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Introduction (Harry H. Wellington Festschrift Issue)

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INTRODUCTION

NADINE STROSSEN*

I am delighted to welcome the remarkably diverse and distinguished participants and guests, all assembled together here at New York Law School today to honor Harry H. Wellington. Harry recently completed his memorable term as NYLS's Dean and President, among the many impressive titles he has earned throughout his illustrious career.

I have the honor of opening these proceedings, since I was the chief initiator and organizer of this symposium, along with my NYLS colleague Ruti Teitel, who will be speaking later today.¹ In 1999, as Harry's retirement from the NYLS Deanship was looming, Ruti and I learned that we each had been thinking of putting together some kind of *Festschrift* as a small token of our great appreciation for Harry's enormous, multifarious contributions to the law and legal education.

Wearing my hat as Faculty Advisor to the *New York Law School Law Review* (an appointment that I owe to Harry, and one of many steps he has taken to nurture my career and enhance my life at New York Law School), I was pleasantly surprised to learn that no other law journal yet had published such a collection. Harry graciously agreed, as yet another contribution to our school, to allow NYLS's *Law Review* to serve as the forum for an in-person symposium and published *Festschrift* volume dedicated to him. The result is a stimulating exchange of ideas among an exceptional array of lawyers, judges, professors, and deans, all brought together by our common connection to, and admiration for, Harry Wellington.

We at New York Law School, and the *NYLS Law Review* in particular, are honored to host such an important forum on behalf of such an outstanding Dean, scholar, teacher, lawyer, and – above all –

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1. Much valuable assistance with the immense amount of planning required to pull together an event involving so many busy participants was provided by my Academic Assistant, Kathy Davis (NYLS '03) and the Supervising Editor of the *New York Law School Law Review*, Jacqueline Esposito (NYLS '01). Early in the planning process, Kathy attached a suitably festive nickname to this celebratory assembly; she dubbed it the "Harrypalooza"!

human being, Harry Wellington. Harry's exemplary career has been widely lauded, so its highlights are well known to all of you here, and also to a broader public. Harry's impressive record has been celebrated, among other ways, through a special Lifetime Achievement Award that the *NYLS Law Review* presented to him last spring. Therefore, I will not repeat here Harry's public record of accomplishments and contributions. Instead, I would like to share a more personal view.

I vividly recall the first time I had the pleasure of hearing Harry Wellington speak, since his wise words impressed me so deeply. The year was 1986 and the occasion was an intellectually dazzling conference commemorating the 350th anniversary of my *alma mater*, Harvard University.

Of all the stars in that firmament, to my mind the brightest was Harry Wellington, who spoke on a panel of prominent law school deans, including the legendary former Dean of the Harvard Law School, Erwin Griswold. Harry was then Dean at the Yale Law School, and I was then on the faculty at the NYU School of Law, so I never dreamt that I would ever have the rare pleasure of collaborating with Harry in a dean-faculty relationship. Yet I never forgot Harry's inspired and inspiring vision of legal education. He heralded later critiques of the then-growing divide between the academy, on the one hand, and the bench and bar, on the other hand. He advocated a dynamic role for law schools, linking students and professors with lawyers and judges, and linking intellectual inquiry with the pursuit of justice.

Years later, when I had joined the NYLS faculty, I was thrilled to learn that Harry shared my commitment to our school, and was then serving on our Board of Trustees. A couple years after that, when we started seeking a new dean, I was delighted to help recruit Harry to accept our invitation to implement his grand vision of legal education at our grand school. My own experience is just one example of the many ways that Harry has fostered the integrative approach to scholarship and lawyering, law and justice, that I first heard him describe at Harvard. With his active support, I have been both an active civil liberties advocate and an active teacher/scholar.

Just as Harry inspired me before he became our Dean, he will always continue to do so long after he ceased to hold that position. As an educator par excellence, Harry embodies the qualities that sparked the following insight by Henry Adams, in his classic autobiography: "A

teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”² So, to really do justice to Harry Wellington, the *New York Law School Law Review* should have awarded his contributions not “just” throughout a lifetime, but also carrying forward into eternity.

The thought-provoking contributions to this *Festschrift* issue of the *NYLS Law Review* are just one important example of Harry Wellington’s enduring influence. The breadth of Harry’s achievements and impact made it daunting to select a representative cross-section of participants, who would do justice to the scope of Harry’s work. Since Harry’s outstanding professional accomplishments have been accompanied by his equally outstanding human qualities, we decided to invite contributors who have been Harry’s friends and colleagues, in addition to being experts and leaders in their own right. Along with many others whose lives and minds have been deeply touched by Harry Wellington, these eminent contributors are carrying forward Harry’s legacies as lawyer, professor, and dean.³

Harry Wellington has done much in his own right to shape the law and legal education. His most enduring contribution has been in shaping the minds and lives of so many others, for whom the *Festschrift* contributors speak, since they will in turn perpetuate the Wellingtonian views, values, and vision. One prime example is our next speaker, Harry’s successor as Dean and President of New York Law School, Richard A. Matasar. Rick, himself an extraordinarily dynamic and effective teacher, scholar, and dean, has drawn from and is building on the legacy of his predecessor and colleague, Harry Wellington.

2. HENRY ADAMS, *THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS* www.bartleby.com/159/20 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. ed., 1999) (1918).

3. I would like to acknowledge the distinguished individuals who made memorable oral presentations at the symposium associated with this *Festschrift* volume, but were unable to contribute written versions for this publication: Barbara Black, Donald Elliott, John Hart Ely, Ellen Ash Peters, and Samuel Stern.