ATHENS, Ga. – Former U.S. Solicitor General Theodore B. Olson, who served as private counsel to Presidents Ronald W. Reagan and George W. Bush, will deliver the keynote address at the University of Georgia School of Law’s commencement on Saturday, May 21.


He is recognized as one of the nation’s premier appellate and U.S. Supreme Court advocates. Over his career, Olson has argued 41 cases before the nation’s high court, two of them stemming from the 2000 presidential election between Bush and Al Gore.

The U.S. Department of Justice has twice awarded Olson the department’s highest honor for public service and leadership, the Edward J. Randolph Award. Additionally, Olson received the U.S. Department of Defense’s highest award given to civilians.

He earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of the Pacific and his law degree from the University of California at Berkeley, where he served on the California Law Review and was inducted into the Order of the Coif.

At this year’s commencement, 195 students will receive Juris Doctor degrees for successfully completing three years of legal study. Additionally, 11 Master of Laws candidates, who have completed one year of legal study, will be recognized.

The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. on the quadrangle in front of the law school on UGA’s North Campus. In the event of rain, the ceremony will be moved to Stegeman Coliseum.

Graduating Class of 2005 President E. Ramsey Henderson will provide the official welcome, and Vice President James L. King II will introduce Olson. Henderson and Legacy Gift Chair Tracy L. Rhodes will present the 2005 class gift to Law School Association President James B. Ellington, who will also welcome the new graduates to the alumni association.

Other commencement speakers include UGA President Michael F. Adams, Georgia Law Dean Rebecca H. White and Georgia Law associate deans Paul M. Kurtz and Gabriel M. Wilner.

Three additional members of the platform party will be UGA Provost Arnett C. Mace Jr., law school Registrar Marc A. Galvin and Athens-Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards Jr., who will lead the graduation processional as is tradition. Also, the senior class has chosen Cleveland Chair C. Ronald Ellington and Carter Chair Michael L. Wells to serve as honorary marshals and read the names of the graduates.

Georgia Law is currently ranked as one of the top four public law schools in the Southeast and one of the top 14 public law schools in the nation.

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