

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

On December 17, 2007, the New Jersey State Legislature repealed its death penalty statute. No other state has voted to abolish capital punishment since the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Griggs v. Georgia* in 1976. On April 14, 2008, the *Seton Hall Legislative Journal* hosted and sponsored a Symposium entitled *Legislation, Litigation, Reflection and Repeal: The Legislative Abolition of the Death Penalty in New Jersey*, co-sponsored by The New Jersey State Bar Association, The New York City Bar Association Capital Punishment Committee, and The Stein Center for Law & Ethics at Fordham Law School, with the purpose of developing the historical record, reflecting on the recent history of capital punishment in New Jersey, and examining how New Jersey's actions might provide a model for others to act in the same spirit. In attendance was a distinguished panel of legislators, scholars, and practitioners who offered their insights. What appears in the following pages are reproductions of presentations made during the Symposium. Preceding these reproductions is a timeline highlighting significant events relating to the death penalty in New Jersey, a biography of those who spoke at the Symposium, and an introductory commentary by Professor George Conk, who co-chaired the Symposium.

Resources for further research on the repeal of the death penalty in New Jersey can be found at <http://law.shu.edu/deathpenalty>.

TIMELINE: THE DEATH PENALTY IN NEW JERSEY

1972—*Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238. In a per curiam opinion, the United States Supreme Court holds that the death penalty as imposed and administered by the states constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. However, only two justices conclude that the death penalty is unconstitutional per se; the other concurring justices take issue with the “arbitrary and capricious”