

Florida State University Law Review

Volume 29
Issue 2 *Bush v. Gore Issue 2001*

Article 1

2001

Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Reubin O. Askew, *Introduction*, 29 Fla. St. U. L. Rev. (2002) .
<https://ir.law.fsu.edu/lr/vol29/iss2/1>

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW



INTRODUCTION

Reubin O'D. Askew

VOLUME 29

WINTER 2001

NUMBER 2

INTRODUCTION TO
THE LAW OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS:
ISSUES IN THE WAKE OF FLORIDA 2000

REUBIN O'D. ASKEW*

In November and December 2000, the country focused its white-hot gaze at our state. National media, political pundits, and lawyers poured into Tallahassee as one of American history's momentous events unfolded. Although the stakes were high and the debate was often heated, Florida's three governmental branches helped lead the nation to a peaceful resolution of the closest presidential contest in its history.

Besides the 2000 election's obvious political importance, it raised issues of legal significance in the selection of the President. On March 23, 2001, some of the country's most noted scholars and legal practitioners gathered at the Florida State University College of Law to address many of these legal and constitutional issues, including the roles of state and local election practices in presidential selection, the Fourteenth Amendment, the role of state constitutions, the Twelfth Amendment, and the Electoral College selection process. The articles in this issue memorialize the presentations made that day.¹

I attended the symposium and was proud to partake in the day's debates, which were sometimes serious, sometimes lively, but always respectful. I am pleased to see that some of what was debated among the symposium's participants, and between the participants and the crowd, has been incorporated into the twenty-one articles printed within. The information presented in this issue helps us understand what happened here in Florida after the 2000 election, and teaches us how to apply the lessons we learned to future elections throughout the country.

* Governor, State of Florida, 1971-79.

1. Editor's note: a webcast of the symposium can be viewed at http://www.law.fsu.edu/events/symposia/election_law/webcast.php. Professor Richard D. Friedman, Judge Richard A. Posner, and Hayward H. Smith did not attend the symposium.