



THIRD EDENFIELD JURIST IN RESIDENCE

Judge discusses implicit bias

Judge Bernice Donald of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit presented the 2018 Edenfield Jurist in Residence Lecture at the School of Law.

Bernice B. Donald – U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit judge – served as the law school’s third B. Avant Edenfield Jurist in Residence. While in Athens during the spring semester, Donald taught a mini-course as well as presented a lecture focusing on implicit bias.

In her lecture, she described implicit bias as a process by which the brain uses well-established mental associations to operate without awareness, without intention and without control.

“Literature says in the first seven seconds that we interact with someone, we form a range of opinions based on these biases or stereotypes. They can be negative or positive,” Donald noted, adding that the fact that people have biases just makes them “human.”

Everyone has biases, she explained, but encouraged attendees to look beyond them.

“We need to sometimes get beyond our own group, because if we surround ourselves always with people who look like us and think like us, there is no one to guard us against our blind spots,” she said.

Donald added that she began studying implicit bias because of research on minorities and their levels of distrust of the justice system.

“We as judges have been really concerned about that,” she said, “because it’s important that people not only receive justice in courts but they must also perceive they receive justice.”

The goal, Donald said, is to learn how to navigate and minimize biases.

“Understanding unintended or unconscious biases and messages can improve our ability to respond fairly and make better decisions for the people who stand before us as a court,” she said.

She encouraged lawyers to be aware of biases and to be willing to address issues when they come up.

“We have to be willing and desirous of changing,” she said, referencing research. “We should not try to suppress it. We must openly acknowledge and confront our own biases. We have to have the motivation to change.”

Made possible by a contribution from 2003 School of Law alumnus Allen W. Yee, a former judicial clerk of the late Edenfield, the Jurist in Residence program enables one or more Article III judges to spend a period in residence at the School of Law each year.



Michael Luttig served as the featured speaker of the law school’s Business Ethics Lecture Series.

Boeing Company vice president and general counsel speaks on business ethics

J. Michael Luttig, executive vice president and general counsel of The Boeing Company, served as the featured speaker of the law school’s Business Ethics Lecture Series during the fall semester.

Luttig is responsible for leading The Boeing Company’s law departments across the organization, a role he assumed in 2006. He joined the aircraft manufacturer after serving on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit for 15 years. At the time of his appointment in 1991 by President George H.W. Bush, Luttig was the youngest federal appeals court judge in the country. Prior to joining the bench, he served as assistant attorney general of the United States and as counselor to the attorney general at the U.S. Department of Justice.

While at the School of Law, Luttig spoke to a business ethics class taught by Kilpatrick Chair of Corporate Finance and Securities Law Usha Rodrigues and Clinical Professor and Business Law and Ethics Program Director Carol Morgan (J.D.’79).