Rebecca Dresser is the Daniel Noyes Kirby Professor in the School of Law and professor of ethics in medicine at Washington University School of Medicine. She is an expert in biomedical ethics and has taught both medical and law students about legal and ethical issues in end-of-life care, biomedical research, genetics, assisted reproduction, and related subjects since 1983.

Dresser’s first book, When Science Offers Salvation: Patient Advocacy and Research Ethics, examines how advocates for HIV/AIDS, breast cancer; and other patients have influenced biomedical research policy. In 2012, she edited and contributed to Malignant: Medical Ethicists Confront Cancer, in which seven bioethics scholars and teachers who have had cancer or cared for a spouse with cancer explain what personal experience taught them about their professional work.

In addition to her teaching, research, and scholarship, Dresser is a Fellow of the Hastings Center and is one of the “At Law” columnists for the Hastings Center Report, a widely read bioethics journal. She serves on the editorial boards of three professional journals, the Journal of Law & the Biosciences, the International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics, and IRB: Ethics and Human Research.

At Washington University, Dresser is a long-time member of the School of Medicine’s Institutional Review Board, the Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee, and the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center Ethics Committee. She also serves on the advisory committee for The Common Reader, Washington University’s new interdisciplinary journal of ideas and inquiry.

Dresser earned a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and sociology and a Master of Science in education from Indiana University in Bloomington. She earned her law degree from Harvard Law School in 1979. Before coming to Washington University, she taught at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and in the law and medical schools of Case Western Reserve University. Dresser lives in University City with her partner, Peter Joy, the Henry Hitchcock Professor of Law, and two feline companions.