Loyola adds to roster this year

By Jerry Crimmins
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Two new appointees, a scholar in international human rights raised in Kenya and a longtime faculty member for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy, joined Loyola University Chicago School of Law this semester.

James Gathii, 44, from Albany Law School, originally from central Kenya, now holds Loyola's Wing-Tat Lee Chair in International Law.

Zelda B. Harris from the James E. Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona — who also taught in the annual National Institute for Trial Advocacy program for the last 10 years at Loyola Chicago — has become the new director of Loyola's Dan K. Webb Center for Advocacy.

Harris succeeds James P. Carey, who retired. Gathii succeeds Gregory Shaffer who moved to the University of Minnesota Law School.

"From a pretty early age, I knew that I wanted to do something that would change the world to make it a better place," Gathii said.

"My dad worked in public service" like U.S. civil service "for the government" in Kenya, he said. "My mother was a public school teacher.

"I grew up in a family that was very aware of the different circumstances in which people were born. Some had more than others."

In law school at the University of Nairobi, he said, "I was involved in the human rights movement, then a fledgling" from 1989 to 1992.

"Some of the things I wrote for legal magazines made my family very uncomfortable."

Some of his themes were, he said, "maybe it was high time the government let the political system run on its own and have more than one party. … Repression of the press should stop."

After law school, he worked in a law firm in Kenya and spent half his time "with a partner who did banking law and acted for big banks." The rest of the time, he worked with another partner "in the pro democracy movement or human rights movement."

He said he "never suffered" for his activities, but knew others who did for theirs.
In 1994, he went to Harvard Law School with help from the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development. He got his master's and doctoral degrees in law at Harvard.

Along the way, he worked as an intern for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He wrote his doctoral thesis on his view that the "IMF economic programs … were themselves making the problems in developing countries worse."

"The IMF was requiring governments to radically reduce spending in education and public health," Gathii said.

The idea was that if the governments became leaner and more efficient, they would have more economic growth, he said.

But "in developing countries where the overwhelming number of people live on less than $2 a day, not having access to water, education and health supported by the government makes a huge difference," he said.

Also, he said privatizing public enterprises "was an opportunity for politicians to steal lots of money from the public."

At Albany Law School, Gathii worked as associate dean for research and scholarship and the Gov. George E. Pataki Professorship in International Commercial Law.

He wrote two books and published "over 60 articles and book chapters" including "in some of the leading journals in his field," Loyola said.

He comes to Chicago with his wife, Caroline, and two sons. He said, "we are expecting a third child in October."

Harris worked as the director of the Domestic Violence Clinic at the Rogers College of Law and co-director of the Child and Family Law Clinic.

Originally from Newton, Mass., while at Syracuse University she decided she wanted to become a legal aid lawyer. She got her law degree from Washington University School of Law and is the first lawyer in her family.

Teachers are prominent in her family, Harris said.

Every March for 10 years during spring break, she said she taught in the National Institute for Trial Advocacy at Loyola, a nonprofit, continuing legal education program for trial lawyers.

In that way, she came to know Carey, her predecessor as head of the Dan K. Webb Center for Advocacy.
"I'm really indebted to Jamie Carey," she said. "He's been a personal mentor and friend to me and I hope to continue his legacy at the center."

Harris comes to Chicago with her husband, Jonathan Peck, who was president of the Urban League in Tucson, Ariz., and their two young children. From 1992 to 1998, Harris worked as a senior lecturer, staff attorney and adjunct faculty at Northwestern University School of Law.

**David N. Yellen**, dean of Loyola Law, said, "We are delighted that James and Zelda have joined our faculty. James is a leading international law scholar and expands our international presence. Zelda is a top advocacy teacher and clinician. Add to that the fact that they are both wonderful people and colleagues, and it's a fabulous day for Loyola."