

CHANGING INFORMATION POLICIES  
AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES

John Shattuck  
Harvard University

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MS. WOODSWORTH: The first of our speakers is John Shattuck, who is Vice President of Harvard University for Government, Community and Public Affairs. He has a law degree from Yale University, an M.A. from Cambridge University in international law and jurisprudence, and a B.A. in history, also from Yale. Prior to his present position, he was Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union in the Washington Office for eight years, and before that was on the ACLU national staff council for another five years. He has also worked in many legal positions and is a prolific author and lecturer.

Recognition for Mr. Shattuck's very active role in the civil liberties movement has come in the form of two awards. In 1984, he received the Roger Baldwin Civil Liberties Award from the New Jersey ACLU, and in the same year, the President's Award from the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union.

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Shattuck.

MR. SHATTUCK: Thank you very much. I cannot resist starting by saying as an academic administrator and civil liberties lawyer, I have spent most of my professional life trying to figure out exactly what the First Amendment means, how far it reaches, what it protects, and what it requires. In this audience I feel less anxiety about those questions than in many others. In fact, I would say that this is almost like coming to the inner sanctum of First Amendment activity, because as we all know, research libraries are really the core of our tradition of freedom of speech and freedom of inquiry.

I should say, however, that there is some risk involved in my speaking before you, because while I have studied the principles that guide you, I am woefully ignorant of the essential facts of how research libraries actually work and the ways in which the various government policies that we are going to be considering this afternoon may or may not impact directly on them. In this respect I feel a little like Yogi Berra, who when he was asked whether he had noticed the sex of a group of streakers who had captured his attention when they ran across the ballfield replied that he could not tell what sex as they were because they all had bags over their heads.

So you will have to judge whether I present to you an analysis of this subject with a bag over my head. But bearing in mind my ardent interest in all of the principles that guide your work, let us at least see whether we can agree on some essential facts about the importance of public access to government information and some of the public policy issues that are facing us today.

I would like to start by putting into historical context the issues we are going to be discussing this afternoon. You do not need to be told, but it is sometimes good to be reminded that this country has a long and deep tradition of public access to government information, going back to the Constitutional Convention and the

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