



*Congressman John Barrow, who delivered the keynote address, is pictured above with distant cousins and 2008 Georgia Law graduates Lucy Pope Dodd (left) and Kathleen Parker. Photo by UGA Public Affairs' Paul Efland.*

## **Barrow delivers commencement speech**

U.S. Congressman John Barrow delivered the keynote address at graduation. Although not a Georgia Law grad himself, many of his relatives graduated from Georgia Law, including a member of the law school's first graduating class in 1860 – Middleton Pope Barrow, who was Barrow's great-grandfather.

After relating his familial connection to Georgia Law, Barrow said, "The law has changed a lot [over the] years. But in all those generations (spanning back to Middleton Barrow), I don't think the law itself has changed as much, or that lawyers have done as much to change the world, as I've seen in just my lifetime. I know that lawyers can change the world, because I've watched them do it."

Barrow's message went on to emphasize the role of the law in the past, present and future.

**PAST:** "People did not always look to the law as a way to change the world. ... But my generation did have a different idea of what the law ought to be. The kids I went to law school with had all come through the '60s. We saw how lawyers had used the law to change society. And I got to see that up close. My parents were outspoken leaders in the movement to desegregate this university. But lawyers got the job done. ... So I know that lawyers can change the world, because I've actually seen them do it."

**PRESENT:** "If we are going to preserve what is good about the law – and change what is not so good – you are the generation of lawyers that is going to have to do it. And I can't think of a better trained, better prepared, or better looking generation to take that on."

**FUTURE:** "I haven't the foggiest idea what the next 30 years holds in store for you, except to predict that the process of specialization – of charging more for knowing more and more about less and less – will continue apace."

In closing, Barrow said, "A guy once complained to Oscar Wilde that opera just wasn't what it used to be. He said, 'You're wrong: the trouble with opera is that it's exactly what it used to be.' When we consider the role that lawyers have played in leading us through the changes that I've seen in just my lifetime, my wish for you is that the practice of law will always be, at least to some extent, exactly what it used to be."

– Compiled by Leigh Tenewitz