

1-1-1996

The Lecture Series

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Recommended Citation

Mary Kay Kane, *The Lecture Series*, 18 HASTINGS COMM. & ENT. L.J. 423 (1996).

Available at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_comm_ent_law_journal/vol18/iss3/2

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The Lecture Series

by

MARY KAY KANE, DEAN

Upon his retirement from the Supreme Court of California, Mathew Tobriner had accepted an appointment to the University of California faculty at Hastings College of the Law. After his untimely death, the Tobriner family and Justice Tobriner's closest friends suggested the establishment at Hastings of a permanent memorial to him and his life work in the form of a fund to sponsor activities consistent with Justice Tobriner's philosophy and ideals. In formalizing the fund, Judge Robert Peckham of the United States District Court, Northern District of California, who, until his death in 1993 served a chairman of the executive committee, wrote:

Justice Tobriner gave voice to a number of these ideals in a speech he delivered nearly 20 years ago when he stated: 'In the context of the law, the underlying moral value of our American society, I think is the protection of the individual citizen for the purpose, and in the hope, that he may reach his greatest fulfillment and self-realization as a person.' To this end, Justice Tobriner viewed the law as a realistic and flexible structure, constantly sensitive to the evolving needs of humanity in the face of ever changing economic and social conditions. In his judicial decisions and academic writings, he consistently stressed the vital role played by an independent judiciary in affording to every individual protection against the government, 'protection against the private centers of power, protection against the inevitable injury inherent in industrial society, protection against categorical punishment and protection against racial and religious discrimination.' His life's work teaches us that the pursuit of justice demands vigilant attention to the 'social imperatives of our times.'

This fund is to be used for the presentation annually of a lecture by a distinguished legal scholar or other prominent personality of national reputation under the auspices of Hastings consistent with Justice Tobriner's philosophy and ideals. It is anticipated that the lecture would be of publishable quality and the lecturer would participate in a series of colloquia or smaller meetings with the faculty and students of Hastings and with members of the judiciary during the course of his or her visit.

We at Hastings are pleased and proud that the college was selected to participate in this unique memorial to an extraordinary jurist and are enthusiastic about the program recommended by the executive committee.

The lectures in this series by Judge James Skelly Wright, Professor Laurence Tribe, Justice William Brennan, Anthony Lewis, Dean Barbara Black, Justice Harry Blackmun, Professor John Hope Franklin, Justice Shirley Abrahamson, José Zalaquett, Chief Judge Abner Mikva, Chief Judge Emeritus A. Leon Higginbotham, Justice Richard Goldstone, and Daniel Schorr have assured its place of distinction in the annals of legal thought. Hastings is indeed honored by this distinguished company.