

Robin Morris Collin: Leader in Sustainability

Robin Morris Collin is professor of law and director of the Sustainability Law Certificate program at Willamette University College of Law in Oregon. Her latest publications include “Restoration and Redemption,” in *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril* (a collection including the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Barack Obama, 2010), and the *Encyclopedia of Sustainability: Environment and Ecology, Business and Economics, Equity and Fairness* (coauthored with husband Robert William Collin, 2010).

Professor Morris Collin comes from a long line of intellectuals and practitioners dedicated to civil rights: her great-grandfather was a freed slave who taught math, her grandfather a Methodist minister who helped end segregation in the church, and her father an attorney and law professor who opened the first integrated law practice in Chicago and sued to enforce access for black physicians in city hospitals. Professor Morris Collin has continued in this vein, becoming the first law professor to teach a course on sustainability at American law schools.

Professor Morris Collin, along with her husband, Professor Robert William Collin, began teaching law at the University of Oregon Law School in 1993, building a reputable environmental law program that included courses on environmental justice, sustainable urban planning, and urban environmental impact assessment, all novel legal concepts at the time.

The Collins cofounded the Coalition Against Environmental Racism, providing a forum to promote environmental justice and end environmental racism and support students of color. Their energy and annual conference brought to Eugene prominent environmental and social-justice leaders, such as Dr. Bob Bullard, Winona LaDuke, and the late Damu Smith.

The Collins also cofounded the Sustainable Business Symposium, and Professor Morris Collin continued to support grassroots activism by participating as a

founding board member of the Environmental Justice Action Group, a community-based nonprofit based in Portland.

Importantly, Professor Morris Collin never shied away from the larger public-policy responsibility that comes with such experience and credentials. She worked with the U.S. EPA’s Common Sense Initiative, a federal advisory committee that advised EPA on matters of public policy. Professor Morris Collin served as the founding chair of the Oregon Governor’s Taskforce on Environmental Justice, continuing to serve as a member and giving of herself selflessly for the public good. She has received the David Brower Lifetime Achievement Award from the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference as well as the Campus Compact Faculty Award for Civic Engagement in Sustainability, has been honored by former Vice President Al Gore for her work advising the U.S. EPA, and has been recognized as a founding leader of the Sustainable Futures Section of the Oregon State Bar.

Professor Morris Collin has advanced the regional and national dis-



“Professor Morris Collin has advanced the regional and national discussion concerning sustainability and environmental justice....”

cussion concerning sustainability and environmental justice in meaningful ways, ensuring that the concept necessarily incorporates an emphasis on equity and education, along with the presumed focus on the environment and economy. For her leadership in the field of sustainability, Professor Robin Morris Collin is an asset to the Oregon State Bar and to the broader environmental justice and sustainability movement, and could not be more deserving of the Sustainable Futures Section 2010 Sustainable Leadership Award.



Section Chair Jim Kennedy with award recipient Robin Morris Collin at the Section’s First Year Celebration.