



Rebecca French named to head Baldy Center

The Baldy Center is an endowed, internationally recognized institute that supports the interdisciplinary study of law and legal institutions.

UB Law Professor Rebecca Redwood French, a Roger and Karen Jones Faculty Scholar, has been named director of the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy at the Law School, Dean Makau Mutua announced. An international authority in law and anthropology, French did her landmark research on the Buddhist legal system of Tibet.

French's appointment took effect Aug. 16. She succeeds Lynn Mather, a distinguished political scientist in the area of law and the courts, who came from Dartmouth College to Buffalo to head the Baldy Center in 2002.

The Baldy Center is an endowed, internationally recognized institute that supports the interdisciplinary study of law and legal institutions. More than 100 UB faculty members from 17 academic departments participate in Baldy Center research, conference and scholarship activities, as do an increasing number of graduate students. The center maintains cooperative ties to other interdisciplinary research centers and co-sponsors a regional network of socio-legal scholars in New York State and Canada. The Baldy Center also hosts distinguished scholars from around the world as visitors, speakers and conference participants.

"I am delighted that Rebecca French has agreed to lead this crucial component of the Law School's research mission," Mutua said. "Her experience in studying comparative law, and her enthusiasm for the possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches to the law, can only strengthen the unique mission of the Baldy Center at the University at Buffalo and beyond. As we continue to enhance UB Law School's academic reputation nation-

ally and internationally, the Baldy Center will play an important part in our continued success."

French joined UB Law School from the University of Colorado School of Law, where she conducted the research for her groundbreaking book *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet*. The project was an outgrowth of her interest in Asian legal systems and her experience at Yale University, where she earned both the master of laws degree and a Ph.D. in anthropology. A philosophy major as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, she earned her J.D. degree from the University of Washington Law School. She served for three years as a public defender, and for four years in general practice, in the Pacific Northwest.

As an expert in Tibetan law, she has spearheaded the development of the new discipline of Law and Buddhism and has organized the first international conferences and working groups in this area. French was instrumental in bringing to UB the Dalai Lama, the exiled religious leader of the Tibetan Buddhist community, for a much-heralded three-day visit in September 2006 which included the first-ever discussion and conference with the Dalai Lama on law, Buddhism and social change. In addition, Cambridge University Press next year is publishing the first comprehensive volume on the topic, *The Cambridge Companion to Law and Buddhism*, edited by French. A current major research project involves bringing the tools of anthropology to bear on 2,500 cases involving religion in the United States.

French also has appointed Laura Mangan, a longtime Baldy Center staff member, as deputy director of the center.

"Her experience in studying comparative law, and her enthusiasm for the possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches to the law, can only strengthen the unique mission of the Baldy Center at the University at Buffalo and beyond."

— Dean Makau W. Mutua



French was instrumental in bringing to UB the Dalai Lama, the exiled religious leader of the Tibetan Buddhist community, for a much-heralded three-day visit in September 2006 which included the first-ever discussion and conference with the Dalai Lama on law, Buddhism and social change.