

Chief Justice Hunstein delivers House Lecture

“A diverse judiciary is necessary for fair and impartial justice,” according to Supreme Court of Georgia Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, who served as the school’s 29th Edith House lecturer in March. She added that without an impartial and independent judicial system, it would be the “death of democracy.”

These statements are fitting for one of the trailblazers in the diversification of the Peach State’s judiciary and the legal profession.

Hunstein also quoted American hero John Gardner who once said, “History never looks like history when you’re living through it.” She elaborated by stating, “You all may not realize it, but all of you, especially young law students, are living in a period of change for women that one day will be written in the history books.”

When Hunstein was elected Superior Court judge in DeKalb County during 1984, she became the first woman Superior Court judge in the county and the fifth woman to serve on the Superior Court for the entire state. While serving on this bench, she became the first female president of the Council of Superior Court Judges and chaired the Georgia Commission on Gender Bias in the Judicial System.

Moreover, when she was appointed to the state’s Supreme Court in 1992, Hunstein became the second woman in history to serve as a permanent member of the court. And, last year, she was featured in an *ABA Journal* article titled “Tipping the Scales: How Southern Women are Remaking the Face of Justice,” as she was one of eight state Supreme Court chief justices in the South at the time.

Coming out of law school in 1976, the future chief justice wanted to be a litigator. However, she said she found it hard to

get a job “as women weren’t welcomed in the practice of law.” She said that at the time female graduates were often asked “how fast they could type” in job interviews rather than the focus being on their legal credentials.

In examining the progress that has been made in the legal profession during the past several decades, the chief justice pointed out that in 1963 the vast majority of Georgia Law students were male, while in 2008 Georgia Law admitted its second majority female class.

Yet, Hunstein also cited recent statistics showing that women still have more to accomplish in the field of law.

“Women still have a way to go in this country,” Hunstein said. “Women constitute only 19 percent of partners in private practice and only 15 percent of Fortune 500 general counsels, and while women represent 51 percent of the population, we hold only 26 percent of state and federal judgeships.”

Hunstein charged future female lawyers to change these numbers.

“Leslie Sanchez, former Bush administration official, once said, ‘We’ve come a long way – maybe.’ And she’s right. Women are making progress, but we’re still not equal to men in the legal profession. Yet, we are getting there, and we’re relying on women law students to make sure that happens.”

In closing she said, “I encourage all to see the possibilities that education provides. A successful career can enable you to give back and be leaders. There is no greater joy than to give back.”

Hunstein’s law degree is from Stetson University College of Law, while her bachelor’s degree is from Florida Atlantic University and her associate’s degree is from Miami-Dade Junior College.



Watch Hunstein’s lecture online at www.law.uga.edu/lecture-series.

The Edith House Lecture Series is hosted annually by the Women Law Students Association (WLSA) in honor of one of the first female graduates of Georgia Law. House, a native of Winder, Ga., was co-valedictorian of the law class of 1925, the first class to graduate women.

Georgia Law recognized for clerkships, value and eco-friendliness

In a recent *U.S. News & World Report* ranking, Georgia Law placed sixth in the nation for graduates securing federal clerkships.

The school was also listed as a top 10 law school for providing the “most financial value” at graduation. This *U.S. News* listing compared first-year salaries relative to debt load.

Additionally, Georgia Law was included in a fall listing of “Best Value Law Schools” by *preLaw* magazine, a National Jurist publication. This ranking placed the law school at 15th for providing a quality legal education at an affordable price.

The editors of *preLaw* also counted Georgia Law among the greenest law schools in the country. Only 20 schools were recognized in this evaluation.

