ASIL RECEIVES GRANT TO ESTABLISH VAGTS ROUNDTABLE ON TRANSNATIONAL LAW

WASHINGTON, DC—The American Society of International Law (ASIL) is pleased to announce that it is receiving a $100,000 grant memorializing the contributions to the field of international law made by eminent Harvard Law School Professor Detlev Vagts (1929-2013), a longtime Patron and leader of the Society. The gift, pledged recently by the Vagts family, will permit the Society to establish and present annually The Detlev F. Vagts Roundtable on Transnational Law. The first Vagts Roundtable, which will focus on international professional responsibility, is expected to take place at the ASIL Annual Meeting in April 2016.

Vagts, who first joined ASIL in 1961, was a renowned scholar of international law and one of the world’s foremost experts on transnational business problems and the laws affecting international commerce. For over half a century, Vagts was a leading figure in the life of the Society and its flagship publication, the American Journal of International Law. He served as the editor of the Journal’s book review section from 1986 until 1993, when he became the periodical’s co-editor in chief, a role that he ably and diligently performed until 1998 with Professor (now Judge) Theodor Meron. Vagts wrote many articles, editorial comments, and book reviews for the Journal and other publications on a wide range of topics, spanning the history and theory of international
law and the practical concerns of international lawyers, including their ethical obligations.

The roundtable being established in Vagts’s honor seeks to promote scholarship of young academics, support exchanges of ideas across jurisdictions through meetings and publications, and maintain connections between scholars and the practicing bar in the field of international and transnational law.

“Detlev Vagts built bridges across disciplines, borders, and generations,” said ASIL President Lori Damrosch. “Through his scholarship, teaching, and service to the profession, he upheld the highest standards and acted as a voice of conscience for the international legal community. ASIL is deeply grateful for the generosity of the Vagts family in making it possible to carry on his legacy.”

The grant for this new ASIL program was the initiative of Vagts’s wife, Dorothy Vagts, and their daughters, Karen and Lydia Vagts, who started developing the idea with the Society not long after Professor Vagts’s death in 2013. President Damrosch, ASIL Executive Director Mark Agrast and former ASIL President Peter Trooboff, in consultation with former students and colleagues of Vagts, then worked with the Vagts family to design a program that would meet the family’s goals of memorializing Vagts’s work. Professors Pieter Bekker, Hannah Buxbaum, William Dodge, and Harold Koh assisted the Society by advising on the structure and focus of the Roundtable.

“Our father cared deeply about legal ethics, transnational business relationships, promoting the work of new scholars, and advancing the understanding of transnational law,” Karen Vagts said. “We are grateful to the Society for working with us to create a
lasting memorial through the legal topics that our father valued most and to which he dedicated his professional life of more than 50 years.”

ASIL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational membership organization. It was founded in 1906, chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1950, and has held Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1993. ASIL’s mission is to foster the study of international law and to promote the establishment and maintenance of international relations on the basis of law and justice. The Society’s nearly 4,000 members from more than 100 countries comprise scholars, jurists, practitioners, government officials, leaders in international and nongovernmental organizations, students, and others interested in international law. For more information, visit www.asil.org.