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## Introduction: In Honor of Gordon Slynn, U.K. Law Lord and Judge of the EC Court of Justice

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# Introduction: In Honor of Gordon Slynn, U.K. Law Lord and Judge of the EC Court of Justice

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## **Abstract**

This symposium issue and the next issue of the Fordham International Law Journal are dedicated to the memory of Gordon Slynn, 1930–2009, a distinguished jurist, accomplished barrister, and a renowned expert in European Union and international law.

## INTRODUCTION

### IN HONOR OF GORDON SLYNN, U.K. LAW LORD AND JUDGE OF THE EC COURT OF JUSTICE

This symposium issue and the next issue of the Fordham International Law Journal are dedicated to the memory of Gordon Slynn, 1930–2009, a distinguished jurist, accomplished barrister, and a renowned expert in European Union and international law. In view of his frequent visits to Fordham Law School as guest teacher and lecturer, it is highly appropriate that the Journal should assemble this symposium in his honor.

Gordon Slynn, who took the designation of Lord Slynn of Hadley when named to the House of Lords in 1992, had a truly extraordinary career. After law studies at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was called to the bar at Gray's Inn in 1956. His analytic ability in complex commercial matters and vigorous courtroom style soon led to government posts, first with the Ministry of Labor and subsequently in 1968 as lead counsel for the Treasury Department.

Married in 1962 to Odile Boutin, their marriage has always been marked by their common dedication to charitable organizations, notably the Child in Need Institute, which she founded. Odile Slynn has also pursued her own career as a teacher of French language and literature.

Gordon Slynn's judicial career began as Judge in the High Court in 1976, the same year in which he was knighted, soon moving to become President of the Employment Appeal Tribunal in 1978. When the United Kingdom's first Advocate General, Jean Pierre Warner, retired in 1981, Sir Gordon Slynn became Advocate General at the European Community ("EC") Court of Justice in Luxembourg. He soon became known for the rapidity and acumen of his opinions, acquiring the nick-name, "*juriste de grande vitesse*," among the Court law clerks. The Telegraph's obituary called him "particularly influential in importing [to the Court] English common law principles of

procedural fairness.”<sup>1</sup> Professor Rosa Greaves’ article in the symposium, “Selected Opinions of Lord Slynn as Advocate General,”<sup>2</sup> demonstrates his influence in the highly technical field of competition law.

In 1988, upon the retirement of Lord Mackenzie Stuart, the U.K. government named Sir Gordon Slynn as a Judge on the EC Court of Justice. Subsequently, in the fall of 2002, the government named him a Law Lord of Appeal in the House of Lords, serving until his retirement in 2002. As Law Lord, he often applied his expertise in European Union law in cases involving the interpretation or application of the Treaty or secondary legislation. Both as part of the majority and in dissent, his opinions were characterized by his solid analysis and vigorous statement of views. After retiring as Law Lord, he continued serving in the Privy Council. He even assumed in 2001 a new post as President of the Court of Appeal of the Solomon Islands, devoting two weeks each year to that function.

Throughout his career, Gordon Slynn was notably active in promoting the study of European Union and international law. He served as Chairman of the International Law Association from 1988 to his death and was also active in the Union Internationale des Avocats. He lectured frequently at law schools, coming several times to Fordham, and spoke often, eloquently and with great wit, at legal conferences. Indeed, he was teaching as a guest lecturer at Fordham in 1992 when notified that the U.K. government was naming him to the House of Lords. He was greatly interested in promoting knowledge of EU law in the Central European states as they prepared for membership in 2004, creating a foundation for this purpose and lecturing himself to judicial and academic conferences throughout Central Europe. Gordon Slynn particularly loved spending time with students in and outside of classes.

His many friends (and the present author would like to consider himself one of them) can pay tribute to his great personal charm and warmth. Professor Laurence Gormley’s obituary in the *European Law Review*, says it well:

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1. Obituary of Lord Slynn of Hadley, *DAILY TELEGRAPH* (London), Apr. 8, 2009, at 37.

2. *See infra* at 1523.

Gordon Slynn will be remembered as a truly great Advocate General and judge, probably the most widely-known British judge since Lord Denning, but also as a humane, kind, generous and most agreeable companion; he was also a bon vivant with a connoisseur's subtle appreciation of fine art and fine wine. He was superb company and a generous host; his asides often had me and other in stitches, and all his friends will miss his disarming wink and infectious smile and enthusiasm.<sup>3</sup>

We are honored to include in the symposium articles by Chief Justice John Murray of the Supreme Court of Ireland, and Judges Koen Lenaerts and Konrad Schiemann of the EC Court of Justice. Chief Justice Murray served on the Court of Justice during part of Gordon Slynn's tenure there, and Judge Lenaerts was a judge in the Court of First Instance at the same time, while Judge Schiemann is his current successor as the U.K. judge at the Court of Justice. Some of the other symposium authors were personal friends of Gordon Slynn, but all knew and admired him. Their articles span an extraordinary variety of topics in EU law, an appropriate tribute to his versatility.

Professor Roger J. Goebel  
Alpin J. Cameron Professor

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3. Laurence Gormley, *Obituary: Gordon Slynn (1930–2009)*, 34 EUR. L. REV. 347, 348 (2009).