

Distinguished jurists teach

FIVE JURISTS, INCLUDING A U.S. SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, LEAD LAW COURSES

The School of Law actively seeks opportunities to provide unparalleled learning experiences for its students. During the 2016–17 academic year, law students were able to learn from five distinguished jurists in the classroom. The jurists included: Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas, Senior Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia David B. Sentelle, Chief Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia Lisa Godbey Wood (J.D.'90), Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama R. David Proctor and Vice Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery Sam Glasscock III.

Justice Thomas taught a course on stare decisis with Visiting Assistant Professor Brian C. Lea (J.D.'09), who is a former judicial clerk of the justice. Judge Sentelle led a class titled *Persuading the Judge and Jury with Appellate Litigation* Clinic Director Thomas V. Burch. Judge Wood instructed in the area of sentencing. Judge Proctor taught *Multidistrict Litigation: Law, Practice and Strategy* with Kirbo Chair Elizabeth Chamblee Burch, and Chancellor Glasscock shared his expertise in the area of corporate litigation.

Having the opportunity to take a class with a sitting jurist is a unique experience, but studying under a sitting U.S. Supreme Court justice is a truly rare occurrence. Second-year student Pfeiffer M. Middleton said, “Learning how to discern so much from the words in a judicial opinion from an individual who has devoted his time on the court to focusing so much on written words [was] invaluable.”

Middleton added that she was inspired by Justice Thomas’ confidence in the future of our country. “He truly made me believe that I, as a lawyer, will have the opportunity to make a difference on a large scale. Getting caught up in the day-to-day of school often leads us to lose sight of that, and I’m grateful to have been reminded by him that we can make a difference.”

Second-year student B. Elizabeth Tarver said Judge Sentelle’s class was one of her favorite law school experiences. “Judge Sentelle was one of those judges you would like to practice and try cases before in your legal career. ... Every piece of advice he offered was something that I can take and will take to use in practice in my legal career after graduation.”

Tarver added that she would recommend similar classes to students in the future. “It is one thing to watch a trial and



U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (right) talks with third-year student Danielle Burnette (next to Thomas) and second-year students Ryan Swindall and Shreya Desai after the stare decisis class he taught on campus in the fall. Photo by Ian McFarlane.

everything that goes into it but it’s completely different when you’re able to hear what a judge thinks after every step during the process and ask questions.”

As a student in Chancellor Glasscock’s Corporate Litigation course, Matthew E. “Matt” Miehle was surprised by the chancellor’s sense of humor and enjoyed being able to talk with the jurist about his note – dealing with appraisal rights in Delaware – and Chancellor Glasscock’s invitation for Miehle to send him the paper.

Of special note, two judges – Wood and Sentelle – taught as part of the school’s new Edenfield Jurists in Residence program, which was launched during the 2016–17 academic year and enables one or more Article III judges to spend a period in residence at Georgia Law each year. At present, Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit Bernice B. Donald is scheduled to teach about oral and written advocacy in the spring of 2018.