

LAWYERING AT THE EDGE:

FOREWORD

*Roy D. Simon**

Lawyering can be humdrum and routine, or it can be exciting and dangerous (or anywhere in between). Hofstra's sixth major conference on legal ethics¹ focused on the exciting and dangerous parts. The title of the conference was "Lawyering at the Edge: Unpopular Clients, Difficult Cases, Zealous Advocates." The extraordinary roster of nineteen speakers featured both practicing lawyers and outstanding scholars. The practicing lawyers described their own personal experiences lawyering at the edge, while the scholars examined the inspiring stories of lawyers who have exhibited remarkable courage. The speakers included (in alphabetical order):

- Raymond Brown
- James Farragher Campbell
- Angela J. Davis
- Monroe H. Freedman
- Stephen Gillers
- Glenda Grace
- Bruce Green
- Ronald Kuby
- Gerald B. Lefcourt

* Howard Lichtenstein Distinguished Professor of Legal Ethics, Hofstra University School of Law and Director of Hofstra's Institute for the Study of Legal Ethics. Professor Simon thanks Dawn Marzella, who served as the Conference Coordinator, and all of the other members of the staff at Hofstra who worked so hard to make this conference possible.

1. The conference was held at Hofstra University for three full days, from October 14 through October 16, 2007. Hofstra previously held similar major conferences on legal ethics in 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2005. For the papers from those four conferences, see 1 J. INST. STUDY OF LEGAL ETHICS (1996); 2 J. INST. STUDY OF LEGAL ETHICS (1999); 30 HOFSTRA L. REV. 685-1067 (2002); 32 HOFSTRA L. REV. 1095-1662 (2004); and 34 HOFSTRA L. REV. 635-1205 (2006).

- Richard Mauro
- Kevin McMunigal
- Andrew Perlman
- Burnele Venable Powell
- Abbe Smith
- Clive Stafford-Smith
- John Steele
- Lynne Stewart
- Michael Tigar (Keynote Address)
- Charles Wolfram
- Ellen Yaroshefsky

This issue collects many of the papers delivered at the conference. However, the papers cannot capture the electric atmosphere that excited the audience and energized the speakers throughout the conference. To capture that atmosphere, you must attend in person (though the video excerpts on the Internet will give you a sense).² But I can explain what makes Hofstra's conferences so special. Our approach at each Hofstra legal ethics conference has been to focus intensely on each individual speaker, in three distinct ways.

First, rather than assigning topics, we give each speaker freedom to choose a topic. Thus, within the broad theme of "lawyering at the edge," each speaker was free to develop a topic of particular personal interest or scholarly significance.

Second, each speaker came to the podium alone for nearly an hour. There were no co-panelists or moderators to distract from a speaker or to deflect questions from the audience.

Third, we devoted about half of each speaker's time to questions and comments from the audience—and the audience is no ordinary audience, because we encourage the major speakers to spend substantial time at the conference attending speeches by others and to ask questions. It was not unusual to hear questions from Charles Wolfram, Stephen Gillers, Monroe Freedman, and other speakers.

In addition, we invited a number of distinguished commentators whose principal assignment was to ask challenging questions. This year's commentators included (in alphabetical order):

2. Video recordings of the proceedings at "Lawyering at the Edge: Unpopular Clients, Difficult Cases, Zealous Advocates," including questions and comments from the audience, are available at http://law.hofstra.edu/Academics/Journals/LawReview/lrv_issues_v36n02.html.

- Lonnie T. Brown, Jr.
- Alafair S. Burke
- I. Bennett Capers
- Eric M. Freedman
- Leon Friedman
- Jeanne P. Gray
- Joel Hirschhorn
- Lisa Lerman
- Adam Liptak
- Ralph J. Temple

We hope you will value this printed version of our conference, and that it will inspire you to find your own edge in the world of law practice. We also hope you will attend Hofstra's next legal ethics conference in person.