

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

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No matter where you are or how you want to measure it, 2020 has pretty much been a terrible year in the United States, as it has been around the world. A viral pandemic has upended lives; it has shuttered businesses, thrown governments into chaos, closed schools, and forced colleges and universities to kick students out of classrooms. As of 10:04 a.m. CET, November 25, 2020, there have been 59,204,902 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,397,139 deaths, reported to the World Health Organization.<sup>1</sup> More than 250,000 of those deaths have occurred here in the United States. And it's worse right now than it's ever been. And yet, here we are at Thanksgiving with plenty to be thankful for.

I did some quick research about Thanksgiving, expecting to find that it is “a uniquely American and Canadian holiday,” or words to that effect. Instead, I was interested to learn that it is a much more global observance than that. While it may have had its origins in colonial US history, Wikipedia (don't judge) reports that Thanksgiving is also celebrated in Canada, Brazil, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Liberia, and in places like Leiden, Norfolk Island, and the inhabited territories of the United States. There are similar festivals in Germany and Japan.<sup>2</sup> This more international aspect of the holiday was a bit of a surprise to me, but it's also nice to learn that others all around the world also observe this time for giving thanks – even in these troubled times.

Over the years, many authors and editors of other newspapers, journals, magazines, blogs and other print and electronic periodicals, and even books, have observed Thanksgiving by creating lists of things for which they are thankful, I have never done that. So, in this year which has been so full of chaos, loss, anxiety, suffering, and strife, I want to change the focus to the hopeful and actually count some of my many blessings. So, here is a partial list of who and what I am thankful for:

I am thankful for teachers, professors, and educators of all kinds. Amid all of the turmoil, they work hard to continue to educate our young people, despite risks to themselves, frustrations over technology, and uncertainty because of constantly changing circumstances. We have learned again how important our schools are to our society, and we're grateful that ours are so good. That's because of the hard work of people at the K-12 and university levels.

I am thankful for librarians. They have completely re-envisioned how libraries operate during a crisis like a global pandemic. Our profession's collective skill, dedication, innovation, and service to the common good have been a marvel to see. I have been truly inspired by my law library colleagues, and I expect that many of you have been similarly inspired by your library colleagues, too.

I am grateful for medical professionals. Their expertise, their unceasing care, and their willingness to accept risk on behalf of the public good has earned gratitude from everyone.

I am thankful for technological advances. Computers and other technology allow many of us to work from home as efficiently as from our workplaces. This means that for many of us, we don't have to exchange safety for employment and progress.

I am thankful for scientific advances. Vaccines are currently in various stages of testing, approval, and production, all thanks to the tireless work of scientists and researchers.

I am grateful for friends. We all have them. They keep us sane. They keep us grounded. They keep us human. They pull us through.

I am grateful for my family. We won't be together this Thanksgiving, but I am grateful nonetheless, because they make me who I am, and they are who I go through my life with, whether we are together in person or not.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjZ\\_cw4ae7QIVgp6zCh1TTAA0EAAAYASAAEgJQkvD\\_BwE](https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjZ_cw4ae7QIVgp6zCh1TTAA0EAAAYASAAEgJQkvD_BwE) (Last visited November 25, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving> (Last visited November 25, 2020).

So, here's a virtual toast to all of that. Even in times as challenging as these, there is still a lot to be thankful for.

And that introduction, readers, provides a segue into the contents of this issue of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL INFORMATION (IJLI). First, we open with yet another tribute to one of our profession's brightest, lights, **Dan Wade**. Dan passed away earlier this year from a long illness. This is yet another terrible loss this year – and an irreplaceable one for those who knew and cared about him. Dan was such a warm, kind, caring spirit, with a very sharp wit, a robust sense of humor, and a fierce intellect. He was a towering figure in the world of foreign, comparative, and international law librarianship, and remembering him cannot help but make me smile. And that is exactly how I believe he would want to be remembered – with a smile rather than tears.

I worked closely with Dan at the Yale Law Library for about eight years and got to know him very well during that time. He was a major influence on my life and my career. There have already been a number of tributes to him in other publications, and I know of more to come in the future. But even though others have paid tribute to Dan and all he has done for our profession, I also believed it was necessary to celebrate his life and his career here in the pages of the IJLI. I made a call for submissions and was so pleased that three FCIL colleagues very quickly stepped up to pen their tributes to Dan. The authors are **Mary Rumsey**, **Marylin Raisch**, and **Jennifer Allison**. All three share different aspects of Dan's life and his influences on them, painting a personal and a more rounded picture of the man who shaped and influenced so many law librarians. I know many of you have your own memories of Dan.

Following the tribute to Dan Wade, there are three strong feature articles in this issue. The first is a piece by **Sarah Alshahrani**. It focuses on how the international investment law evolved over history in Egypt and much of northern Africa. The author investigates the history of signing investment treaties in that part of the world, then explains when control over foreign investment started to diminish during the Ottoman Empire period. Alshahrani addresses the impact of colonization and imperialism on drafting treaty provisions. Within this historical context, her article illustrates the need to understand the roots of international investment law in order to urge Arab countries to either terminate or renegotiate current bilateral investment treaties. It is a thought-provoking and important piece.

**Aseem Rahni** authored a short piece on the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic on Indian law, with a primary focus on commercial law. His article illustrates some of the unintended and/or unexpected consequences of disruptions in the supply chain—and other aspects of business—caused by the pandemic. He structures the piece around when and how force majeure and the Doctrine of Frustration come into play, particularly in contracts that have been affected in some way by the pandemic. Rahni's article is accessible and easy to read. It is the first piece I have seen that directly addresses the effects of the pandemic on the law.

The final article is by **Zia Akhtar**. The author argues that legal software is the main vehicle for the application of artificial intelligence within an increasingly specialized field of law. Akhtar contends that it is necessary for legal professionals to stay up-to-date on computerized research skills and digitized legal information or risk losing out in the information supply chain.

Of course, this issue also contains our very popular Book Reviews, edited by **Caroline Osborne**, and the International Calendar, edited by **Amy Flick**. As you can see, there is much to read – and be thankful for – in the pages of this issue of the IJLI. I hope you add the IJLI to your own list of things for which you are grateful this year!

*Mark Engsberg, Editor  
International Journal of Legal Information  
Hugh F. MacMillan Law Library  
Emory University School of Law*