

*The Historical Society of the New York Courts*  
**2014 David A. Garfinkel Essay Contest**

**Who Watches the Watchers?  
Free Speech and Free Press in the Electronic Age**

The 1st Amendment to the United States Constitution protects both citizens' rights of free speech and the power of the press to obtain information and publish it without government censorship. This supports the free exchange of ideas which is considered the bedrock of political democracy. Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court have upheld the crucial role of free speech and free press in American society.

Recent revelations in the press and by whistleblowers have produced information about the existence of secret government initiatives that now routinely gather huge quantities of data on Americans. These disclosures reveal the activities of courts not subject to scrutiny in the press. Such courts have apparent jurisdiction to make determinations involving privacy, secrecy and surveillance. Recently, the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals held that reporters may be compelled to disclose the names of sources who provide them with classified information

These recent revelations are the focus of the 2014 David A. Garfinkel Essay Contest.  
(See questions on the Society's website at the [Garfinkel Contest Homepage](#))

**ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED STARTING DECEMBER 13, 2013 THROUGH APRIL 1, 2014**

**Prizes and Awards**

In recognition of New York's two great Community College systems, the CUNY Community Colleges and the SUNY Community Colleges, *The Historical Society of the New York Courts* has established prizes named in their honor.

All essays submitted will be reviewed by our judges to determine the best overall essay, and the student with the winning essay will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel New York State Community College Grand Prize*. The best essay submitted by a student attending a CUNY Community College will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel CUNY Community College Prize*. The best essay submitted by a student attending a SUNY Community College will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel SUNY Community College Prize*.

**NYS Community College Grand Prize: \$1,500**

**CUNY Community College Prize: \$1,000**

**SUNY Community College Prize: \$1,000**

The winners will be honored at the Law Day ceremony at Court of Appeals Hall in Albany, an event at which the Chief Judge of the State of New York presides and State dignitaries attend. Following the ceremony, *The Historical Society of the New York Courts* will host a luncheon for the prize winners and their families. The professors who mentor the prize winners and their college presidents will also be invited to attend the Law Day ceremony and luncheon. The prize-winning essays will be published on our website.

**Honorable Mention**

The name of each student receiving *Honorable Mention* awards will be included in an Honor Roll on our website.

## Resources

To assist you in your research for your essay, The Historical Society of the New York Courts has set up a website with useful links. To access the website, please click [here](#).

## Requirements

- The writer must be a student pursuing a degree at a Community College within the SUNY or CUNY systems and registered at the college during the Fall semester of 2013 or the Spring semester of 2014
- The essay must be an original work of scholarship
- The essay must be at least 1,500 words in length and should not exceed 5,500 words; written in English, double-spaced, and formatted for 8-1/2" by 11" paper. **Neither the essay nor the title page may contain any identifying information** (i.e. do not include your name, your professor's name or the name of the school)
- The essay must be sent by e-mail attachment (PDF, Word or WordPerfect) to: [history@nycourts.gov](mailto:history@nycourts.gov). **Include in the body of the email the following: (1) your name, (2) phone number, (3) home address, (4) the name of the college you attend and (5) the name of your professor**

## Judging the Competition

A panel of members of the New York Bench and Bar will select the winning essays. Essays will be judged on:

- Understanding of the subject
- Effective presentation of a point of view
- Good literary style and technique

*The Historical Society of the New York Courts is an education corporation chartered by the Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York.*