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Contact: Jon Mills, Dean Emeritus and Director, Center for Governmental Responsibility, University of Florida Levin College of Law, 352-273-0835, mills@law.ufl.edu or Meredith Fensom, Director of the Law & Policy in the Americas Program, fensom@law.ufl.edu.

FORMER PERUVIAN OMBUDSMAN RECEIVES JON MILLS AWARD AT UF CONFERENCE IN PERU

Former national Ombudsman of Peru Jorge Santistevan de Noriega received the Jon Mills Award for Significant Contributions to Relations between Florida and the Americas at the University of Florida's Conference on Legal & Policy Issues, held in Lima, Peru, May 25 and 26. Santistevan was the first-ever national ombudsman in Peru, protecting citizens against abuse by public officials and serving as an independent watchdog, with the jurisdiction to challenge the president, courts, and police. As Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and through his involvement in the Federation of Ombudsmen (FIO), he paved the way for other emerging democracies, many of which have since created an ombudsman position.

"Jorge Santistevan is a central figure in the development of the rule of law in Peru and the Americas," said Dean Emeritus Jon Mills, director of the Center for Governmental Responsibility at UF's Levin College of Law, after whom the award is named. "We, at the University of Florida, have been fortunate that he has shared his experience with us and our students."

As a visiting professor at the Levin College of Law in January 2006, Santistevan gave a public lecture on human rights and civil society for which he was awarded Best Speaker of 2005-2006 by the International Law Students Association, a non-profit organization of students and young lawyers with over 150 chapters worldwide. Santistevan began forging close ties with UF during his conference participation in previous years, and was instrumental in this year's conference planning.

The annual conference brings together attorneys, judges, policy makers and members of the business and academic community to discuss the rule of law and justice reform throughout the Americas. This year, conference participants—which included Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo and U.S. Ambassador to Peru J. Curtis Struble—focused on the need to reform the Peruvian justice system.

Past award recipients include: Kenneth H. "Buddy" MacKay, Jr., former governor of Florida and special White House envoy to the Americas; Alejandro Ogarrio, president of the Mexican Bar Association; Miami attorney Raul Valdes-Fauli; and Brazilian environmental attorney Paolo Roberto Pereira de Souza.

For more information about the conference visit <http://www.law.ufl.edu/cgr/conference/>.

Photo attached. Cutline: Award recipient Jorge Santistevan (center), former US Ambassador to Peru Dennis Jett (left) and Director for the Center for Governmental Responsibility Jon Mills (right).