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EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

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THE FOURTH ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND JUSTICE SYMPOSIUM ISSUE

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Annual Environmental Law and Justice Symposium, “Empowering Environmental Justice Communities Locally and Globally,” was held on November 7-8, 2013 at Florida A&M College of Law. Hosted jointly by Florida A&M’s College of Law and School of the Environment, the event convened more than two dozen speakers and moderators in a two-day format that considered local, state, national, and international dimensions of the challenges that environmental justice communities face and explored proposed strategies for addressing those challenges.

The event featured keynote lectures from distinguished speakers from government and academia. Several panels also addressed a wide range of topics including international finance, human rights, and the environment; substantive and procedural legal protections for indigenous peoples; the use of Title VI as a potential environmental justice remedy; and combating the encroachment of toxicity in environmental justice communities. The symposium program is available here: http://www.law.famu.edu/download/file/FAMU_Program.pdf

The symposium also featured several unique and memorable dimensions including a roundtable of published and recognized Florida A&M College of Law student scholars on environmental justice topics, the Second Annual “Sustainable U” poster competition, and an encore performance from 2011 of the internationally acclaimed poetry slam duo, “Climbing Poetree,” who delivered a riveting and inspiring multimedia performance addressing compelling messages of social and environmental justice. A poignant addition to the symposium was the annual display of the Lake Apopka Farmworker Memorial Quilts, prepared as a tribute to the lives of deceased farmworkers who worked the muck farms on Lake Apopka in Central Florida.

The symposium would not have been possible without the generous support of its sponsors: Florida A&M School of the Environment, Florida A&M College of Law, the Center for International Law and Justice, the Environmental and Land Use Law Section of the Florida Bar, and several university and College of Law student organizations including the Environmental Law Society, FAMU Green Coalition, Environmental Sciences Student Organization, Black Law Students

Association, Hispanic American Law Students Association, Asian Pacific Islander Law Students Association, American Association for Justice, Federalist Society, and the Florida A&M University *Law Review*.

The articles in this symposium issue of the Florida A&M University *Law Review* build on what was already a major environmental justice event. Leading environmental law scholars from two of the top environmental law programs in the nation contributed to this issue. Professor Mary Wood, an internationally recognized scholar on environmental and natural resources law at the University of Oregon School of Law, published the keynote address that she delivered at the symposium. Her speech examines the legal foundations of a new litigation theory that she developed known as “atmospheric trust litigation,” which offers a new ray of hope for climate justice litigation in the U.S. and abroad. Professor Jessica Scott of Vermont Law School addresses another dimension of climate justice in her article regarding how the law should address the plight of environmentally displaced persons in the wake of climate change impacts. Several U.S.-based attorneys and a political science professor from the University of Central Florida contributed articles in this issue on cutting-edge topics on environmental justice at the local, state, and national levels. In addition, a lawyer from India and a scholar from Germany also contributed valuable articles to this issue. Two excellent student-written articles that address local and international environmental justice issues complete this comprehensive environmental law and justice symposium issue. We hope that you find these articles to be informative and inspiring catalysts for change in addressing the needs of environmental justice communities throughout the nation and the world.

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