

# Introduction: A Festschrift for Professor Martha Chamallas

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It is my honor to pay tribute to my long-time senior colleague, treasured mentor, and dear friend of almost two decades, Martha Chamallas, upon her retirement from full-time teaching. Simply put, Martha is a wonder. One of the most original and important legal scholars of her generation, Martha has had an impact on law, the legal academy, and, in particular, the public discussion of issues of gender and racial bias that is deep, broad, and lasting. She is a splendid blend of theoretician, humanitarian, and practical lawyer.

While many legal scholars earn their scholarly reputation in a single area, Martha's insights have influenced the way we think about three fields: American tort law, employment discrimination, and feminist jurisprudence. This *festschrift* features two outstanding articles from distinguished scholars for whom she has served as an important role model: Scott Skinner-Thompson, who explores her work on torts,<sup>1</sup> and Deborah Brake, who writes about her enormous impact on feminist legal theory.<sup>2</sup>

In a career spanning more than four decades, Martha Chamallas received the William Prosser Award from the AALS's Section on Torts and Compensation Systems, was presented both the University Distinguished Scholar Award and the Distinguished University professorship by Ohio State, and was elected to the American Law Institute. She also has been a distinguished visiting professor at the law schools of Harvard, Suffolk, Temple, Washington, and Tel Aviv Universities and the Universities of Richmond, Tennessee, and Ghent. A dynamic and quick-witted speaker, she has delivered the Ohio State University Distinguished Lecture, the Monsanto Lecture on Tort Law and Jurisprudence, the Jack Pemberton Lecture on Workplace Justice, and numerous lectures at law schools in the United States (including those of Yale and NYU) and abroad (e.g., Bar-Ilan in Israel and Zhejiang in China). Her writings influenced the decision of the late Judge Jack Weinstein to declare the use of race-based actuarial tables unconstitutional and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund's approach to race- and gender-based payment calculations.<sup>3</sup> Her example and achievements will continue to inspire future

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<sup>1</sup> See generally Scott Skinner-Thompson, *Anti-Subordination Torts*, 83 OHIO ST. L.J. 427 (2022).

<sup>2</sup> See generally Deborah L. Brake, *Theory Matters—And Ten More Things I Learned from Martha Chamallas About Feminism, Law, and Gender*, 83 OHIO ST. L.J. 435 (2022).

<sup>3</sup> See generally G.M.M. *ex rel. Hernandez-Adams v. Kimpson*, 116 F. Supp. 3d 126 (E.D.N.Y. 2015) (citing several of Martha Chamallas's books and articles).

generations and shape and influence the development of the law, especially as it affects women and people of color.

Martha has given so much to The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law faculty since joining it in 2002 and to the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, University of Iowa College of Law, and Louisiana State University Law Center, where she also held professorships. She was a leader in addressing sexual assault on campus, in establishing policies on thorny issues (e.g., consensual relationships), in advancing interdisciplinary scholarship and the field of women's studies, and in selecting outstanding scholars for various coveted university honors. And, of course, it's hard to overstate her importance to generations of students. She was a stellar classroom teacher devoted to students' intellectual growth and a trusted advisor and counselor to all types of students.

When I joined the legal academy in 2004, I became one of a long line of new scholars to be skillfully ushered into the field by Martha Chamallas. She quickly became a friend, a mentor, and a sponsor. Martha's encouragement, generosity, and sound advice helped me and numerous other scholars find our footing and establish success in the academy. Especially when it comes to reading a colleague's scholarship (often in domains far from her own), she has the uncanny ability to offer clarifying insights, paradigm shifts, and suggestions that help one better understand one's own work; her edits actually leave you fortified and energized.

Being swept into her orbit has been a thrill and the gift of a lifetime. Martha tells stories in a way no one else can, she lifts up voices no one else focuses on, and she brings joy in a way no other person does. With her astute observations about the world and the working of institutions, her ability to bring lightness and humor to any situation, and her profound wisdom, Martha is always the first person I want to talk with to help make sense of something crazy I've read in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* or on Politico.com. Of course, this feeling is shared by many friends, especially those who've had the pleasure of enjoying great food and conversation late into the night in her warm, gracious home with her and her husband, the equally brilliant legal scholar Peter Shane, and, with luck, their frequently visiting daughter Beth Shane, a lawyer in Manhattan, and her partner, Eric Conrad.

The late Katherine Graham, herself a pioneering woman in business, once said, "To love what you do and feel that it matters—how could anything be more fun?"<sup>4</sup> Graham was, of course, talking about her own passion for journalism, but she just as well could have been referring to Martha Chamallas's passion for law, justice, and legal education. Thank you, Martha, for all that you do to advance law, life, and learning (and for always bringing the fun). Thank you for everything. This *festschrift* is a terrific tribute to Martha's brilliance and

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<sup>4</sup> See JOANNA BARSH & SUSIE CRANSTON, HOW REMARKABLE WOMEN LEAD: THE BREAKTHROUGH MODEL FOR WORK AND LIFE 21 (2009).

powerful contributions over the course of her extraordinary forty-five-year career. Let the celebration begin.