

Introduction: Perspectives on Fundamental Freedoms

Editorial Board

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SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS (1791-1991)

INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES ON FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Last April, when our board first contemplated this Symposium, we invited authors from across the intellectual and political spectrum to share their scholarly insights on themes generic to the Bill of Rights in honor of its anniversary. We intended the issue to be an informed discourse framed by scholars speaking in their own voices and from their own perspectives about human liberties. We hoped that a dialogic tone would stretch and enliven the conversation.

We have not been disappointed. The authors participating in this Symposium challenge us to celebrate the Bicentennial by re-considering and recommitting ourselves to the flourishing of essential freedoms. Charles Black particularly reminds us that this responsibility is grounded, not in passion or intent, but in the Constitution's very structure. Other contributors, including law professors, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, a social ethicist, and a member of Congress, offer different perspectives. Individually and collectively, they urge us to stand against

the forces of exclusion, fear, and ignorance. They invite us, overwhelmingly, to extend the circle of protections we enjoy to those at the margins of society.

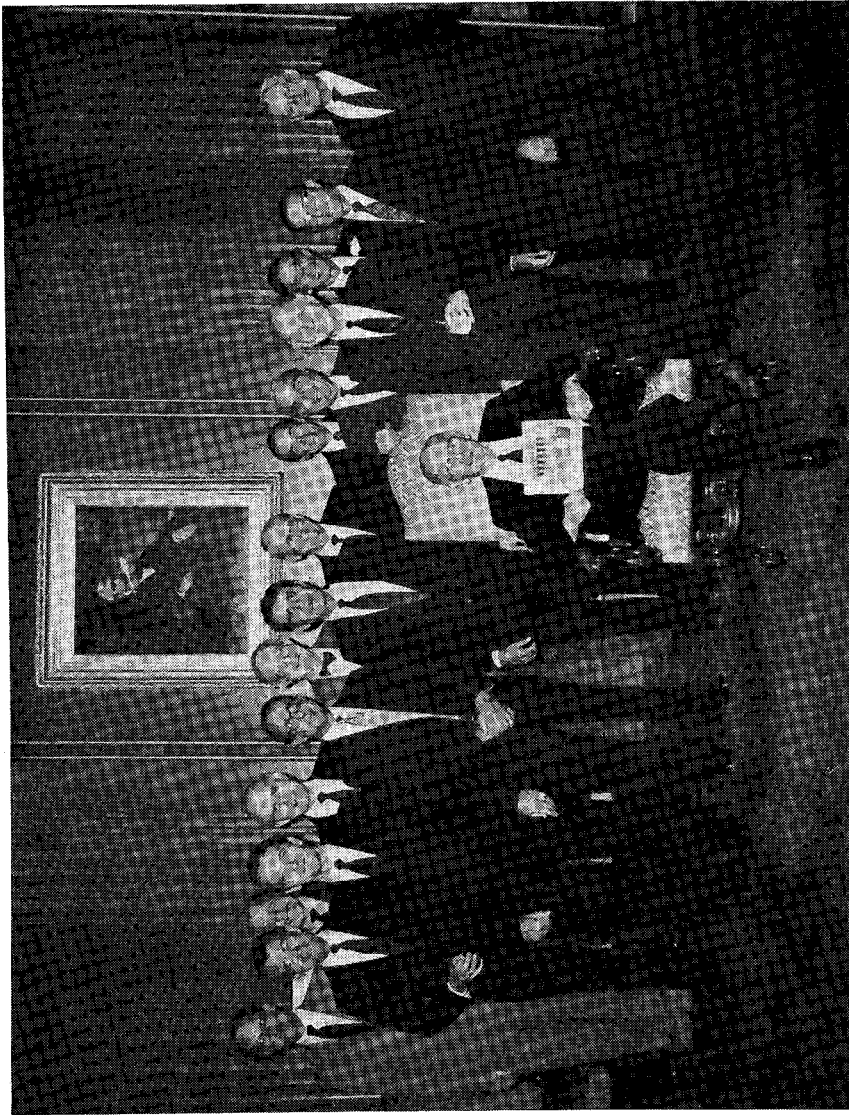
It seems most appropriate to commemorate this anniversary by remembering the Supreme Court Justice who has so powerfully articulated a constitutional vision grounded in liberty and equality. To acknowledge his compelling contribution to safeguarding and extending these basic human rights, we dedicate this Symposium to retired Associate Justice William Brennan, Jr. As he reminded us, "from its founding, the Nation's basic commitment has been to foster the dignity and well-being of all persons within its borders."¹ We are pleased that two of Justice Brennan's former clerks have each captured his warmth, imagination, and profound humanity in a foreword written in his honor.

It is in the spirit of Justice Brennan's own commitment that this Symposium welcomes various perspectives on human freedom. In celebrating the Bicentennial of the Bill of Rights, we seek to remember the possibilities that we might "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."²

The Editors of Volume 65

¹ *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254, 265 (1970).

² U.S. Const. preamble; *Goldberg*, 397 U.S. at 265.



Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. surrounded by his former clerks.

