



**Making History Together
The New York State Court of Appeals
in
Albany's Tricentennial Year**

Transcript of Ceremony held in Court of Appeals Hall
Eagle Street, Albany, NY
November 15, 1986

The Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York
New York State Judicial Institute
84 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10603
phone: (914) 682-3222



**Making History Together
The New York State Court of Appeals
in
Albany's Tricentennial Year**

COURT OF APPEALS TRICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Carroll J. Mealey, Chairman
Attorney

Hon. Francis Bergan
Retired Court of Appeals Judge

Nicholas Capra
Executive Assistant, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge,
Office of Court Administration

John H. Gary
Motion Clerk, Court of Appeals

Larry Hackman
New York State Archivist

Sr. Ellen Lawlor, RSM
President and Chief Operating Officer,
St. Peter's Hospital

Walter J. Mordaunt
Public Information Officer,
Court of Appeals

Mary Helen Moses
Professor of Law, Albany Law School

Norman S. Rice
Director Emeritus, Albany Institute of History and Art

Sally Webb
Chapter Coordinator, Fund for Modern Courts

Dolores Wharton
President, Fund for Corporate Initiatives, Inc.

Making History Together
 The New York State Court of Appeals
 in
 Albany's Tricentennial Year

CHIEF JUDGE SOL WACHTLER:

I am delighted, as Chief Judge of this Court, and on behalf of the judges of this Court, Judge Meyer, Judge Simons, Judge Kaye, Judge Alexander, Judge Titone, Judge Hancock, and our Clerk, Don Sheraw, to welcome you here this morning.

I particularly wish to thank the members of the Committee for their arrangements in connection with this event:

Our Chairman, Carroll J. Mealey, from whom we will hear later, Judge Bergan, who will also favor us with remarks, Larry Hackman, our State Archivist, Sister Ellen Lawlor, Walter Mordaunt, Professor Mary Helen Moses, Norman Rice, Sally Webb, Dolores Wharton. I skipped Jack Gary only because I wanted to make special mention of him. Jack died very recently. Jack was as much a part of this Court as anyone could be, having given and devoted thirty years of his life as our Motion Clerk. He was very much a part of all of us and of the fabric of this institution. So I speak his name with sadness, with love, affection, and eternal gratitude.

Three hundred years ago when the colonies of New England, the intellectual seed bed of the New World, were regressing to the savagery of witch hunts, and when Cotton Mather was warning those colonists of "the possessed" and of soul selling to the devil, we here in New York State, a much more civilized lot, were applying to Thomas Dongan for land patents.

During this past year, we who have been privileged to be in and a part of Albany, have been enjoying with the residents and citizens of the City, —and we all feel very much a part of that citizenry, —the Tricentennial — the 300th anniversary of this city.

The study of the history of this city and of this state is very important because, as Judge Kaye of our Court once said, "Many of the troubles of this generation come from not having read the minutes of the last meeting". And so we are gathered here in a sense to look at the past, to "read the minutes of the last meeting", and at the same time we hope to share not only of the beauty of this great chamber, but some of the history of this Court as well.

Although we are privileged to have many distinguished guests here this morning, one of our most distinguished citizens is absent. I speak of the Mayor of the City, Tom Whalen, who is not here for very good reason. That reason will be explained to you and a letter will be read to you from the Mayor by our Chief Administrative Judge, Joseph W. Bellacosa. I would just like to mention in introducing Judge Bellacosa to you that he works with me in administering the court system of the State of New York, which is probably the largest court system in the country. We resolve 3 million cases a year in this State, which is ten times more than all of the courts in all of the federal system combined. My right hand, and left hand, in doing that work is Joe Bellacosa, who will now read a communication from our Mayor, Tom Whalen.

Making History Together
The New York State Court of Appeals
in
Albany's Tricentennial Year

CHIEF JUDGE WACHTLER:

Thank you so much, Mr. Kennedy. I noticed when you were enumerating some of those ancient punishments, every one was smiling except our District Attorney, Sol Greenberg, who was very seriously taking notes for future reference.

I would like to thank the State Archivist, Larry Hackman, who provided the exhibit outside this chamber, which I hope you will all see before your leave. And, now, for a parting word, I would like to introduce the Chairman of this event — a man on whom we have called so often and always has very eagerly and willingly served and who has always done such a superb job, whether it was in the Commission that Governor Cuomo and I appointed to study our court system, or whether it was the event this morning. I speak of the Chairman, Carroll Mealey.

CARROLL J. MEALEY:

Respected Judges of the Court:

I must remark before I close that John Mesick had a very interesting statement here this morning, but in it was something that is not really that novel to attorneys, John. When you remarked that there are interesting things to be found — when you approached the Court on your hands and knees. We attorneys know that. We do it every day when we argue here. And, hence, we use that time-honored salutation to the Court before we argue — "May it please the Court".

As a proud native of this venerable city and a long-time advocate before this dedicated and erudite Court, I wish to extend the thanks of the City of Albany and its citizens for the Court's unique tender of this celebration in honor of the City's Tricentennial year. Particularly do we wish to thank you for your graciousness in remaining in the city today to celebrate this with us. Like any celebration shared by neighbors surely this event brings us closer together in appreciation and understanding.

I would be remiss, I think, if I did not remark to you that the enthusiasm and the inspiration, which Chief Judge Wachtler and Chief Administrative Judge Bellacosa have brought to this event, is highly and richly deserving of our gratitude. I thank all of the distinguished speakers here today for this most interesting program. I thank the members of my committee who worked so hard to put this together; and, I announce on behalf of the Chief Judge, that the Judges of the Court will now join all of us in a reception to be held through the good graces of Mayor Tom Whalen in the City Hall rotunda.

Thank you very much.



[Home](#) | [Courts](#) | [Judges](#) | [Library](#) | [Trials](#)
[About](#) | [News](#) | [Membership](#) | [Board of Trustees](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Links](#) | [Search](#)



The Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York
New York State Judicial Institute
84 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10603
phone: (914) 682-3222