JOIN US IN REFLECTING ON HOW FAR WE'VE COME AND IN PREPARING FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES.
Since its founding in 1999, the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR) has grown as an essential catalyst for teaching, scholarship, and research. Now a part of the College of Law, UICHR continues to expand its impact on the campus, state, and world.

For the past 20 years, the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights has occupied a unique and prominent role in teaching and promoting human rights on the University of Iowa campus, throughout the State of Iowa, and across the globe. I am honored to serve as the Center’s fifth director and to lead this innovative, multidisciplinary organization as we mark its 20th anniversary and continue to fulfill the inspired vision of its founders. We are grateful to all of our friends for their continued support, and we look forward to the Center’s third decade of contributions to the advancement of human rights.

UICHR Director Adrienne W. Wing, Associate Dean of International & Comparative Law Programs, Bessie Dutton Murray Professor of Law
The UICHR's mission is to promote and protect human rights at home and abroad. We are leaders in human rights education, scholarship, and public service to The University of Iowa, its surrounding communities, the State of Iowa, and beyond. Founded in 1999 under the auspices of a small team of leaders, including Burns Weston, Dorothy Paul, Rex Honey, and Gina Croscheck, the UICHR was conceived as a unique resource and a center of inquiry. From child labor to climate change, torture to migration, UICHR has prioritized educating students, teachers, and the larger community about the pressing human rights concerns of our day.

UICHR has sponsored over 2,000 programs and events.

UICHR has provided internships on campus, in the U.S. and around the world for more than 300 students who have worked with human rights advocates from over 25 countries.

UICHR has generated approximately $2 million in contracts, grants, and donations.

UICHR has collaborated with hundreds of organizations in the U.S. and around the world to empower human rights activists such as Human Rights Watch, The Advocates for Human Rights, National Immigrant Justice Center, and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Alumni of UICHR are working at such organizations as the ACLU, Freedom House, World Health Organization, United Nations Association, in academia, and in government service.

UICHR has taught over 2,000 University of Iowa students in human rights courses.

UICHR-supported publications have been utilized in more than 1,000 classroom and continuing education settings around the world.
I was drawn to the center because of the amazing staff, outstanding scholarly research, and commitment to think globally, but act locally… The UICHR’s nurturing leaders and commitment to engaging all members of a community in discussions around human rights left a lasting impression on me.

GIRLIA MAHAJAN, FORMER UICHR INTERN

The UICHR engages students and Iowa residents through a variety of programs and initiatives on campus and in communities throughout the state. We regularly partner with a wide range of civic, educational, and faith organizations to maximize our reach.

ACTIVITIES WITH LOCAL IMPACT:

• Public Lectures and Panel Discussions—free public forums featuring internationally renowned human rights authors, scholars, and activists
• Community Dialogues—Partnership with the Iowa City Human Rights Commission featuring area residents telling stories related to diversity and human rights.
• Make it Better, Iowa—Conference, supported by a Catalyst Award, fostering community dialogue about the effects of bullying and discrimination, and promoting the rights of LGBTQ youth and young adults.
• Protecting Rights of Detained Immigrants & Asylum Seekers—Educational program about detained immigrants in Iowa, detention standards and issues, and facilitation of and assistance for legal-service providers.
• Celebrate Voting!—Collaboration with the League of Women Voters, The UI Iowa Women’s Archive, and the State of Iowa to educate about the history of voting in the U.S. and to recognize the legacy of voting rights activists in the state.
• Improving Mental Health Care for New Iowans—Conducting intervention-based studies to address health inequities in new immigrant communities.

One Community, One Book is an example of UICHR’s sustained community programming. To engage the local community in human rights education, UICHR—in collaboration with area stakeholders—selects a book that explores human rights challenges and possibilities for social change through the power of storytelling. The One Community, One Book program brings the author to campus and provides a variety of discussion forums, lectures, and films on the topics addressed in the book throughout Iowa City and surrounding communities.

