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WRITER: Larry B. Dendy, 706/542-8078, ldendy@uga.edu
CONTACT: Susan Landrum, 706/542-0415, slandrum@uga.edu

SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE FLETCHER TO SPEAK AT UGA COMMENCEMENT

ATHENS, Ga. – Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher will be the speaker for the University of Georgia's summer commencement Saturday, Aug. 7, at 9:30 a.m. in Stegeman Coliseum.

Fletcher, who holds bachelor's and law degrees from UGA, will speak at a combined ceremony for undergraduate and graduate students who complete degree requirements at the end of summer semester.

The registrar's office estimates that about 1,000 undergraduate and 600 graduate candidates will be eligible to participate in the ceremony. Final numbers won't be known until the end of summer semester final examinations Aug. 6. About a third of eligible candidates usually attend the summer ceremonies.

Three undergraduate students who have maintained perfect 4.0 grade point averages during their time at UGA will be recognized as First Honor Graduates. The students and their majors are: David A. Kross of Hilton Head, S.C., bachelor of arts in journalism with a concentration in magazines; Julie W. Orlemanski of Lilburn, bachelor of arts in English; and Hamilton H. Powell of Atlanta, bachelor of business administration with a concentration in finance.

The commencement ceremony will include the traditional ritual in which Ph.D. candidates receive the academic hood from their major professor or a member of the graduate faculty. Candidates for master's degrees will walk across the stage, and undergraduate students will stand in the audience as their degrees are conferred.

Fletcher was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court in 1989 by Gov. Joe Frank Harris and was re-elected to a third six-year term in 2002. He has served as chief justice since June 28, 2001.

In addition to his UGA law degree, which he received in 1958, Fletcher earned an LL.M degree from the University of Virginia law school in 1995. He began practicing law in 1958 in Rome, and later moved to LaFayette where he practiced until being appointed to the Supreme Court.

While in LaFayette he was a special assistant attorney general for the state and also served as LaFayette city attorney and Walker County attorney.

Fletcher was co-chair of the State Bar Association's commission on lawyer disciplinary reform and chair of the association's Local Government Section. He has been president of the City Attorney's Section of the Georgia Municipal Association.

A past president of the UGA Law School Association and past chair of the school's Board of Visitors, Fletcher is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the Georgia Bar Foundation. He received the Georgia Indigent Defense Council's Harold G. Clarke Award for his commitment to ensuring equal justice for all Georgia citizens.

UGA will hold a commencement ceremony Dec. 18 for students who complete degree requirements this fall semester, and a ceremony May 14, 2005, for students who complete degree requirements next spring semester.

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