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Introduction to Keynote Address

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Introduction to Keynote Address

John D. Feerick*

On behalf of Fordham Law School, I am pleased, to welcome you to today's program. It is certainly a pleasure for me to acknowledge the presence of your keynote speakers, Eliot Spitzer, New York State Attorney General, and Peter Swire, Chief Counselor for Privacy in the Executive Office of the President of the United States.

I would like to recognize, as well, your many panelists, whose backgrounds are set forth in the program that you all have. I certainly also want to thank the moderators of today's panels, James Goodale and Professor Reidenberg. It seems just about every program I come to at the law school these days, Professor Reidenberg is front and center in some way.

Today's conference addresses one of the most important issues of our time: the rapidly evolving relationship between data privacy laws and the First Amendment. Almost daily, it seems, we witness tremendous changes in this complex relationship through the influence of such various entities as the European Union, the Internet, and other forces of the Information Age. These changes bring with them opportunities to expand the human potential in ways that were unimaginable only a decade ago. They also bring new and formidable challenges to our society and to those leaders and specialists, such as you, who are responsible for the intellectual dialogue that will guide our citizens through this exciting period of history.

* Dean, Fordham University School of Law. Adjunct Professor, Fordham, 1976-82; Chair, Committee to Review Audiovisual Coverage of Court Proceedings, 1996-97; President, Association of the Bar of the City of New York (1992-1994); Practicing Attorney, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, 1961-82; Chairman, N.Y.S. Commission on Government Integrity, 1987-90; Chair, Fund for Modern Courts (1995-99); Chair, Board of Directors of American Arbitration Association; Appointed Dean in 1982; Fordham, B.S., 1958, LL.B., 1961.

A version of these remarks was delivered on February 15, 2000, at Fordham University School of Law during the *Fordham Intellectual Property, Media & Entertainment Law Journal's* Eighth Annual Symposium on Current Issues in First Amendment and Media Law - "*Data Privacy Laws and the First Amendment: A Conflict?*" Footnotes have been added by the *Journal's* staff.

This particular program is a very important part of meeting the challenges of this brave new world. I once again would like to thank all of our students and all of the participants in the program, and I wish you all a very successful day.

I now have the great pleasure of introducing the first of your keynote speakers, New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review, Attorney General Spitzer has a long and distinguished career in public service. Prior to his present position, he was best known, I believe, for his work as an Assistant District Attorney in Manhattan, from 1986 to 1992, where he led successful prosecutions of organized crime, white-collar crime, antitrust violations, and political corruption. In the celebrated Gambino case, he was credited with breaking organized crime's hold on the garment center here in New York City.¹

Attorney General Spitzer has also earned an enviable reputation as a community advocate and public interest lawyer. As founder of the not-for-profit Center for Community Interest, he represented neighborhood groups in efforts to evict drug dealers from public housing. He has also been active in a variety of public health initiatives, worked to reduce violence in our schools, aggressively addressed data privacy issues, and helped to ensure the integrity of electronic commerce. As a Trustee of the Montefiore Medical Center and Chair of the Community Preservation Corporation, he helped create high-tech jobs and revitalize inner-city neighborhoods. As an authority on prosecution of public interest law, he has been a regular analyst and commentator on national news programs, as well as on Court TV, "The Today Show," and many other major programs. He has also published numerous articles in legal journals and newspapers on a wide range of public policy issues.

As a fellow member of the Bar of New York, I would also like to express my admiration for the outstanding job he has done in a

¹ See generally, National Association of Attorneys General, Biography of Eliot Spitzer, at <http://www.naag.org/about/ag.cfm?state=newyork&wildcard=biog>. See, e.g., Samuel Maull, *Prosecutor: Gambino "Salesman" Enforced Mafia Trucking Cartel*, ASSOCIATED PRESS Feb. 4, 1992, available at 1992 WL 5332289.

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relatively short period of time in discharging his high public office while meeting the highest possible standard of professional excellence. As somebody who has been actively involved in the Bar of New York, I know I reflect the feelings of many observers of that office. It is, therefore, a privilege and honor to introduce our Attorney General, Eliot Spitzer.