

Opening Remarks

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Recommended Citation

Bellacosa, Joseph W. (2002) "Opening Remarks," *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*: Vol. 16 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcred/vol16/iss2/2>

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OPENING REMARKS

JOSEPH W. BELLACOSA*

In the spirit of John Marshall, I could say that the welcome and thanks that Michael extended are simply taken care of by my saying, "I concur." And I don't have to write a separate judicial opinion.

But as dean, I do want to second the welcome and the thanks to the distinguished panel members for participating in this important and special program. When Professor Weinberg presented this idea and conceived of the notion that we ought to have this kind of symposium we agreed immediately. He is to be commended for the planning and the work with the Journal staff in bringing it to fruition.

I think one of the things about a law school, and a great law school like ours, is the vitality and the vibrancy of ideas that are discussed. We try to see how and where those ideas play out in action. William Safire wrote a recent column that he entitled, "Little Gemmy," about James Madison. The conception of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and how Madison, despite his nickname, was a man of grand thought and overarching action was the central theme of the column.

That column provided the segue for the few remarks that I was to make today as an opening welcome. Chief Justice Marshall was also a man who put ideas into action. He actualized the concept that we have come to know and that is so appreciated in our own history in American jurisprudence, and that is the principle of judicial review.

How interesting it is that last night we could have a program here with Sister Helen Prejean on capital punishment, talking about the effects of that issue on people in our society under our

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governance. And then on the very next morning we have this timely program dealing with federalism. How we see ourselves as a nation and how individuals are governed by that nation through the power that they give to their officials through the Constitution is very important to study and appreciate.

We might otherwise overlook, because of nostalgia and the two hundred years of celebration, that these seminal ideas and the actions taken under them have a very vital impact today. We see the results in the cases that are still unfolding. We will see it in the presentations of the distinguished panel today. And we look forward to where the ideas unfold anew and take our nation.

So my delight as the dean and on behalf of my faculty colleagues is to express appreciation for another treat with this program. We know the values of being exposed to fresh perspectives and ideas. I thank the panelists for sharing your time and breadth of knowledge and experience with us.