

February 17, 2005

LAW PROFESSOR FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE

By Anastasia Tsioutas

STAFF WRITER

As law professor at the University, Eric M. Freedman is seeking justice in and out of the classroom.

For the past three years, while simultaneously teaching at the University, Freedman has devoted his efforts to correct the injustice brought against the Guantanamo Bay detainees.

"I am consulting on all cases of all the detainees, including the one filed last week (Feb. 10) on behalf of John Does one through 570, representing all the detainees whose names are not known," Freedman said. "In order to facilitate my work in coordinating the large and diverse teams of lawyers working on the cases - people from large and small firms, from law schools and from public interest organizations - I myself do not represent any individual detainee."

Approximately 500 detainees have been held at the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for about three years. Most of the detainees have neither been tried nor charged with any crimes.

Freedman said the School of Law appreciates his involvement with the Guantanamo Bay cases.

"Hofstra Law School has been extraordinarily supportive in sharing my view that efforts like these are precisely those that a constitutional law professor should be involved with," he said.

Freedman he has been named a Maurice A. Deane Distinguished Professor of Constitutional Law and Freedman's accomplishments give him the necessary expertise and experience to help with the case of the detainees.

"I volunteered to coordinate the litigation strategy of the detainees' cases with those of the enemy combatant cases involving American citizens held in the United States that were being appealed at the same time so as to maximize the chances of victory for all three cases," Freedman said.

Freedman Defends Prisoners

(Continued from FREEDMAN on page 1)

associate professor at the School of Law, said. "He is a real hero in trying to make the writ of Habeas Corpus mean what it says."

In a *Washington Post* article published on Jan. 20, Freedman commented on the U.S.'s refusal to allow detainee Mamdouh Habib, released early in January, to fly over U.S. soil on his way home.

"They are releasing him for a good reason that not a single shred of evidence supports any findings of wrong doing on his part - other than the confession he signed to avoid be-

ing killed under torture," he said in the article. "He would just as easily have signed a confession saying he assassinated Abraham Lincoln under those circumstances, and it would be just as unreliable."

Despite evidence presented confirming the mistreatment of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. government has not provided any legal validation for holding the prisoners.

"The entire episode is a blot on the good name of America and its justice system," Freedman said. "I have been involved since the cases that went to the Supreme Court this past June were still at the District Court level:"

Freedman is an elected member of

the American Law Institute, a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. His academic interests lie in the fields of constitutional law, mainly concerning the First Amendment and Presidential Power, as well as in the area of constitutional history.

Freedman has also recently published "*Habeas Corpus: Rethinking the Great Writ of Liberty*," only one of his many written works.

Even though Freedman has an active role in the detainees' cases, he remains a law professor at the University, often teaching courses such

as: Constitutional Law, The Constitution and Social Reform, Mass Media and the First Amendment; The Death Penalty in Contemporary America, Critical Events in Anglo-American Legal History, Civil Procedures, Pre-trial Litigation and Trial Techniques.

Freedman thinks his efforts, have been successful.

"Yes, there has been a strong turnaround in public opinion," he said, "Which now understands that just because the government asserts that someone is 'a terrorist' is meaningless unless and until it proves that case in legitimate legal proceedings."