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## Opening Remarks

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# **SPEAKERS**

## **OPENING REMARKS**

DEAN RUDOLPH C. HASL\*

This is truly a special year for St. John's University, not only in the history of the Law School, but also of the University. The University is celebrating its 125th anniversary, which started with a grand celebration at St. Patrick's Cathedral in September and will end with an event at Ellis Island to celebrate the University's 125 years of service to this metropolitan area.

St. John's, like Ellis Island, is a point of access. In its 125 years of existence, this University has been a point of access to people seeking higher education. It has served various constituencies over the years, and that same tradition has affected the Law School.

The law school has been the point of access for many generations of students. The school was originally based in Brooklyn. The first students were mostly immigrants and children of immigrants, many of whom were Jewish and had no other opportuni-

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ties for legal education. This tradition has continued throughout the history of the Law School.

This was a special year in the history of St. John's University School of Law as well. We dedicated this facility, Finley Hall, in September. This year has also provided an opportunity to institute a number of programs of an academic nature to give greater visibility to our school's strengths.

One of those strengths is represented today by the efforts of the editors and staff of the *St. John's Journal of Legal Commentary* in coordinating this symposium. The Americans With Disabilities Act<sup>1</sup> ("ADA") is truly a revolutionary statutory change. One theme that the speakers will discuss is the profound potential impact of the ADA on our legal system. We have only begun to scratch the surface of its influence.

In the construction plans for the new building we were cognizant of the requirements of the ADA, as we are when we engage in so many of the other activities that affect the Law School. The ADA has a profound impact on the educational community as well as across the country in so many other areas and will only grow in the years to come.

I wish you a successful conference and a stimulating examination of this new legislation.

<sup>1</sup> Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336 (codified at 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-213 (Supp. V 1993)).