

Princeton University

HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVING EMERITUS STATUS



May 2017

The biographical sketches were written by staff and colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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LAWRENCE ROSEN



One of the foremost legal anthropologists in the United States, Lawrence Rosen will retire from Princeton in 2017 after forty years. Throughout his career, Larry's research focused on Islamic law, Native American legal cases, and the embeddedness of cultural presumptions in legal reasoning. Larry's vast body of scholarship illustrates that ethical and moral "truths" are subject to community negotiation, a finding that challenges theories of Natural Law.

Larry grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family in a Catholic neighborhood on the Ohio/Kentucky border. Given his early experiences, it is hardly surprising that Larry became an anthropologist. Whether it was observing Christian holidays, or working summers and weekends with Appalachian mechanics at his father's small auto dealership, the sheer range of human variation inspired a lifelong curiosity about how others make sense of the world.

While a student at Brandeis University, Larry spent his junior year at the University of London and the Paris-Sorbonne University and discovered the discipline of anthropology. Originally hoping to do fieldwork in Indonesia, the mass killings from 1965-66 forced him to rethink his fieldsite. It was Clifford Geertz, his graduate adviser at the University of Chicago, who invited Larry to join him and Hildred Geertz in Morocco. After a crash course in Moroccan Arabic, Larry arrived in North Africa in the fall of 1965.

In Morocco, his fieldsites included the small city of Sefrou as well as small communities in the Middle Atlas mountains. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, Larry accepted a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study and an assistant professorship in the anthropology department at the University of Illinois - Urbana from 1968-71. During that time, he conducted research for the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations at the University of Chicago. He then joined his former graduate adviser from 1970-71 at the newly formed School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. His extensive collaborations with Clifford and Hildred Geertz culminated in a

coauthored book titled *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (1979).

While completing his now classic ethnography on Morocco, Larry decided it was time to revisit his doctoral field data on Moroccan Islamic law courts. Building on a longstanding interest in comparative law, he returned to the University of Chicago to attend law school. He gravitated to the study of indigenous rights and interned with the Native American Rights Fund to work on a number of cases involving various Indian legal claims. These experiences culminated in an edited volume entitled *The American Indian and the Law* (1976).

Upon the completion of his law degree and admission to the bar, in 1974 Larry accepted an appointment as an associate professor at Duke Cultural Anthropology with an adjunct appointment in their School of Law. In 1977, he was offered an appointment as a professor of anthropology by Princeton University, and in 1979 was simultaneously appointed as an adjunct professor at Columbia Law School. He held both positions until his retirement. Larry's career is also distinguished by his membership to the bars of the United States Supreme Court, the State of North Carolina, and the Federal Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit. In addition, he nobly led Princeton's Department of Anthropology for over a decade.

Throughout his career, Larry published a dozen books including *Bargaining For Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (1984), *The Anthropology of Justice: Law as Culture in Islamic Societies* (1989), and more recently *Varieties of Muslim Experience: Encounters with Arab Cultural and Political Life* (2007) and *Two Arabs, a Berber, and a Jew: Moroccan Lives Entangled* (2015). He also edited a second volume titled *Other Intentions: Culture Contexts and the Attribution of Inner States* (1995). His articles and reviews have appeared in *The London Review of Books*, *The American Scholar*, *The New York Times*, and many other publications.

In 1981, he was named to the first group of MacArthur "Genius Grant" Award recipients. In addition, he received the J. B. Donne Essay Prize of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and has been a visiting professor at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and Georgetown Law Center. He served as a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Lecturer and has been a visiting fellow at Corpus Christi College at University of Cambridge

and elected a member of commons at Wolfson College at University of Oxford. He has also held fellowships at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, The School of Advanced Research, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the American Bar Foundation, and has been a visiting scholar at the University of Arizona. His research has been supported by grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, The National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health. At Princeton, Larry is a founding faculty fellow of Rockefeller College and has received the President's Committee on the Status of Women Award, the Ombudsman's Award for Civility, and the Princeton Women's Organization Award.

Larry has always taken special pleasure in teaching, whether undergraduates (for which he won the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching), graduate students (for which he received the Graduate Mentoring Award), or through the many alumni talks he has given over the years. An avid sailor, Larry holds a U.S. Coast Guard captain's license and certification from the Royal Yachting Association. In the year following his retirement, he will return to the Institute for Advanced Study to work on a book about tribes. Later projects include further studies in the anthropology of art and the rights of indigenous peoples. Given Larry's outsized role in our department as a true mensch, his colleagues and students will continue to draw from his wisdom and leadership well into the future.