

## SEXUALITY AND THE LAW: INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

It is not every year that fifty-six professors at one's law school join together to submit a brief to the Supreme Court. This law school's recent brief in *Rumsfeld v. Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights*, No 04-1152 (2005), demonstrates the mounting tension around questions of sexuality and sexual expression in contemporary American culture, and the pressing need for the law to accommodate the asking of those questions. From the outcry that followed President Bush's call for a constitutional amendment protecting heterosexual marriage in 2004 to the record-breaking release last month of *Brokeback Mountain*, the first gay romance film to receive wide release, this year has been marked by persistent reminders about the need to explore the issues surrounding sexuality.

In an effort to encourage that discussion, we are pleased to host a symposium entitled "Sexuality and the Law" on February 24, 2006. We look forward to welcoming the many scholars who have contributed to this volume and will contribute to the panel discussions on "Children and Education," "The Interplay Between Disability and Sexuality," "Prison and Punishment," "Sexuality and Marriage," and "Sexual Expression." We are especially pleased that Professor William Eskridge will join us to give the keynote address.

We are proud that all of the faculty moderators at this symposium were among the fifty-six professors who signed the brief that is now pending, and grateful for the continued support that Columbia has given to this journal and to gender and sexuality scholarship in general. While, like all law schools, we could use a few more courses in these areas, the ongoing support of this law school fosters critical inquiry into these concerns and produces lawyers with the tools to engage important questions on both a social and a legal level.

Whatever the results of *Rumsfeld v. FAIR*, the Columbia Journal of Gender and Law is thankful, to our own faculty as well as the visiting scholars who will join us for this event, for their commitment to encouraging dialogue about sexuality and the law. We look forward to the panel discussions that will ensue from the papers presented in this volume, and hope that this symposium will contribute to the development of a "do ask, do tell" model of open conversation about sexuality and its complicated relationship to the law.

Lucy Jane Lang  
Editor-in-Chief

## **CHILDREN AND EDUCATION**

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