By Jo Kadlec

In a time when much of life seems uncertain, it’s nice to know of exceptions, like a 75-year-old man happy to be in a position to help others. For the past 43 years, one of Columbia’s more regular faces in the biological sciences has been John Thornton, stock room supervisor for the department of biological sciences. His reputation as a stabilizer of the departmental organization in the face of change stems from his even-tempered ability to handle things calmly. For the past 43 years, Thornton has worked with Thornton over 30 years and believes it was his even-tempered approach to life that made him so easy to work with.

In all these years, I’ve never seen John angry or upset. He has this amazing ability to handle things calmly," said one of the department’s professors.

First, he worked in Schemerhorn Hall, helping professors keep their labs stocked and their equipment in good shape. He recalls the time when the Post Office used to deliver live frogs in wooden crates to the biology department, and the day the mailman dropped the crate when he got off the elevator.

“We had frogs everywhere in the building. Everyone dropped what they were doing to catch them. No one panicked—we just laughed,” he said.

When the department moved to Shapiro Center for Engineering and Physical Science Research, Thornton moved too, continuing to order supplies, invoice companies, take inventory, and stock shelves with beakers, enzymes, chemicals, frogs, mice, and whatever else the department needed. Through the years, his work led him to interact with a variety of people, including graduate students, professors, study students, company representatives, and co-workers within the department. Some days after work, he would go fishing or golfing with his fishing, golfing and time with his nine grandchildren, signs that some things don’t change after all.

First Amendment Discussion Continues Debate

By CAROLINE LAHDHAK

Following a tug-of-war for digital rights of print news articles that culminated in a July court ruling, freelancers triumphed over publishers in the case The New York Times vs. Tasini. Still, exact damages awarded to freelancers remains in question, and the case, which major publishers in this case continued the debate as part of a panel discussion hosted by Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism, titled “Penny’s for Your Thoughts: Who Owns Content?” The event was the second in the fall’s First Amendment Breakfast series held at the Columbia Club in midtown.

In 1993 by six freelance writers, the litigation now sets a precedent for digital rights to print-published material in the future. Freelancers in the case argued that they paid additional money for their work to publishers that re-package, for example, online?" It is that sense of humor that’s made him an invaluable employee, says Renate Clynes, director of laboratories for the department of biological sciences.

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