

Robert A. Destro

Robert A. Destro is Professor of Law at The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. He has been a member of the CUA Law faculty since 1982, served as Interim Dean from 1999-2001, and as founder and Director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion from 1985-2015. He served as Director of the University's Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies from 2017-2019 and he remains a Senior Fellow of the Institute. His government service includes the United States Commission on Civil Rights (Commissioner, 1983-89); Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (September 2019-January 2021), and Special Representative for Tibetan Issues (2020-21). He also served as Special Counsel to the Ohio Secretary of State for election and voting rights issues (2004-2006).

As Assistant Secretary, he led the State Department's worldwide policy and foreign assistance programs on human rights and democracy issues such as free and fair elections, Internet freedom, and the growth of the surveillance state. His work on labor issues focused on State Department and inter-agency efforts to ensure that business supply chains do not include goods or services produced by slave or forced labor. As Special Representative for Tibetan Issues, he was responsible for collaboration and consultation with the Central Tibetan Authority and the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and the governments of India, Nepal, and other regional powers in South Asia. Since leaving the State Department, he has served as an advisor to in trade and human rights issues in East Asia, South Asia, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Professor Destro has taught and practiced in the fields of constitutional law, comparative constitutional law, legal ethics, private international law, international human rights, bioethics, employment law, election law, and remedies. He serves as a Senior Fellow, International Religious Freedom Policy and North America Action Teams for the Religious Freedom Institute; and as a Member of the Advisory Council of the Krach Institute for Tech Diplomacy at Purdue University.

Professor Destro was born and raised in Akron, Ohio. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1972 from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and his law degree (J.D.) in 1975 from the University of California, Berkeley. He is an active member of the Ohio Bar. He is married to Brenda C. Destro, Ph.D. They have two adult children.