

Law Professor to Lecture at Army JAG Center July 18

Contributed by Andrew M. Abernathy
06/30/2008

Joanne Gabrynowicz

OXFORD, Miss. - In an age when cars give directions and Web surfing can be done in the palm of your hand, advancing satellite technology that makes all of this possible is continuously being incorporated into the legal system.

As this legal framework of space law has been evolving for more than a decade, University of Mississippi law professor Joanne Gabrynowicz has established an international reputation as an expert in the field.

Director of UM's National Center for Remote Sensing, Air and Space Law and a frequent presenter at national and international conferences, Gabrynowicz has several significant speaking engagements this summer, including a lecture July 18 at the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Va.

As the 2008 Sommerfeld Lecturer in Space Law, she has titled her speech "Origins and Characteristics of Space Law Treaty Regimes." Her discussion centers on how the current legal system governing satellites has created a stable environment for military use.

"I'm going to focus on why space law is important to information operations," said Gabrynowicz, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Space Law*, which is published at the UM law school.

The lecture series was created in 1999 in honor of retired Army Col. Alan Sommerfeld, whose military career was a key factor in the development of modern military space and information operations.

Gabrynowicz is also scheduled to speak this summer at the California Institute of Technology, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and during the Caltech Management Association Leadership Forum. In the latter, her speech is titled "Celestial Speed Traps: Space Law in the 21st Century."

"Inside a month I will be talking to both military lawyers and scientists and engineers. I enjoy the diversity of it," she said.

Gabrynowicz, a graduate of Hunter College and Yeshiva University in New York City, joined the UM faculty in 2001 after being recruited from the University of North Dakota, where she was a founding member of the space studies program. She also holds degrees in history, literature and law.

Gabrynowicz said her career in space law has given her the opportunity to communicate the law to scientists and engineers in a language they understand. This can be a daunting task and requires extensive research, she said.

"The analogy I use is that if a lawyer goes into medical malpractice law then he or she has to learn something about medicine," she said. "Engineers and scientists come in to learn something about space. They really know nothing about the law, and I feel like they are better, more educated citizens when they leave."

In 2007, Gabrynowicz was elected to the board of directors for the International Institute of Space Law. As a member of the board, she advises the writing of space law in nations with developing space programs.

P.J. Blount, research counsel and instructor of law at UM, has worked with Gabrynowicz as both a student and a faculty member. "I have been able to witness not only the depth of knowledge that she has in her field but also her amazing ability to convey that knowledge to her students," he said.

Gabrynowicz was recently featured as a space law expert in the March edition of the American Bar Association Journal.

For more information about the National Center for Remote Sensing, Air and Space Law visit <http://www.spacelaw.olemiss.edu>