

Intro to public lecture / Gary Marchant / Nov 15, 2007
Prof. Steve Strauss, OSU

Good evening. My name is Steve Strauss. I am a Professor in the Department of Forest Science and Director of the OSU Outreach in Biotechnology Program. Together with Professor Mary Jo Nye, the lecture series co-organizer, it is our pleasure to welcome you to tonight's lecture. This is the third in our year-long series on history, technology, and gastronomy of food and related agricultural issues.

The lecture series is co-sponsored by the Horning Endowment in the Humanities and the OSU Outreach in Biotechnology Program, with support from the Wait and Lois Rising Lectureship Fund. It continues the two separate lecture series that these programs have put on at OSU for several years.

This is the final lecture of fall term. The next lecture in the series will be on January 24th, when Professor Jeffrey Pilcher presents a lecture entitled "Planet Taco: The Globalization of Mexican Cuisine."

We are extremely pleased that Dr. Marchant has agreed to come to OSU. I heard him speak at a small conference a few years ago that was intended to educate judges and law professors on legal issues of new biotechnologies, and was struck by the depth of his comprehension of scientific issues. Are lawyers more attuned to science than I had imagined possible? I am afraid not. I later learned that in addition to his law degree and years of legal practice, he had earned a PhD in Genetics.

Professor Marchant is the Lincoln Professor Emerging Technologies, Law and Ethics at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. He is also a Professor of Life Sciences at ASU and Executive Director of the ASU Center for the Study of Law, Science and Technology.

Professor Marchant has that Ph.D. in Genetics from the University of British Columbia, and also has a Masters of Public Policy degree from the Kennedy School of Government, and a law degree from Harvard.

I think you will agree that Harvard is probably not a bad place to get an education, and Professor Marchant seems to have made the most of it. In 1990 he graduated first in a class of 540, and was Editor of the Harvard Environmental Law Review and the Harvard Journal of Law and Technology.

Prior to joining the ASU faculty in 1999, he was a partner in a Washington, D.C. law firm where his practice focused on environmental and administrative law.

Since coming to ASU, Professor Marchant has taught and conducted research in an amazing diversity of areas, including in environmental law, risk assessment, FDA drug law, ethics of genetic testing of humans, biotechnology, and nanotechnology.

He has written two books, published dozens of papers in scholarly journals, given numerous invited lectures, and served on two National Research Council committees.

Despite this workload, he must not do a bad job in teaching. This year he was voted Professor of the Year by the students in the ASU law school.

Professor Marchant has been funded by the National Institutes of Health to study “genetic susceptibility and environmental regulation,” and is currently involved in two major research grant-funded projects: One is to develop models for the international regulation of nanotechnology. The other is a project that addresses the growing lag between emerging technologies and the development of laws, policies and ethics that govern them.

Tonight, Professor Marchant will discuss the daunting challenges to national and international legal systems in trying to regulate the fast evolving food biotechnologies. Like his interest in nanotechnology, biotechnology represents cutting edge biological science based on things we cannot see and people hardly understand, but with amazing potentials for good, and significant risks from misuse.

The title of his lecture is “The role and rule of law in the global development of food biotechnology.”

Please help me in welcoming Professor Marchant to OSU.