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Welcome and Opening Remarks Work/Life Conflict in the Legal Profession

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Women's Rights Law Reporter Symposium

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

JAMIE AMIR: Good afternoon and welcome to Rutgers Law School, administrators and faculty and our distinguished speakers and guests.

My name is Jamie Amir and this is Sarah Lechner and we are Co-Editors-in-Chief of the *Women's Rights Law Reporter*. I'd like to welcome you to this year's symposium entitled *Work/Life Conflict in the Legal Profession*. We chose this topic because it is important to everyone who enters this building. Work/Life conflicts cuts across all dimensions of family, race, ethnicity, and gender. Today we'll hear from a wide variety of speakers on the subject and we hope that will all interest and inform you.

SARAH LECHNER: Before we begin the day, Jamie and I want to express our gratitude to people without whom this would not have been possible. First and foremost, the staff and editors of the *Women's Rights Law Reporter* who have gone above and beyond in their assistance in preparing for this event.

Second, we would like to thank Deans Deutsch and Bouchoux for their continued support and guidance. We would also like to thank former EIC Jessica Kitson who has returned to Rutgers Law School in the Career Services office. We know that future editorial boards will have a good resource so long as Jessica is around.

Next we would like to thank Professor Twila Perry who serves as our faculty advisor. She has been a valuable leader and we are so

pleased that she can also join us as a panelist today.

Finally, Jamie and I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to our managing editor Ruth Rauls. Without her presence in the office keeping us in line every day, we would not be able to host an event of this magnitude.

Now I'd like to welcome Dean Deutsch who will say hello to everyone followed by Professor Tanya Hernandez who will introduce Professor Joan Williams, our keynote speaker.

DEAN DEUTSCH*: I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to Jamie and Sarah for the phenomenal leadership they've shown and for all their hard work in putting together today's symposium we're very pleased to have. And I'm pleased to welcome everybody.

We have some guests from outside, returning editors of the *Women's Rights Law Reporter* sitting in the audience who have just arrived. I see at least one - actually, I see two - some alumni come back for this. And I want to thank all of our speakers today, it's a wonderful group of people.

And just - this shouldn't detract from Professor Williams, but she and I have been friends for about twenty-five years and so I'm delighted that you're back here today. You also spoke here a couple years ago at a faculty symposium. I'm delighted that Joan has joined us today. She really is a leader and has created attention on an incredibly important topic that had some-

*Stuart L. Deutsch is the Dean of Rutgers School of Law-Newark.

how been slipping through the- I'll let Professor Hernandez.

PROFESSOR HERNANDEZ**: I'll keep this very brief because if I were to detail all the accomplishments of our keynote speaker, I'll probably take up all of her talk time.

I can think of no better person to talk to us about the Work/Life Conflict in the Legal Profession than Professor Joan Williams. She is currently a law professor at the American Law School, Washington College of Law in Washington, D.C. where she teaches Property, Women's Legal History, Feminist Jurist Prudence, and a Jurist Prudence seminar.

She is not only a law teacher, she is a prolific legal scholar. She's actually been voted one of the most prolific law professors in the country and written nearly 40 articles. Her most, sort of, noteworthy work that, at least as far as the media is concerned, all her work is noteworthy, is her book *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It*. And then a number of fascinating articles that fit very well with our topic today: *Make Way For Mothers, Using Title 7 to Deconstruct and Reconstruct Work, Restructuring Work and Family Around Family Values*.

But her work is not only that of a legal scholar, she also gets out of the ivory tower and

is the director of the program on WorkLife Law — a research and advocacy center that seeks to eliminate employment discrimination against care-givers such as parents. The mission of the center is to provide valuable information to help shape the public conversation around changes, family, and their experiences in the work place. They hope to influence the future of work so that individuals can participate in family life as they desire and deserve to do.

The work that Professor Williams and her colleagues have done in that center has received much public attention. I'll just quote one admirer of her work, a law partner that states that "Professor Williams' academic work has such relevancy to today's work place and work force. Her ideas lend themselves to immediate application."

She has stepped out of the ivory tower and into the world of thousands upon thousands of women and men who struggle. We as individuals and employers and as a nation benefit from her thinking, prodding, and belief that work and life do not have to be add-ons with one another. She is a public speaker extraordinaire. You may have already heard her comment on the National Public Radio and so it is wonderful that she is able to be with us today and I would like to welcome Professor Joan Williams.

*Tanya Hernandez is a Professor of Law and Justice Frederick W. Hall Scholar at Rutgers School of Law-Newark.