



## Calvert's Career Revolves Around First Amendment

by Cynthia Kincaid

“I wanted to practice law, and I wanted to teach,” says Dr. Clay Calvert, '91.

“Combining the legal education I received at Pacific McGeorge with a Ph.D in communications made it possible for me to teach media law and the First Amendment; I couldn't have done all of this without it,” he says.

Calvert has combined his talents and interests in journalism, free speech and the law into a stellar career. Earlier this year, he was named the inaugural holder of the John and Ann Curley Professorship in First Amendment Studies in the College of Communications at Penn State University where he is a journalism professor.

“Sometimes it is difficult to defend some media practices,” Calvert says. “But we defend the principle of freedom of speech, not necessarily the underlying message.”

The endowed professorship is named for John Curley, the former president, chairman and CEO of Gannett Co. Inc. “Clay Calvert is an outstanding first choice to hold this professorship,” Curley says. “He is a talented, articulate leader in the First Amendment field and a brilliant scholar.”

Calvert has devoted his career to educating individuals on the importance of defending free speech and a free press. “The First Amendment and freedom of speech will always be under attack from some quarters, some organizations, and some politicians in the U.S., regardless of who is in power,” he says. “I try to show students that if you censor one side, then your side is probably going to be next. It's not always easy for them to see that because people want to censor messages that they disagree with, or they find objectionable, or they think cause harm. But we can't take these rights for granted.”

Calvert is the author or co-author of more than 75 law review articles and the author of *Voyeur Nation: Media, Privacy and Peering in Modern Culture*. As the co-director of the Pennsylvania Center for the First Amendment, Calvert also tries to have an impact at the grass roots, legislative and judicial levels. “We try to educate citizens, both in Pennsylvania and at the national level, about their free speech rights and the purpose of the First Amendment,” he says.

Given the constantly differing viewpoints of society, free speech will remain a significant issue into the future. “There are always controversies going on, which makes my work very interesting,” Calvert says. “There is never a shortage of issues in this field about which to write, research or teach.”