

Abrams Institute for Freedom of Expression Will Promote Freedom of Speech and Press, Access to Information

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Yale Law School News

Yale Law School and Floyd Abrams '59 have announced the formation of The Floyd Abrams Institute for Freedom of Expression at Yale Law School, dedicated to promoting freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and access to information as informed by the values of democracy and human freedom. The Abrams Institute is made possible by a generous gift from Floyd Abrams, one of the country's leading experts in freedom of speech and press issues who both graduated from and has taught at Yale Law School. It is administered by the Yale Information Society Project, directed by Professor Jack Balkin.

"We are thrilled that one of the First Amendment's greatest champions has made it possible for a new generation of Yale Law students to work for the values of free expression that he holds so dear," said Professor Balkin.

The mission of the Abrams Institute is both practical and scholarly. It will include a clinic for Yale Law students to engage in litigation, draft model legislation, and give advice to lawmakers and policy makers on issues of media freedom and informational access. It will promote scholarship and law reform on emerging questions concerning both traditional and new media. And it will hold scholarly conferences and events at Yale on First Amendment issues and on related issues of access to information, Internet and media law, telecommunications, privacy, and intellectual property.

"The First Amendment is a unique and enduring American contribution to the protection of liberty," said Abrams, a senior partner in Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP. "It is law but it is more than that. The vigorous defense of free expression is a cause, one rooted in distrust of virtually all government efforts to ban, prevent, punish or require speech. My hope is that the Abrams Institute will not only help to train a new generation of lawyers skilled in defending freedom of expression but to further that cause within the Yale Law School, within our nation and throughout the world."

Floyd Abrams has been described by former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan as "the leading First Amendment advocate of our age." He rose to national prominence in 1971 when he was co-counsel to the New York Times with Yale Law School Professor Alexander Bickel in their successful defense of the newspaper in resisting the Nixon Administration's attempt to suppress publication of the Pentagon Papers. In the following 40 years, he has argued numerous First Amendment cases before the Supreme Court including, most recently and controversially, his successful argument on behalf of Senator Mitch McConnell in the *Citizens United* case defending the right of corporations and unions to participate in election campaigns. Among his clients have been the Brooklyn Museum, in the case prompted by New York Mayor Rudolph Guiliani's attempt to close a controversial exhibit, and journalists such as Judith Miller who sought to protect the confidentiality of their sources. He is the author of "*Speaking Freely: Trials of the First Amendment*."

In addition to numerous appointments as a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School and Columbia Law School, Abrams was for fifteen years the William J. Brennan, Jr. Visiting Professor of First Amendment Law at the

Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. He holds a B.A. from Cornell University and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

The Information Society Project at Yale Law School is an intellectual center addressing the implications of the Internet and new information technologies for law and society, guided by the values of democracy, development, and equality. For more information about the Yale ISP, visit <http://isp.law.yale.edu>.

Attorney

- Floyd Abrams

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