


2023

The Conference of Religiously Affiliated Law Schools Foreword

Samuel J. Levine

Touro Law Center, slevine8@tourolaw.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/lawreview>

 Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#), [Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility Commons](#), and the [Legal Profession Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Levine, Samuel J. (2023) "The Conference of Religiously Affiliated Law Schools Foreword," *Touro Law Review*. Vol. 38: No. 4, Article 3.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/lawreview/vol38/iss4/3>

This Symposium: The Religiously Affiliated Law Schools Conference is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Touro Law Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Touro Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Touro Law Center. For more information, please contact lross@tourolaw.edu.

**THE CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED LAW
SCHOOLS
FOREWORD**

*Samuel J. Levine**

On September 15-16, 2022, Touro Law Center, *Touro Law Review*, and the Jewish Law Institute hosted a national conference, “The Past, Present & Future of Religiously Affiliated Law Schools.”¹ The Touro conference was the latest in a series of biennial conferences, organized by the Association of Religious Affiliated Law Schools (“RALS”), dating back to 1994.²

Previous conferences had been hosted at schools based in different geographical areas and representing various religious affiliations, including the law schools at Baylor University, Boston College, Brigham Young University, Marquette University, Notre Dame University, Pepperdine University, Regent University, St. John’s University, and the University of St. Thomas—and, back in 2012, Touro. However, the conference had not been held in recent years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a number of other factors. The 2022 conference thus represented an important step forward for RALS, both resuming the scheduling of the conference and providing an opportunity for conference participants to once again attend an in-person event—the first, for many, since the outbreak of the virus.

The conference proceedings included presentations by university leaders, law school deans and faculty, judges, and lawyers from across the country, who examined a wide range of topics: Religion in the

* Professor of Law & Director of the Jewish Law Institute, Touro Law Center; Conference Organizer. I thank the conference co-organizers, Jeff Brauch, Rick Garnett, and Mark Osler, and all of the conference participants. As always, I thank the administration, faculty, staff, and students at Touro Law Center for their support, encouragement, and participation, and the editors and staff of the *Touro Law Review* for their work in organizing the conference and this Conference Issue.

¹ See https://www.tourolaw.edu/academics/jewish_law_institute_conferences_

² See Steven M. Barkan, *The First Conference of Religiously Affiliated Law Schools: An Overview*, 78 MARQ. L. REV. 247 (1995).

Intellectual Life of the Law School; Religion and Faculty Hiring; Religious Thought in Criminal Law Scholarship and Advocacy; Religion and the Practice of Law; and Religious Liberty Advocacy. In addition, the conference featured an interactive panel discussion among several university leaders and a keynote address delivered by Professor Russell Pearce, both dedicated to a broad exploration of the overall conference theme.³

Finally, in addition to the presentations, the conference included two sessions highlighting the prominence of Touro's religious affiliation within the life of the Law School: a tour of the Central Islip State Hospital Cemetery, which Touro is in the process of restoring in partnership with the New York State Office of Mental Health,⁴ and a tour of Touro Gould Law Library's Abraham Goldstein and Lillie Goldstein Judaica Collection, which houses scholarly materials dedicated to Jewish law, Jewish philosophy, and Jewish history.⁵

The articles published in this Conference Issue of the *Touro Law Review* provide a sampling of the papers presented at the conference, illustrating the abiding relevance of these topics within religiously affiliated law schools and beyond. Moreover, building on the legacy of past RALS conferences and the corresponding body of scholarship that has emerged, this Conference Issue represents the next stage in ongoing conversations about the past, the present, and—most significantly—the future of religiously affiliated law schools.

³ For a full conference schedule, see https://www.tourolaw.edu/pdf/rals_conference_program.pdf; For video recordings of the conference proceedings, see https://www.tourolaw.edu/academics/jewish_law_institute_conferences.

⁴ See <https://www.tourolaw.edu/academics/1238>.

⁵ See https://www.tourolaw.edu/academics/judaica_collection.