

# Disability Rights at the College of Law: A Retrospective Look at the ADA and the DLPP

**Friday, September 25, 2020**

Join moderator, Professor Arlene Kanter, Director of Disability Law and Policy Program and Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor of Teaching Excellence with panelists:

## **Arlene Kanter, Moderator**

**Professor, Director of Disability Law and Policy Program and Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor of Teaching Excellence, Syracuse University College of Law**

Professor Kanter is the founder and Director of the College of Law's Disability Law and Policy Program (DLPP) and the Faculty Director of International Programs.

The DLPP houses the nation's most extensive disability law program, including joint degrees, certificates, clinics and externships, and the first LL.M. Program in the US with a specialization in international human rights and comparative disability law.

Professor Kanter is an internationally acclaimed expert in international and comparative disability law. She publishes and lectures extensively on domestic and international human rights and disability law and policy. Her recent book, *The Development of Disability Rights Under International Law: From Charity to Human Rights* (Routledge, 2015, 2017) traces the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). She is co-author (with Beth Ferri) of *Righting Educational Wrongs: Disability Studies in Law and Education* (Syracuse Univ. Press, 2014). This is the first book to bring together scholars from the fields of law, education, and disability studies. She also co-authored the first law casebook on international and comparative disability law, and has published over 100 articles and book chapters on topics related to international human rights and comparative disability law, US disability and special education laws, inclusive education, violence against women with disabilities, mental health law, legal personhood, and alternatives to guardianship.

From 2001-06, Professor Kanter worked with the UN committee on drafting the CRPD. Since then, she has worked with governments and disability organizations on implementing the CRPD in more than a dozen countries. She has been invited to speak at the UN General Assembly, the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. She is currently an expert consultant to the UN Rapporteur on Disability as well as several international and domestic disability organizations.

In Fall 2017, Professor Kanter was a visiting scholar at Harvard Law School. In Spring 2018, she was awarded the prestigious Lady Davis Fellowship at Hebrew University Faculty of Law. Previously, she was named the 2010-11 Distinguished Switzer Fellow by the US Department of Education's National Disability Rehabilitation Research Institute, and the 2010-11 Fulbright Scholar at Tel Aviv University.

Professor Kanter is co-editor of the *Critical Disability Series at Syracuse University Press*, founder and editor of the *SSRN Journal on Disability Law*, co-founder of the Disability Law Section of the American Association of Law Schools, and co-founder of the Disability Collaborative Research Group of the Law and Society Association. She is a former Commissioner of the American Bar Association's Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law.

At SU, Professor Kanter is a recipient of the University's highest teaching award, the Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professorship of Teaching Excellence, and the Bond, Schoeneck and King Distinguished Professorship of Law. Professor Kanter also has been honored for her work in disability rights by the New York State Bar Association, the International Center of Syracuse, ARISE, and the Israel Center for Human Rights. At the College of Law, Professor Kanter has served as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Director of Clinical Legal Education, and founder and Director of the Externship Program. She teaches disability law, international human rights and comparative disability law, public interest lawyering, and other courses. Professor Kanter holds a courtesy appointment in the School of Education. Prior to joining the faculty in 1988, Professor Kanter taught at Georgetown University Law Center and practiced public interest law at a national disability rights organization in Washington, DC, now known as the Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law, where she represented clients before the United States Supreme Court and Congress.

## **Robert Borrelle L'13,**

**Staff Attorney, Disability Rights California**

Robert is a Supervising Attorney at Disability Rights California (DRC) and part of DRC's Youth Practice Group where he represents youth with disabilities in special education and disability discrimination matters. Prior to his current position, he was an Equal Justice Fellow at Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund in Berkeley, CA, and before that, he was a teacher in a public school in Massachusetts. He graduated from SUCOL with the joint degree in law and education, specializing in disability and special education law.

## **Jennifer Conrad Wolfsheimer L'06**

**U.S. Department of Education**

Jennifer is an Education Program Specialist with the U.S. Department of Education in the Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSSEO). Prior to joining this office, Jennifer was the Disability Rights Program Manager for the Equal Rights Center in Washington, DC., where she worked to increase access to public accommodations for people with disabilities. She also has worked as Commissioner of the Montgomery County MD Commission on People with Disabilities; Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy and Legal Intern at The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, and Protection and Advocacy organizations in New York and California. At SUCOL she received the joint degree in law and education, specializing in disability and special education law.

## **Julie Morse L'05**

**Legal Services of Central New York**

Julie is a 2005 graduate of Syracuse University College of Law and the School of Education where she received a joint degree in law and disability studies. She has been a Staff Attorney at Legal Services of Central New York since September 2005. From 2005 to 2007, she was a Skadden Fellow at LSCNY concentrating on Olmstead issues. From 2007 to 2014, Ms. Morse represented people with disabilities in education and home care cases. Since 2014, she has represented people in public benefits cases.

## **Daniel Van Sant L'16**

**Special Education Attorney, Disability Rights Iowa**

Daniel is a disabled attorney representing students with disabilities and their families at all levels of dispute resolution, monitors facilities where children reside, and spearheads an outreach project for students with disabilities who are also English Language Learners. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa where he teaches an undergraduate course titled, "Disability Culture and Law." Previously, he was a staff attorney at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid where he represented survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence. His international experience includes conducting research and visits to facilities for people with disabilities in Japan, Taiwan, India, and Vietnam. He is also a former summer intern at the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) in Berkeley, California and was a United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD) Youth in International Development and Affairs Fellow at Human Rights Watch in Washington, D.C.

## **Carla Villarreal Lopez LL.M.'16**

**UN Office of the Special Rapporteur on Disability**

Carla is an attorney from Peru who received her LL.M. at SUCOL in 2017, as a Disability Rights Fellow, funded by the Open Society Foundation. In Peru as a professor at Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and as a human rights attorney, she specialized in the rights of children and women particularly those with disabilities. For the past two years she has been the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation International Public Policy Fellow supporting the Office of the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities where she works with the Special Rapporteur to develop strategies to implement the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. She is also the first SUCOL student ever to win the SU Robert B. Menschel Public Service Fellowship, which allows her to work for a summer at Women Enabled International in D.C.

## **Koert Wehberg L'08**

**Executive Director, Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Disability**

Koert is one of this year's five law alumni honor recipients. He is currently the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities. During COVID-19, he collaborated with other city agencies and nonprofits to develop a program to deliver food to residents with disabilities who are unable to leave their homes. Prior to his current position, he was an Equal Justice Works Fellow at the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc. where he specialized in race and disability discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment. He also worked at Disability Rights PA, first as a staff attorney and then as a project director in 2017. He graduated from SUCOL with a Curricular Program Certificate.

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