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BRIAN P. LAMB  
Chairman and  
Chief Executive Officer

February 8, 1988

The Honorable William Rehnquist  
Supreme Court of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20543

Dear Mr. Chief Justice:

In the last year C-SPAN has produced over 300 hours of television devoted exclusively to the American judiciary, and nearly all of it focusing on the Supreme Court. Almost none of it would have been possible without your cooperation in allowing us to originate programs from the Supreme Court building, and to involve many of your staff in helping us explain the Court to our audience. On behalf of C-SPAN and its audience, I want to thank you, as we begin our third year of Supreme Court related programming, for your openness and willingness to experiment in using cable television this way. You should also know that Toni House has impressed us all with her professionalism and her understanding of C-SPAN's unique mission and its production requirements.

Our approach to covering the Court has been, and will continue to be, very simple: show the process as it really is without allowing the logistics of television to distort that process. Indeed, we have been successful over the last nine years in televising literally thousands of public events, with respect for the roles of the participants and the procedures of the institutions we cover uppermost in our minds. The most prominent examples are the proceedings of the House and Senate. Others include hundreds of Congressional hearings, public ceremonies of all degrees of formality, and the events of non-government organizations of many types.

We hope we have done a pretty good job of bringing our audience closer to the makers of public policy through cable television, and with a minimum of the distortion that is a consequence of other formats. Our gavel-to-gavel coverage without commentary, editing or analysis is unique in television, and is, in fact, the prime appeal of C-SPAN.

By early last year we had provided extensive coverage of the Executive and Legislative branches of government, then sought to provide comparable coverage of the Judiciary. Recognizing that

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Page Two

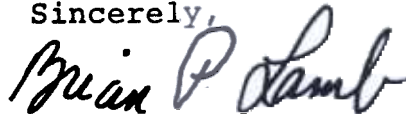
the work of the Judiciary is less public than the other branches, we did the following things to help our audience understand the courts:

- Began a new program series called "Supreme Court Review" that appears every week the Court schedules oral argument.
- Encouraged the Benton Foundation to publish the book, Justice for All, an easy to read viewer's guide to the Supreme Court, and then paid for the first printing. We are making it available to our viewers.
- Televised the entirety of all confirmation hearings of all nominees to the Court.
- Covered in their entirety, all major speeches of the Justices open to television cameras.
- Produced "live" call-in programs from the Press Room of the Court featuring journalists, lawyers and others discussing the Court and its work.

We are aware, of course, that the Court may someday decide to allow television coverage of its public sessions. If the Court makes the decision to allow televised coverage, C-SPAN will cooperate in any way it can. Further, we now make this commitment to the Court: C-SPAN will make available to our potential audience of 100 million the entirety of every oral argument scheduled by the Court. In short, we will provide the Supreme Court of the United States the same quality and extent of coverage that we now give to the daily debates of the United States Congress.

We believe our public service mission requires as much, and we are pleased to be able to make this promise. We also hope that we will be called upon to fulfill it.

Sincerely,



BRIAN P. LAMB

cc: Toni House