

KCM:

Yet another project — There were some terrific quotes on television & the courts in Toni House interview and in following call in w/ 3 reporters. (Did you hear any of them?)

Suggest the following for Susan to pitch (before she does the work) to Broadcasting

- ① photo of Toni
- ② exact transcript of Toni's comments on tv in general + C-SPAN setting precedent
- ③ transcript of guests' response to viewer question on TV in the courts (include exchange between caller + Connie)

I think they'll bite!

S.

p.s. — will you talk w/ Pat + offer them to the update, too?



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July 8, 1987

Harry,

Enclosed are some excerpts from the Supreme Court special C-SPAN aired from 4:30 - 8:00 PM ET on July 6. The program examined the first year of the Rehnquist court.

During a 30-minute live interview, Toni House, the public information officer for the Court, had some comments on televising the Supreme Court proceedings.

I've also included excerpts from a 60-minute call-in program with journalists who regularly cover the Supreme Court. They also made some remarks concerning cameras in the courtroom.

I'll be out of the office for the rest of the week. If you have any questions, Kathy Murphy will be able to help you out.

Susan Neal

OCT 3, 1987 FIRST TELEVISIED COVERAGE FROM SUPREME COURT PRESS ROOM
DEC 17, 1986 LIVE FROM PRESS ROOM
APRIL 16, 1987 " " "
JULY 6, 1987 " " "

THE CABLE SATELLITE PUBLIC AFFAIRS NETWORK



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Monday, July 6, C-SPAN host, Bruce Collins interviewed Toni House, public information officer of the U.S. Supreme Court, on press coverage of the Court.

COLLINS: What do you think about televising the Supreme Court?

HOUSE: I have no comment Bruce.

COLLINS: Do you think televising the Supreme Court would change any misimpressions the public has?

HOUSE: Obviously this is a decision the Court has to make. I think the kind of thing C-SPAN does could be very beneficial. The problem is that the law can be so arcane that you do have to accompany it, again I think C-SPAN does this, with a guide so that people understand what is going on. Most Supreme Court arguments are not very exciting. It's not a trial, it's an appellate argument. The parties are not at the table -- you have two attorneys, each of whom have one half hour to state his or her case, and subject always to questions whenever any justice feels like it. It can all be done on a level that is confusing.

It is important to give more people access to the process. Then they will understand the unemotional side of it. They will also see the earnestness and intellect the justices use in their work.

It's going to take a lot of people, giving some intelligent commentary for it to be worthwhile to the public and to make them want to watch.

Another segment of the Supreme Court special included a live call-in program with journalists who cover the Court. C-SPAN host Connie Doebele talked with Stuart Taylor, New York Times; Dick Carelli, Associated Press; and Peter Scheer, Legal Times.

DOEBELE: Chief Justice Rehnquist seems more open to new ideas with his precedent-setting ways according to Toni House. House also talked about the "bad wrap" retired Chief Justice Burger might have gotten on his views on media coverage of the Supreme Court. What are your feelings?

TAYLOR: One thing is clear, Burger did not want TV in the Court or anywhere near it. There was a ban on TV during his time and this was his wish. Rehnquist has loosened up a little bit on cameras. They (the cameras) have not gone to the courtrooms yet, and I don't know when they will, but he seems less categorically opposed to any television in the courtroom than Burger.

We know that some of the other members in the court, specifically Justice Brennan, favor cameras in the courtroom. It's possible that Rehnquist has it in mind to gradually move in that direction. However, I don't think he's shown his hand yet.

DOEBELE: Peter Scheer -- television cameras in the Supreme Court -- is it a possibility?

SCHEER: I would agree with Stuart, it is a possibility. Justice Rehnquist has indicated he is not as rigidly opposed as former Justice Burger, but has not really indicated either way. I would think it would happen in the next couple of years.

DOEBELE: As representatives of the print media what are your feelings on televised coverage?

CARELLI: Personally, I think it would enhance public understanding of the institution

CARELLI: immensely. Therefore, I'm in favor of it.
(continued)

TAYLOR: I would say I favor it. I question whether it would make an enormous difference. I think it would do some good in terms of public understanding. And I can't think of any reason why I ought to be able to be there taking notes and somebody else shouldn't be able to be there taking pictures. Since I want to be able to stay there taking notes, it seems to me they (the cameras) ought to be there too.

SCHEER: I favor it strongly because I think, as someone said earlier, the Supreme Court is perhaps the most secret, private major institution in the American Government. All of its business is conducted behind closed doors-- the sacred room -- where no one has ever had access to other than the justices. This is the one opportunity that the public has to see just what the Court does and how it conducts its business. It would go a long way to greater public understanding of how the court engages in constitutional decision-making to have cameras in the courtroom.

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