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Preface

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SYMPOSIUM

THE UNITED STATES COURT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

PREFACE

PATRICK J. ROHAN*

It is my pleasure to write the preface to this special issue of the St. John's Law Review on international trade law, which commemorates the First Annual Judicial Conference of the United States Court of International Trade, held on February 15, 1984 in New York City. As the world grows smaller, and international trade becomes ever more important and complex, it is essential that lawyers come to understand the role of the United States Court of International Trade. This federal tribunal was established under Article III of the Constitution by the "Customs Courts Act of 1980." In creating the Court, Congress stated that its primary intent was to provide persons adversely affected by agency actions arising out of import transactions with the same access to judicial remedies and judicial review that is available to persons aggrieved by actions of other administrative agencies.

Congressman Peter W. Rodino, Jr., a sponsor of the legislation, stated that: "Congress has provided the tools necessary to make judicial review of import transactions function properly for parties adversely affected by administrative decisions. Whether that process will do so lies within the province of the litigants, their attorneys, and the Court. The challenge posed by the Cus-

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toms Courts Act of 1980 is theirs to fulfill." Some three and one-half years later, the Court's first Chief Judge, the Honorable Edward D. Re, convened the Court's First Annual Judicial Conference "to evaluate the impact of the 1980 Act upon the Court, the litigants, the practitioners and those officials who administer the international trade laws of the United States." It seems clear that the Court, and those who appear before it, are working hard to meet the challenge posed by Congress. During the Court's nascent years, they have endeavored to give meaning to the provisions of two new and important statutes, the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 and The Customs Courts Act of 1980. In the words of the President, in signing the 1980 Act, the legislation: "creates a comprehensive system for judicial review of civil actions arising out of import transactions and federal statutes affecting international trade." In addition, the Court continues to perform the traditional functions of its predecessor, the United States Customs Court, by resolving disputes pertaining to the classification and valuation of all imported goods.

In furtherance of the goal of the First Annual Judicial Conference of the United States Court of International Trade, namely, the evaluation of the impact of the 1980 Act, the *St. John's Law Review* presents articles by recognized experts who participated in the Conference. These articles will provide all who have an interest in international trade law with valuable insights into the complex procedural and substantive issues that the Court has faced since 1980. This Symposium issue also includes a number of student works that highlight a cross-section of important recent decisions of the Court. The thorough discussion of the work of the Court by these distinguished authors will illuminate this important area of international trade law. I would like to thank Chief Judge Re for his suggestions and assistance in the publication of this international trade issue of the *Law Review*. The United States Court of International Trade and its distinguished Chief Judge are to be commended for their valuable contributions to this field of law.