2001 The Last Summer of Reason; Tahar Dajout
2002 First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers; Loung Ung
2003 Bel Canto; Ann Patchett
2004 The Kite Runner; Khaled Hosseini
2005 When the Emperor Was Divine; Julie Otsuka
2006 Blood Done Sign My Name; Tim Tyson
2007 A Long Way Gone: Ismael Beah (all incoming first year students included in project)
2008 Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year in Food Life; Barbara Kingsolver
2009 Gardens of Water; Alan Drew
2010 Zeitoun; Dave Eggers
2011 The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir; Kao Kalia Yang
2012 The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind; William Kamkwamba
2013 The Distance Between Us; Reyna Grande
2014 Just Mercy; Bryan Stevenson
2015 Without You, There is No Us; Suk Kim
2017 The Butterfly Mosque; G. Willow Wilson
2018 Reading With Patrick; Michelle Koo
2019 The Faraway Brothers; Lauren Markham

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Through hundreds of convenings, trainings, policy consultations, outreach programs, white papers, monitoring, and reporting, UICHR has worked with non-governmental, governmental and intergovernmental organizations around the world to conduct research, assist with policy development, and participate in human rights protection mechanisms. UICHR has enabled University of Iowa students to gain experiential knowledge about and to assist in the work of human rights advocates in countries throughout Central America, Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa, and North America.

Our global reach is exemplified by in-depth, cutting-edge projects that engage advocates and leaders from around the world.

WE ARE GLOBAL

ACTIVITIES WITH GLOBAL IMPACT:

• Child Labor Research Initiative—Multi-year project producing curriculum and teacher training opportunities, a unique on-line database of child labor law, and a significant multidisciplinary textbook.

• Climate Legacy Initiative—Partnership with the Vermont Law School promoting innovative legal responses to global climate change, including a widely disseminated white paper and sparking a UICHR-led lecture series and Iowa-based Climate change teacher institute.

• Courage of Conviction Award—Recognition of extraordinary individuals from around the world with long-standing commitment to human rights principles.

• Academic and practitioner conferences on cutting edge human rights research—International research symposia and forums on issues such as addressing sexual violence in conflict zones, the intersection of immigration and labor rights, and the history and future of refugee resettlement locally and internationally.

• Human Rights Index—Unique, thematic, curated list of statistics illustrating a global human rights challenge, published periodically with the Iowa Review.

My time with UICHR has continued to be invaluable to my development as a human rights advocate and still influences my career goals even after a number of years have passed. Through the Center, I was exposed to a variety of local services and organizations; worked with and found inspiration in others who are invested in human rights; and gained practical work experience, which is something I was unable to find elsewhere in my degree program.

KERRY LAD, FORMER UICHR INTERN
WE EDUCATE

UICHR is committed to educating and serving learners at every level. Through our Certificate Program in Human Rights, we work with passionate post-secondary students, providing them with practical and theoretical knowledge about human rights disciplinary frameworks, law, and advocacy. UICHR works with students of all ages through internship programs, public events, workshops, institutional partnerships, adult continuing education initiatives, and engagement with experienced K-12 educators. As the only human rights research and teaching center in the state of Iowa, UICHR is committed to remaining a vibrant, responsive resource for Iowans and all members of our global community.

ACTIVITIES THAT EDUCATE:

• Kenneth J. Cmiel Internship Awards—Support for students working for local human rights organizations worldwide over a summer.

• Certificate in Human Rights—An 18 credit hour academic program for undergraduates providing an interdisciplinary perspective on human rights and skill development in the application and use of human rights law for advocacy.

• Burns H. Weston Internship Award—Annually-funded professional development experience in human rights practice for law students.

• Rex Honey Undergraduate Internship Program—Program for UI students to work directly with UICHR staff to support programs and advance knowledge of human rights issues through research, education, and outreach.

