U.S. Air Force judge advocate general speaks on career

In October, Maj. Gen. Jack L. Rives (J.D.’77), the judge advocate general (TJAG) of the U.S. Air Force, spoke at the School of Law regarding his career in the military and his current appointment as head of the Air Force legal team.

Rives explained to students the many possibilities available through the Air Force Judge Advocate General’s Corps including: prosecuting and defending clients in a variety of felony cases, handling international law cases and agreements, working on a variety of civil law claims, serving as a trial judge or an appellate judge and advising in the area of operational law.

“It really is a pure legal job, and it is a great opportunity,” he said.

As TJAG, Rives is responsible for overseeing more than 2,200 judge advocates, 350 civilian attorneys, 1,400 enlisted paralegals and 550 civilians in the corps worldwide. He also provides advice to the Air Staff on all legal issues.

“We have a superb client. The Air Force does not do things perfectly, but we try to do things as effectively as possible. When we mess up we will admit it, we will apologize, and we will investigate and try to take the right sort of corrective actions so it does not happen again,” Rives said.

Prior to his current appointment, Rives served as deputy judge advocate general and as the staff judge advocate at Air Combat Command headquarters. He has also served as a wing staff judge advocate, as deputy legal counsel to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as commandant of the Air Force Judge Advocate General’s School and as the first chief of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He received his commission in 1974 through the Air Force ROTC program and then began active duty in 1977, after graduating from UGA with both his bachelor’s and law degrees.

Vice president of European Parliament speaks at Rusk Center events

Diana Wallis, vice president of the European Parliament, visited the School of Law this past November as part of back-to-back events sponsored by the Dean Rusk Center and the Georgia Society for International and Comparative Law.

First, Wallis joined other American and European private international law experts to explore new European Union legislation on the law applicable to torts and to compare it to approaches in U.S. law during a day-long colloquium. Their discussion, titled “Colloquium on Rome II: the 2007 EU Regulation on the Law Applicable to Non-contractual Obligations – European and American Perspectives,” will be published by the Dean Rusk Center in its 30th Anniversary Paper Series.

Presenters included: Wallis, the law school’s Kirbo Chair in International Law Gabriel M. Wilner, Powell Chair Emeritus Russell J. Weintraub of the University of Texas School of Law, Dean and Professor Symeon C. Symeonides of the Willamette University College of Law, and Dean and Professor Johan Meesusen of the University of Antwerp Law School.

The next day, Wallis delivered a speech titled “Who Runs Who: Does Europe Europe, on Major Policy Issues?” which was co-sponsored by UGA’s Willson Center for Humanities and Arts as part of the Willson Center – Dean Rusk Center Annual Lecture Series. Her presentation will also be published by the Dean Rusk Center as part of its 30th Anniversary Paper Series.

In her presentation, Wallis explored some of the similarities and differences in how the European Union and the United States have handled various global issues including the war in Iraq, terrorism, the death penalty and recent changes in the environment and climate.

“One of the things that has always been important to me, both as an elected parliamentarian and indeed even before as a lawyer, is the importance of global exchange and interchange between various peoples and various countries,” Wallis said.

“I believe that when we look at one another’s achievements and use this sort of comparative approach we can learn from that, and we can learn much,” she said.

While never really answering the question “who runs who?” Wallis did suggest that it is really more of a give and take between the European Union and the United States and, if we are willing, we could learn a great deal from one another.

“The European Union has a story to tell … about how we have moved forward based on particular values [and] how we have been able to develop a method of governance that allows us to share resources and to protect resources for future generations.”