

CONFERENCE PANEL

THE GOLDEN LABORATORY:

Legal Innovation in Twentieth-Century California

EDITOR'S NOTE

For the first time, the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Legal History has included a panel of scholars sponsored by the California Supreme Court Historical Society and its journal, *California Legal History*. The 2012 Annual Meeting also appears to be the first at which a panel has been devoted specifically to legal history in California. This panel was one of 35 offered at this year's conference — held at the Four Seasons Hotel in St. Louis from November 8 to 10 — at which papers were presented by scholars from 46 U.S. and 12 foreign universities.

As indicated by its title, “The Golden Laboratory: Legal Innovation in Twentieth-Century California,” the panel represents the continuing dedication by the CSCHS to the theme of California's leading role in American jurisprudence.¹ This panel also represents the first occasion on which we

¹ See, for example, the panel program presented by the CSCHS at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the California State Bar, “California — Laboratory of Legal Innovation,” published in the CSCHS *Newsletter*, Autumn/Winter 2006, Supplement pages 1–4, available at http://www.cschs.org/images_features/cschs_2006-autumn-winter.pdf.

have brought California-directed legal research to the attention of an international scholarly audience at a venue outside of California.

Sponsorship of this panel furthers several of our objectives: encouraging emerging legal historians to undertake new research in the field of California legal history, giving prominence to scholars who do so, and making known the results of their work, both to their colleagues in person and to a broader readership in print and online. At my invitation, Professor Reuel Schiller of UC Hastings College of the Law, a member of the journal's Editorial Board, undertook with enthusiasm the role of chairing the panel and "shepherding" the project through the process of approval and presentation. Professor Lawrence Friedman of Stanford University, also a member of the journal's Editorial Board (and a past president of the ASLH), who had generously agreed to serve as the panel's commentator, was forced by a family medical emergency to leave the conference early and return to California. The three scholars selected for the panel — Mark Brilliant, S. Deborah Kang, and Felicia Kornbluh — who have already achieved recognition in the field of legal history, were thereby given the opportunity and the impetus to develop further the California aspects of their individual areas of interest, as demonstrated by their papers on the following pages.

— SELMA MOIDEL SMITH

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