9-5-2013

Dean Logan's Blog: Justice Kagan in Rhode Island

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Justice Kagan in Rhode Island

Posted by David Logan on 09/05/2013 at 05:19 PM

Justice Elena Kagan came to Rhode Island to join in two important celebrations: the 250th anniversary of the oldest synagogue in the United States - Touro Synagogue and the 350th anniversary of the Royal Charter for the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and the Roger Williams Law community was out in force for both events, as well as an invitation-only reception at the Federal Courthouse in Providence.

The Touro event was built around the reading of George Washington's Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, historically significant because it was the first statement by a United States President that the new country would not just be tolerant of all religions, but actually provide religious liberty. (And it was the source of the famous phrase, "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.") Justice Kagan's address, unsurprisingly, focused on the experience of Jewish lawyers in the U.S. Here is press coverage of her Touro talk. [http://www.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/content/20130818-newports-touro-synagogue-celebrates-its-250th-anniversary-gallery.ece](http://www.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/content/20130818-newports-touro-synagogue-celebrates-its-250th-anniversary-gallery.ece)

The next day, Judge Bruce Selya (a popular member of our Adjunct Faculty), hosted the federal court event which began with a private reception in his chambers and then an opportunity for the larger group to interact with the personable justice.

Jeffrey Padwa, Providence City Solicitor with Justice Kagan
Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee and Judge Bruce Selya

RI Supreme Court Associate Justice William Robinson

U.S. Attorney Peter Neronha, Colonel Brendan Doherty (ret.) and RI Superior Court Associate Justice Michael Silverstein
Mike Daly'02, Stan Pupecki'02 and Associate Justice Netti Vogel, RI Superior Court

RI Family Court Associate Justice Laureen D’Ambra

Michael P. Fontaine, Esq. and Judge Selya
Then, of course, was the event that was sponsored by RWU Law, her conversation, held at Trinity Rep Theater in Providence, and attended by over 200 RWU Law students, faculty, and staff. The conversation was fascinating and the event went viral when Justice Kagan mentioned that due to the formality of her
colleagues, the Court “had not gotten around to email.” Here are some links to the press coverage:


http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/justices_send_each_other_paper_memos_not_email_messages_kagan_says/


Here are pictures from this event.

Professor Ted Widmer, Brown University