



FACULTY MATTERS

NEW FACULTY

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

*Things for Antonio Gidi are going great. The charismatic Comparative Procedure scholar is on top of the world, happy to be at the UH Law Center.*

JUST CALL HIM "GIDI." GEE-DEE. DON'T BOTHER CALLING HIM "ANTONIO" OR "TONY"—HE WON'T EVEN LOOK UP. WHEN INTRODUCED TO VERA RILEY BROWN, UH LAW CENTER FRIEND AND WIDOW OF THE VENERABLE JUDGE JOHN R. BROWN, THE BRAZILIAN PROFESSOR SAID, "I'M GIDI." CONFUSION CLOUDED HER FACE. "GIDI, WHAT?" SHE ASKED. "JUST GIDI. ONE NAME. LIKE CHER."

It's that ability to both charm and disarm that made him a faculty favorite at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and the quarry of UH Law Center's Professor Stephen Zamora. "When a faculty position for a comparativist opened here, I immediately thought of Gidi," Zamora said. No wonder: Gidi has all the makings of becoming a world-class comparative law scholar: Indeed, he is already half-way there.

So how did the son of a Brazilian-born, Arab-extraction antique dealer make his way to Houston and the UH Law Center? Circuitously.

Gidi is from Salvador in the Brazilian state of Bahia, where he obtained his J.D. at the Federal University. He stumbled onto the study of law by default. "A doctor? Me? I'd faint. An engineer? I don't do math. But pick a position, and I'll fight against you—so, law study was perfect for me," Gidi said with a smile. But he doesn't clown around when it comes to his research, analysis, or independence. Gidi is a serious, intuitive scholar who rocketed through the Federal University and then obtained his LL.M. in Civil Procedure from PUC University in Saõ Paulo.

Attracted by the pursuit of his scholarship, Gidi left his coveted position as Public Attorney for the city of Saõ Paulo to become Visiting Scholar at the University of Milan, Italy. "I had every intention of returning to Bahia to teach, but fate intervened," Gidi said. On a lark, he applied and was accepted to be a Visiting Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania for a three-month research project on class actions. He didn't know then that he'd be leaving his country for good.

At Penn, he had the opportunity to work with Professor Geoffrey Hazard, an academic giant in Civil

Procedure and Legal Ethics. Hazard was just starting work as the Reporter for The American Law Institute's Principles and Rules of Transnational Civil Procedure when Gidi arrived. "Angelo Dondi, a professor at Genoa and a common friend, referred Gidi to me," Hazard said. "After working with Gidi on a number of projects I realized that this guy could be very helpful."

Hazard found in Gidi a young scholar and independent thinker who was unabashed, hardworking, and smart. "The Transnational Civil Procedure project covered rules in the common law and civil law systems, and different cultures. Gidi had a thorough understanding of the Latin American and European civil law systems. He was fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, English, and Italian and conversed well in French and understood the ethos and style of the many legal systems covered by the project," Hazard explained. "Gidi is honest and courageous; if he thought I was misunderstanding something, he would tell me directly. In my experience, foreign people tend to be diffident. But Gidi speaks firmly, bordering the impudent, yet graciously. UH Law Center is lucky to have him and he's lucky to have the UH Law Center."

Gidi's fondness for the Hazard years is apparent. "This is a guy who is one of the world's most renowned jurists and he wanted me by his side because I would openly disagree with him? This speaks directly to Hazard's assuredness. I would only excel with him by being 100% honest. I never had a more pleasant or productive experience."

Because of his impudence, Hazard invited Gidi to serve as Associate Reporter for the ALI/UNIDROIT's Principles and Rules of Transnational Civil Procedure, a project geared to create a common set of rules for international commercial litigation. The plum assignment had him crisscrossing



the globe—20 countries over eight years assessing the rules of civil procedure from a comparative and international perspective.

In the intervening period, Gidi was very productive. He taught as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and did research as a Visiting Scholar at the University of Paris I Law School. He earned his Ph.D. from PUC University at São Paulo and his S.J.D. from Penn and published several books and articles in several languages. His two masterpieces are a treatise on class actions to be published in Portuguese, English, and Spanish and a Model Class Action Code for Civil Law Countries, to be published in five languages. And, of course, there is Isabella, his captivating, stairs-loving, easy-smiling daughter; who is Gidi's true *capolavoro* and, according to him, his "only contribution to humanity."

Gidi is different—not your typical law professor. And he affects the senses: For some, he is love at first sight; for others, he is an acquired taste. Ana Claudia, Gidi's wife, who holds a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Penn, agrees. "Gidi is not for the faint of heart; for some people, it takes time and opportunity to see his true self."

At Detroit Mercy, Gidi taught subjects related to Civil Procedure, Comparative Law, International Law, and Class Actions, and he was well-loved during his two-year tenure there. Here's a typical student evaluation: "I love his classes—he's full of energy, he's funny, and makes learning easy and interesting." Joel Harris, a former student who served as one of Gidi's research assistants, said that UH Law Center is fortunate to get the dynamic, prolific young scholar who inspires students and faculty colleagues. "Gidi takes the time to provide real-world context to the concepts he's teaching. He found that students understand more and give more back to him at the end."

But a school in a more international city was bound to attract Gidi. Houston, and more specifically Zamora, came calling. The attraction was mutual: "There is no other place that I would rather be than the UH Law Center," Gidi admits. "I cannot think of a more perfect fit. This school and this city give me the cosmopolitan environment that I need to develop my research interests and grow as a scholar. Besides, I'm a tropical animal, and I need to be where it is warm."

**Gidi's scholarship  
has a global  
embrace.**

