



LAW SCHOOL HOME

[Students Home](#)
[About BC Law](#)
[Admission & Financial Aid](#)
[Center for Experiential Learning](#)
[The Rappaport Center](#)
[Faculty & Administration](#)

News, Events & Calendars

[2016 News Archive](#)
[2015-News Archive](#)
[2014-News Archive](#)
[2013-News Archive](#)
[2012-News Archive](#)
[2011-News Archive](#)
[2010-News Archive](#)
[2009-News Archive](#)
[2008-News Archive](#)
[2007-News Archive](#)
[2006-News Archive](#)
[2005-News Archive](#)
[2004-News Archive](#)
[2003-News Archive](#)
[2002-News Archive](#)

2001-News Archive

[2000-News Archive](#)
[Events](#)
[Services & Departments](#)
[Law Reviews](#)
[Alumni and Friends](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Law Library](#)
[bc home](#) > [schools](#) > [law school home](#) > [news-events](#) > [2001-archive](#) >

Brown

12/26/01--Boston College Law School Professor George Brown delivered the keynote address at the recent 6th Annual Legislative Ethics Conference, held in Connecticut on December 18. Brown, an expert in ethics and political corruption and former chair of the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission, spoke on "Alternative Models of Ethics Enforcement-the U.S. Supreme Court and the Political Process."

The conference, jointly sponsored by the Connecticut General Assembly, the State Ethics Commission and the Connecticut Humanities Council, brought together some of the leading experts in the field of legal and government ethics. Browns address dealt with a series of Supreme Court cases, beginning with *Elrod v. Burns* (1976), that invalidate patronage as a basis for state and local government employment and contracting. Brown explored the pros and cons of these decisions, noting that some writers defend patronage as a means of maintaining political parties and bringing minorities into the political system. But studies of Chicago have concluded that it was often used to keep African-Americans out of the system entirely. Brown used the Supreme Court decisions to illustrate one popular model of dealing with political corruption, substantial involvement by federal government entities, and argued that real change in a state or local political system can only come from the citizens of that jurisdiction. He offered an alternative model: substantial reliance on state-level enforcement entities, especially state ethics commissions.

"These entities are part of the state government and are better placed to have long-term influence over it," Brown said. "It is crucial, however that they have such features as real independence, a strong set of laws covering both disclosure and conflicts of interest, and adequate budgets. That is the great paradox of anti-corruption enforcement: the agencies that can have the greatest effect are, to a considerable extent, under the control of those they must regulate."

George Brown is a former assistant state attorney general, and served as chair of the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission from 1994-1998. In 1998-1999, he served as an assistant to the Office of Independent Counsel in Washington, D.C. He has authored numerous articles in law journals such as the *Tulane Law Review*, *Rutgers Law Review* and *Cornell Law Review*, among others.