Invitation to the Twentieth Annual John F. Sonnett Memorial Lecture Series: The Advocate: Should He Speak or Write?

James Mackay

House of Lords
The Fordham Law Alumni Association announces the Twentieth Annual John F. Sonnett Memorial Lecture to be delivered by The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay Lord Chancellor of Great Britain

Wednesday, April 3, 1991
6:00 P.M.

James B. M. McNally Amphitheatre
Fordham University School of Law
140 West 62nd Street
New York City
John F. Sonnett, a 1933 graduate of Fordham College and a 1936 graduate of the School of Law, was a senior partner in the firm of Cahill Gordon & Reindel. This lecture series has been endowed by his partners and friends as a permanent memorial to him.

In 1933, Mr. Sonnett joined that firm, then known as Cotton & Franklin, as a managing clerk, a position he held for the next three years while attending Fordham Law School. Upon graduation he became an associate at the firm. In 1941 he joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York where he became Chief Assistant United States Attorney.

During the Second World War, Mr. Sonnett was Special Counsel to the Under Secretary of the Navy. Later, as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy holding the rank of Lieutenant Commander, he conducted the final Navy investigations of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

At the conclusion of the war, Mr. Sonnett was named Assistant Attorney General and Chief of the Antitrust Division of the United States Department of Justice.

He returned to the Cahill Gordon firm in 1948 and established an international reputation as a pre-eminent trial and appellate lawyer. A devoted son of Fordham, his death in July 1969 was a great loss to the profession and his alma mater. His excellence as an advocate is memorialized through this lecture series.

Previous
John F. Sonnett Memorial Lecturers

Hon. Tom Clark
Hon. Cearbhall O'Dalaigh
Hon. Irving R. Kaufman
Hon. Warren E. Burger
Rt. Hon. Lord John Widgery
Hon. Robert J. Sheran
Hon. Leon Jaworski
Hon. Griffin Bell
Hon. William Hughes Mulligan
Hon. Benjamin R. Civiletti

Hon. Lawrence H. Cooke
Rt. Hon. Sir Robert E. Megarry
Hon. William T. Coleman
Hon. Wilfred Feinberg
Hon. Thomas A. Finlay
Hon. Sol Wachtler
Hon. Francis T. Murphy
Hon. John J. Gibbons
Hon. Olé Due

Lord Mackay was appointed Lord Chancellor in 1987. In that capacity, he occupies a unique position in Great Britain, being part of the three branches of government. As part of the executive, he is a member of the Prime Minister's cabinet and has the primary responsibility for the appointment of judges. As president of the House of Lords he is a central figure in the legislature, and at the same time, he heads the judiciary (which through the Lords of Appeal functions as the English Supreme Court). He was Lord Advocate of Scotland from 1979 to 1984 and was a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary from 1985 until his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1987.

James Peter Hymers Mackay was born in 1927. He was educated at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, and at Edinburgh University, where he graduated Master of Arts with Honors in mathematics and natural philosophy. He was a lecturer in mathematics at St. Andrews University between 1948 and 1950, subsequently studying at Cambridge where he obtained a first-class degree in mathematics and was awarded a Senior Scholarship at Trinity College. He returned to Edinburgh, where he obtained a Bachelor of Laws degree with distinction in 1955 and was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates.

Lord Mackay has been standing junior counsel to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, the Scottish Home and Health Department and the Commissioners of Inland Revenue in Scotland. He became a Queen's Counsel in 1965. He was Sheriff Principal of Renfrew and Argyll from 1972 to 1974 and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Advocates from 1973 to 1976, when he was elected Dean. He was a part-time member of the Scottish Law Commission from 1976 to 1979 and served on the Insurance Brokers' Registration Council from 1977 to 1979. He held these positions until his appointment as Lord Advocate. From 1984 to 1985 he was a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland.

Lord Mackay is a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Taxation, an Honorary Member of the Society of Public Teachers of Law and an Honorary Member of the Law Society of Scotland. He has received honorary doctorates in law from the universities of Edinburgh, Dundee, Strathclyde, Aberdeen and Cambridge.

Lord Mackay is married with a son and two daughters. His home is in Edinburgh.
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