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Boston College Law School

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06/09/10

1/29/10--BC Law Professor Mark Brodin’s newest release, "William P. Homans Jr.: A Life In Court" (Vandeplas Press), recounts the remarkable legal career and troubled personal life of the prominent Boston lawyer William P. Homans Jr.

Watch a video interview with Professor Brodin

Descendent of a venerable family of surgeons, politicians, corporate lawyers and Harvard professors, the patrician Homans was a fixture on the Boston legal scene for fifty years and an unlikely guru to the 1960s generation of activist lawyers. A World War II combat veteran of both the British and American navies, he became the first-call lawyer for antiwar protestors during the Vietnam years and was on the defense team in the pivotal 1968 conspiracy trial of Dr. Benjamin Spock and four other leading opponents of the War. Homans fought a successful decades-long courtroom battle against capital punishment in Massachusetts, persuaded the Supreme Judicial Court to modernize the insanity defense, and represented Dr. Kenneth Edelin in the controversial 1975 manslaughter prosecution arising out of a lawful abortion. As counsel to the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts in the 1950s and 1960s, he was center stage in the struggles against book and film censorship and the over-reaching investigative committees of the McCarthy era.

Mark S. Brodin is Professor of Law and former Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Boston College Law School. A graduate of Columbia College and Columbia Law School (where he served on the Law Review), Professor Brodin clerked for United States District Judge Joseph L. Tauro from 1972 to 1974. He was Staff Counsel with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association from 1974 to 1980, representing plaintiffs in employment, housing, and police misconduct actions. Professor Brodin has published extensively in the areas of employment discrimination, constitutional criminal procedure, civil procedure, evidence, and litigation. He is the author of numerous law review articles and co-author of *Handbook of Massachusetts Evidence* (with Hon. Paul J. Liacos and Michael Avery), *Criminal Procedure: The Constitution and the Police* (with Robert M. Bloom), and *Civil Procedure: Doctrine, Practice and Context* (with Stephen Subrin, Martha Minow, and Thom Main). Professor Brodin has served for brief periods as an appellate attorney with the Massachusetts Defenders Committee (now the Committee for Public Counsel) and as a special assistant district attorney in Norfolk County.

Professor Brodin was named BC Law's 2002-2003 Faculty Member of the Year by the Law Students Association. The Black Law Students Association awarded him the Ruth Arlene Howe Award in both 2005 and 2006, and the Anthony P. Farley Excellence in Training Award in 2008-2009.

"William P. Homans Jr.: A Life In Court" is now available online [here](#).