When Alfred C. Aman, Roscoe C. O’Byrne professor of law, received the Ryan Award for his contributions to international studies, the committee highlighted his efforts to enhance the global dimensions of what is now the IU Maurer School of Law. Arriving in Bloomington in 1991 to assume the deanship, Aman had two questions: “How can we best prepare our students to be global professionals?” and “How can the law school connect to other parts of the world?” He saw a “world that had become so interconnected, and so intertwined, that legal systems were becoming more and more dependent on other legal systems and some transnational activities often transcended legal systems altogether.” Law schools “had a major task preparing students for the complex world that all lawyers were soon to enter.”

During his time as dean, the law school expanded its curricular offerings in international law (a subject that had been around for some time). It established or renewed partnerships with institutions and scholars in China, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, France, Germany, England, and Spain. It expanded programs for international students and attracted larger numbers from all over the world. Aman encouraged faculty’s interdisciplinary efforts and in 1993 inaugurated the student- and faculty-edited Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies. Aman serves as a faculty editor to this day.

Early in his academic career, Aman spent a sabbatical leave at Wolfson College, Cambridge University. His goal, hardly international, was to write about administrative law from a domestic perspective. “Each day I would have lunch or dinner in college. Around the table were students and faculty from all over the world. When I raised a question that I was working on, they all had a take on it from their own perspectives. I realized that we were all dealing with the similar issues from different starting points.”

Increases in the number of law students from abroad brought that perspective to IU. “In my seminar on transnational law, I have had students from China, Korea, Nigeria, France, and elsewhere. In our discussions, they provided a real sense of what it’s like on the ground—on issues like the European Union, or human rights in Nigeria. My international and American students learned so much from each other; it is an entirely different kind of classroom now.”

Aman first grappled with the impact of globalization on the law when he was in legal practice in the 1970s. “It was
a time of deregulation, and many saw that as a reaction to a long period of increased regulation. I saw deregulation not as a reversal but simply a quarter click forward on the dial in response to a new global era in which borders don’t mean the same thing anymore. Technology crosses borders easily. Science made us see the environmental effects of local activities elsewhere, and similarly, markets had to adjust to global competition.”

In legal studies, Aman prefers transnational to global. “Global can sometimes send the wrong message, as though it’s not a global problem if it doesn’t exist everywhere on earth. Legal issues arise when more than one jurisdiction is involved. It doesn’t have to be every jurisdiction on the globe.” His recent scholarly work explores the domestic impact of globalization. “It is a fiction that ‘globalization’ is ‘out there,’ like a force of nature.” Rather, “globalization is embedded in all of our local institutions, public and private.”

As global forces increasingly define local circumstances, Aman sees the danger of a “democracy deficit.” For example, to compete in a global marketplace, public and private institutions seek ever-greater economic efficiencies. One route they choose is outsourcing public services, such as the management of prisons. “If we are going to do things in this new way, we must not forget that there are public aspects that need to remain public. Health care, fairness, discipline—all require a hybrid perspective that accounts for public and private needs. Otherwise, globalization will affect vulnerable population groups adversely.” As Aman explains in his 2004 book, *The Democracy Deficit: Taming Globalization through Law Reform*, “The challenge for law in the twenty-first century is to create the structures necessary for a new kind of democracy to flourish.”

Aman stepped down from the deanship and returned to full-time teaching in 2002, but the school’s international initiatives have continued. The Maurer School has since established new partnerships in India, Myanmar, Ireland, and Great Britain. It has seen a rise in numbers of international students enrolling in the core J.D. program. “The really great law schools of the future,” Aman said, “are going to be the schools that are highly attractive to and highly competitive for the best students from all over the world. Schools would put international issues in a larger frame of reference—exploring in interdisciplinary fashion different legal systems and different kinds of relationships that are created among the players. Students would come not just because they want to work in international law, but because that international perspective will prepare them to be better lawyers no matter what their specialty or where in the state, nation, or world they may practice.”