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## ***Dean Logan's Blog***

### **Senator Jack Reed Keynotes Program of Legal Challenges Created by 9/11 Terror Attack**

Posted by David Logan on 09/16/2011 at 11:25 AM

One of the great benefits of being the only law school in Rhode Island is the breadth and depth of support we receive from the bench, bar, and public officials. On Monday, September 12, the School of Law community enjoyed yet another example of this integration when a remarkable gathering of lawyers spoke to a big crowd in our Appellate Courtroom on the topic, "Rights, Remedies and Terrorism: 9/11's Challenge to the Legal System."





The senior U.S. Senator from Rhode Island, Jack Reed, gave the keynote, bringing a truly unique perspective to the subject matter. A graduate of West Point (only the eighth U.S. Senator to do so), Reed served as an Army Ranger and completed his education at Harvard's Kennedy School and Law School. After a stint in private practice, he was elected to the state senate, then the U. S. House of Representatives, and finally the U.S. Senate. He has served with distinction there since 1996, and is currently a member of the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees.

Senator Reed spoke eloquently about how 9/11 challenged the American commitment to the rule of law, domestically and abroad. He emphasized that “when we are a nation of laws, we succeed; when we stray, we get into difficult and precarious positions” – mentioning as examples the controversy over “enhanced interrogation techniques” and the scandal at the Abu Gharib prison.



Next up was United States Attorney Peter Neronha, who, as the top federal law enforcement officer, spoke passionately about his office's efforts to open and maintain lines of communication with the state's Muslim community (I did not know there were seven mosques in our little state) as well as some of the difficult procedural questions faced by investigators and prosecutors by cases implicating national security, like whether someone not a citizen suspected of terrorism should be given Miranda warnings.



Don Migliori, a longtime (and popular) member of our adjunct faculty, shared his experiences handling compensation claims on behalf of families that lost loved ones in the 9/11 attacks, both in front of Ken Feinberg's compensation commission and in civil actions in the federal courts. Now, after almost a decade of preparation, Don is set to try the single case slated to go to trial (in the Southern District of New York), and he gave a nice shout-out to his colleague (and our alumna) Leah Donaldson '07, who brought her invaluable pre-law school experience with air safety to her work at Don's firm, [Motley Rice](#). Read [9/11 Families, Except One, Receive Over \\$7 Billion](#) for details.



Don Migliori and Leah Donaldson '07



This audience also got to hear from Patricia Sullivan, one of New England's top corporate lawyers, who saw her professional life inalterably changed when she and her partner Deming Sherman took on, pro bono, a pair of habeas corpus claims on behalf of detainees captured in Afghanistan and incarcerated at Guantanamo. Pat described how, after she and Deming convinced their partners at the leading firm [Edwards, Angell, Palmer & Dodge](#) that they should take on the cases, the two dove into a completely new (and highly controversial) area of the law – and personally incurred the cost of their logistical support, travel and an interpreter, all in an effort to ferret out why her clients were incarcerated. It turned out that both were in the wrong place at the wrong time: one was eventually released to return to Afghanistan; the other remains at Gitmo with no release date on the horizon (he fired Pat and Deming, preferring to leave the matter to Allah).



Last but not least came our own [Professor Peter Margulies](#), a nationally-known expert on National Security Law, and author of "Law's Detour: Justice Displaced in Bush Administration (2010)". Peter has been involved in a number of hi-visibility cases arising out of the War on Terror [/blog/professor-margulies-plays-role-key-scotus-case](#) and he summarized important civil cases that seek compensation for the "enhanced interrogation" techniques used during the early years of the War on Terror, and that are working their way through the court system.

All in all, a fascinating collection of experiences for a terrific group of lawyers.



