GEORGIA COURT OF APPEALS
CHIEF JUDGE DELIVERS EDITH HOUSE LECTURE

Dorothy Toth Beasley, chief judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, challenged law students in the 1995 Edith House Lecture to abide by the four p’s as they prepare for a career in the law: past, place, path and passion.

Beasley, the first woman to serve on the state appeals court and the first woman to become its chief judge, was appointed in 1984, elected in 1986 and re-elected in 1992. Her speech, “Why Are We Here?” was the thirteenth Edith House Lecture given at UGA.

Beasley encouraged audience members to research the past — their own genealogies and the legacy of women in the law. “We are tied to these forebears by the thread of history,” she said, “and they inspire us to the future.”

She also advised students to find their place in the law — the niche where their talents will best serve others; to set a path — a plan to achieve their goals; and to practice law with a passion.

“You need a mission statement for yourself,” Beasley said. “Then whatever you do is not a job, but a response to a calling.”

Beasley told the audience that Edith House lived a life of “total immersion in the law” and “inspires a higher commitment to the rule of law.”

A native of Winder, Georgia, House was co-educator of the law class of 1925, the first law class to graduate women. She practiced law for 38 years and became assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida and acting U.S. attorney for the district. The Edith House Lecture Series, sponsored by the Women Law Students Association, was established in her honor.

Judge Beasley served as judge of the State Court of Fulton County for 7 1/2 years before her appointment to the appellate bench. She worked as assistant U.S. attorney and assistant attorney general of Georgia, and also practiced privately in both Atlanta and Arlington, Virginia.

Beasley is an active professional and civic leader. She served two terms on the board of directors of the National Center for State Courts and received its first Paul C. Reardon award. She is a member of the American Law Institute and a past-director of the American Judicature Society.

She is a founder of Atlanta’s Table, a program to feed the poor, and a former board of directors member of the Atlanta Community Food Bank. In 1991, she was part of a three-person team sent to Albania by the American Bar Association’s Central and East European Law Initiative project to consult on the constitution, and in the summer of 1994, participated in a 3-day seminar in Tirana for the judges of Albania.

Beasley earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Lawrence University, a law degree from the Washington College of Law of American University, and a Master of Laws in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia School of Law.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: FEASIBLE OR FANTASY?

Promoting development and growth while protecting natural resources and controlling pollution was the focus of the seventh annual Red Clay Conference at the University of Georgia School of Law March 10-11. The sustainable development topic encompassed discussions on population management, endangered species preservation, improved forestry and agriculture techniques, pollution prevention, transportation and ethics.

“Sustainability is the 21st century’s effort to complete the promise of the Founding Fathers and what we hoped our country would be,” said keynote speaker Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, co-chair of the Citizens Network on Sustainable Development and a member of the President’s Council on Sustainable Development. “The environmental movement must have at its soul a social consciousness. Development must be equitable or it will not be sustainable.”

Dillon-Ridgley, who served as an advisor during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, told spectators in the crowded auditorium that hope for the environment exists if all citizens recognize that “environmental protection is not a luxury or an add-on, but an essential.” She advocated emphasizing environmental stewardship to young people, promoting the political will to address critical environmental concerns, and transforming environmental awareness into a discussion of other related world problems such as overpopulation, poverty and hunger.

“We must make it safe for politicians to state boldly and consistently that it is important to protect the environment,” Dillon-Ridgley said.

The Red Clay Conference is the only annual law school-sponsored environmental symposium in the eastern United States. It was established by members of the Environmental Law Association to increase public awareness of environmental issues on regional, national and international levels. Each year, a full spectrum of views from the private legal sector, the corporate/business sector, government and public interest groups is represented.

Nearly 30 environmental experts gathered for the conference. Lectures were interspersed with panel presentations and informal question and answer periods in order to maximize informational exchanges. Bob Benson, chief of the Pollution Prevention and Toxics Branch of the EPA Industrial Policy Development Sector, served as the second keynote speaker.