regulation in Korea and in the United States, and the development of Japanese legal services, examining problems from multi-lateral points of view. “You can come here and look at an issue — whether it is human rights or the W.T.O. — and you not only have an American perspective, you get a Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian perspective,” said Eddy, who became center director in 2010 after Taylor accepted the position of Director of the School of Regulation, Justice, and Diplomacy at Australian National University.

Students are drawn to the Asian Law Center by its scholarly standing. But they are also drawn by its reputation as a small, engaged intellectual community that remains, as Haley described it decades ago, “extraordinarily close and cooperative.” The student-teacher ratio is low: 10:1. The center faculty is welcoming, and office doors are open. The teaching style is student-focused. Professors know students well, mentor them closely, and try to ensure that they accomplish their goals. “This has always been a program about quality and always about personal care and attention to the students,” said Eddy.

Faculty and staff celebrate student accomplishments, pointing with pride to the multiple deans of top law schools in Asia, the global business leaders, the leading academics, and the cabinet-level advisers who have graduated from the program.
They point to Liu Guoyuan LL.M. ’82, Vice Chairman of COSCO Hong Kong, who leads one of the largest Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong as part of a multinational enterprise focusing on shipping and logistics businesses. They cite the transformative work of alumni like Chan-Jin Kim, the very first graduate of the fledgling Ph.D. program in 1972, who returned to South Korea and became a key player in an economic development movement that transformed a poor nation to a prosperous one.

These accomplishments speak to the heart of the program, and to its survival, says Eddy. “That is the real mark of the success and the importance of the program, and that is its real continuing legacy.”

“There is not a law school in America that can match the depth and breadth of our relations in Asia.”

Jon Eddy, Director of the Asian Law Center, 2010-present
EXTENSIVE COLLECTION, EXPERT SUPPORT FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

OVER 70 YEARS, THE GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LAW SCHOOL HAS AMASSED A COLLECTION OF EAST ASIAN LAW MATERIALS THAT SCHOLARS CALL A "JEWEL" AND A "NATIONAL TREASURE."

THEIR PRAISE CENTERS AS MUCH ON THE LIBRARIANS AS ON THE LIBRARY.

"When people talk about Asian law at the University of Washington, the next sentence is always, 'What a fantastic library.' They're not just talking about the collection, which is magnificent, but also about the high caliber of the librarians. They provide unusually high levels of expertise and service," said Asian Law Center senior advisor and former director Veronica Taylor.

The esteemed library collection includes more than 23,000 titles on East Asian law in various languages, including more than 19,000 titles written in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. English titles include texts on Japanese law written by founding scholars of the Asian Law Center, with support from Gallagher's librarians. "The faculty we served in the early years could not have done the work they did without the collections and services we offered," said Gallagher Law Library Director Penny Hazeltine, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Library and Technology Services.

It was the early 1960s launch of the Asian Law Program—later renamed the Asian Law Center—that prompted law librarian and professor Marian Gould Gallagher to create the Comparative Law Department, later renamed the East Asian Law Department (EALD). The library already had an impressive collection of Japanese legal materials thanks to a donation of law books from Japan's Ministry of Justice in 1941, only a few months before the start of World War II. Under the leadership of Takiki 'Susie' Lee, EALD librarians built on that strong beginning to create a pre-eminent Japanese legal collection, renowned as one of the finest in America.

The collection’s strong focus on Japan broadened in the late ‘80s. With the hiring of Bill McCloy to head EALD and expand the Chinese and Korean materials, librarians began providing enhanced services to scholars, students, and practitioners in Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean law. Over the next two decades, under Bill’s leadership, Chinese legal collections grew nearly four times larger, and the Korean collection more than doubled.

Cataloging titles in Asian languages was a technological challenge for early library staff. With no way to type the characters, librarians had to hand-write catalog cards. And when the library moved to computerized catalogs, early programs would not accept any script except English.
Today, virtual keyboards make cataloging in the original scripts quick and efficient, and the EALD pages of the law library website provide instant worldwide access to the collection. The website has links to the latest online legal resources, including full-text court decisions, statutes, and legal articles. Rob Britt, an authority on Japanese legal research and coordinator of East Asian Library Services, has up-to-date knowledge of many complex Asian language bibliographic databases and spends hours answering questions from students, faculty, visiting scholars, professors, and practitioners. Many are Asian Law Center graduates.

“The center has alumni with prominent jobs in universities, courts, governments, and businesses in the United States and across East Asia and beyond. The library has really worked hard to keep a collection and staff that can provide the kind of research and scholarly effort alumni need,” said Hazelton, hired as library director in 1985.

In her 28 years at the library, she has watched the EALD collection evolve along with the program it was designed to serve. When the program began, students and visiting scholars were from one or two countries, she said. Now they are from dozens. Scholarly interests have also diversified and broadened. “There has been a huge change in the faculty we are serving, and the countries and the legal systems they are interested in. While we’re still collecting primarily East Asian Law, we also have to serve people who need to know about legal systems in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Indonesia.”

Change isn’t easy for libraries, she said. They’re like big aircraft carriers, hard to steer in different directions. But innovation and adaptability have been hallmarks of the dedicated EALD staff. “When you try to change directions to different priorities, it really stretches a library’s abilities,” said Hazelton. “We have done that extremely well over the years.”

EALD LIBRARIANS BILL MCCLOY AND ROB BRITT IN THE EARLY 1990s