



Brandeis University

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Biography

Frederick M. Lawrence took office as the eighth president of Brandeis University on January 1, 2011. An accomplished scholar, teacher and attorney, Lawrence is one of the nation's leading experts on civil rights, free expression and bias crimes. His formal inauguration took place on March 31.

Prior to Brandeis, Lawrence was dean and Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law at George Washington University Law School from 2005 to 2010. During his tenure there, Lawrence brought in the strongest five classes in the law school's history and led five of its most effective years of fundraising, despite historically challenging economic conditions. He recruited an impressive number of new faculty members with expertise in a range of areas, from international courts and tribunals to environmental law. Lawrence also increased financial aid, expanded facilities, opened doors to faculty endowments and sought new programmatic possibilities nationally and internationally.

Lawrence, a native of Long Island, N.Y., received a bachelor's degree in 1977 from Williams College and a law degree in 1980 from Yale Law School. He began his legal career in 1980 as clerk to Judge Amalya L. Kearse of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Later, Lawrence was named an assistant U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York, where he became chief of the Civil Rights Unit.

In 1988, he joined the faculty of the Boston University School of Law and taught courses on civil rights enforcement and civil rights crimes, criminal law, and civil procedure. He also served as the school's associate dean for academic affairs from 1996 to 1999. Lawrence received BU's Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching, the university's highest teaching honor, in 1996.

Lawrence has written, lectured and testified widely on civil rights crimes and is the author of "Punishing Hate: Bias Crimes Under American Law" (Harvard University Press, 1999), which examines bias-motivated violence and how such crimes are dealt with in the United States.

Lawrence has been a senior visiting research fellow with the University College London Faculty of Law and has studied bias crimes law in the United Kingdom through a Ford Foundation grant. He has lectured nationally and internationally about bias crime law and testified before Congress on several occasions, addressing Justice Department misconduct in Boston and speaking in support of federal hate crimes legislation.

Lawrence was a trustee of Williams College and serves on the board of directors of the Anti-Defamation League.

Lawrence is married to Kathy Lawrence, an academic who specializes in 19th-century American literature. They have two children, Miriam and Noah. Fred Lawrence enjoys hiking, old movies, professional sports, and singing. He has performed in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with the New York Choral Society.