• Burns H. Weston International Human Rights Essay Prize Competition—Recognition of excellence in student research at all three Regents universities.

• Careers for Change Lecture Series—Program to bring those working in the field of social justice to campus to share their experiences with students.

• IOWA Human Rights Research Conference—Annual showcase of student human rights scholarship from colleges and universities across the Midwest organized by the Iowa Network of Human Rights Academics.

• Infusing Human Rights into the Curriculum—Workshops for faculty on campus and educators from across the state to enhance human rights education in Iowa schools.
The Center excels in creating spaces in which surprising synergies form... Human rights scholarship and artistic production are dependent on what people say and do within the arenas of teaching, civic life, community service, and advocacy.

UICHR is an institution that takes seriously the charge to integrate inquiry, creativity, and activism.

DIANA CATES, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND UICHR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

For the past 20 years, UICHR has committed itself to serving locally and globally through collaborative, innovative programming designed to equip groups and individuals to take on the most pressing human rights challenges facing our world.

My volunteer work and internship with the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights were some of the most important experiences in my time in law school... I learned that sometimes, international human rights work is a very local endeavor. Because of programs available through UICHR, I engaged with advocates across our state in the legal, faith, and human rights communities who were working heroically to protect... rights. Because of the UICHR human rights internship funding, I was able to afford to travel to and live in New York City during my second summer in law school to work at the national ACLU, where I was exposed to the use of impact-litigation as a tool to protect and promote constitutionally protected human rights... UICHR provided a way for me to connect with other students and UICHR's phenomenal staff, who were actively engaged in scholarship and education related to human rights. That connection kept me in touch with the reasons I became interested in becoming a lawyer in the first place.

RITA BETTIS AUSTEN, LEGAL DIRECTOR, ACLU OF IOWA AND FORMER KENNETH J. CMIELE INTERNSHIP AND MIDWEST COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FELLOW WITH JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS
He sees the leaves fly free.
She sees the wild horse and the sparrow.
Free to labor, to consort with their kind, to choose or be chosen.
He sees them fed and feeding, mindful of the season.
She hears the continents shifting, he smells the air of change.
He tastes the wind-borne soot of rebirth.
She feels the human cry in her bones.
What can they do to gain our attention?
Shall he dance, shall he spin in the air, shall he vote with his feet, with his voice, with the shells of his burning ears?
Shall she tell the world to hear the world’s crying?
Shall she number the bodies, the prison, the pyres, shall be mark the graves, display the bloody shackles?
How many pairs of disembodied heads will it take?
How many detached hands and feet?
How many hollow cheeks, empty stomachs, vacant eyes?
How many skulls without memory?
He has been there, she has seen it, they have lived and died a long time.
He has something to say about who did what.
She has something to say about the living.
Let history honor the murmurs of conscience that are heard above ground.
Let praise flow to those who unclenched a fist.
Who granted men and women the freedom of the sparrow.
Who taught us to think twice.
Who showed us that famine is not a fast.
That exile is the last step.
That the rights of the few must be written down by the many.
She sees the leaves fly free.
He sees the wild horse and the sparrow.
Free to work, to consort with their kind, to choose or be chosen.
She sees them fed and feeding, mindful of the season.
He hears the continents shifting, she smells the air of change.
She tastes the wind-borne soot of rebirth.
He feels the human cry in his bones.
Marvin Bell
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This poem is a literary interpretation of the meaning of the UDHR, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the document. It was re-dedicated to the UICHR by the poet to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UICHR and reflects the UICHR’s commitment to and understanding of the arts as a powerful force for human rights protection and promotion, and essential to the realization of human dignity. Founding Director Burns Weston was committed to the integration of what he called “the cognitive and the creative” and believed the two must work in tandem to make human rights a matter of mind and heart and ultimately a holistic engagement of the human person. In this spirit, UICHR continues to collaborate with artists locally and globally.