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South Carolina Supreme Court justice to speak on the role of women in the legal profession at annual lecture

ATHENS, Ga. – Chief Justice Jean Hoefler Toal, the first and only woman to serve on the Supreme Court of South Carolina, will deliver the 23rd annual Edith House Lecture titled “Women in the Law.” The lecture will be held on Thursday, March 24, at 3:30 p.m. in the Hatton Lovejoy Courtroom at the University of Georgia School of Law. It is open to the public, and admission is free.

Toal has served on the South Carolina Supreme Court since 1988 and became chief justice in 2000. As a Supreme Court justice, she has written opinions on a variety of issues in both civil and criminal cases and authored Appellate Practice in South Carolina with two of her law clerks.

Before being elected to the Supreme Court, Toal was an associate and partner with the Columbia, S.C., law firm Belser, Baker, Barwick, Ravenel, Toal & Bender and an associate with the Haynsworth Law Firm in Greenville, S.C. She has litigated cases in U.S. district courts and the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and was co-counsel for a case that went before the U.S. Supreme Court. Additionally, she served as a legislator in the South Carolina House of Representatives for 13 years.

In 2004, Toal received the prestigious Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award from the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Profession. The award, named in honor of the first woman lawyer in the United States, is given annually to five women who have achieved professional excellence in their field and have actively advanced the status of women within the legal community.

Toal earned her bachelor’s degree from Agnes Scott College and her law degree from the University of South Carolina, where she was the managing editor, leading articles editor and book review editor for the South Carolina Law Review. She also holds honorary doctorates from the University of South Carolina, Francis Marion University, The Citadel, Columbia College and the College of Charleston.

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

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