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Barney Frank, Schroth in Panel Discussion on Drinan

2011 ARCHIVE

02/09/11

Newton, MA—BC Law will be hosting a panel discussion featuring Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., author of the first comprehensive biography on the late Robert Drinan, S.J, former dean of Boston College Law School and U.S. representative for Massachusetts. The event, also featuring Representative Barney Frank, among others, will be held Monday, March 7 at 7:00 pm on the BC Law campus, East Wing room 120.

Entitled *Bob Drinan: The Controversial Life of the First Catholic Priest Elected to Congress*, Schroth pays tribute to Drinan’s religious, political, and social activism during a turbulent era in America.

The discussion will feature author Schroth, U.S. Representative of Massachusetts Barney Frank, Chairman of “Father Drinan for Congress” Jerome Grossman, and Professor Gregory Kalscheur of BC Law. Darald and Juliet Libby Professor Sanford Katz, also of BC Law, will moderate the panel.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Drinan graduated from Boston College in 1942 and joined the Jesuit Order that same year. He received his LL.M. and LL.B. from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1950. He returned in 1956 to serve as dean of the Boston College Law School until 1970, when he chose to run for Congress on an anti-Vietnam War platform. Gaining a seat in the House of Representatives, he served for ten years.

During that time, Drinan introduced a resolution demanding President Nixon’s impeachment not for the Watergate Scandal, but for Nixon’s secret bombing of Cambodia. He was also a controversial figure in the Church for his consistent support of abortion rights, arguing that the legality of abortion should be considered separately from moral arguments.

In 1980, Pope John Paul II demanded that priests withdraw from electoral politics. Rather than renounce the priesthood, Drinan did not seek reelection for the following year. He remained a vigorous human rights advocate and continued to promote justice and civil rights at home and abroad. He taught at Georgetown University Law Center from then until his death in 2007.

As both a friend and fellow Jesuit, Schroth chronicles the events of Drinan’s life with love and care, giving the reader an “intriguing portrait in courage [that] provides an intimate glimpse into the heart and soul of a deeply textured spiritual and political groundbreaker,” says reviewer Margaret Flanagan of *Booklist*.

During his tenure at BC Law, Robert Drinan was the driving force for BC Law’s transition from a well-regarded local institute to one of the nation’s top law schools. BC University Historian Thomas O’Connor referred to him as a “dynamic force at Boston College...He attracted the kind of scholars and professors to the law school that would eventually make it one of the most significant in the country.”

Schroth is currently a professor of humanities at Saint Peter’s College. He has taught or served as dean at five Jesuit colleges and Universities. He has written eight books, including “The American Jesuits: A History.” He is also the media columnist for the National Catholic Reporter, focusing on religion issues.

