

## EDITH HOUSE LECTURE

### Former Acting U.S. Attorney General Yates discusses law school, career

A conversation with alumna Sally Quillian Yates was the focus of the School of Law's 36th Edith House Lecture during the spring semester, held during Alumni/Alumnae Weekend.

Yates, a 1986 graduate, has served in several leadership roles during her career – most recently as acting U.S. attorney general and as deputy attorney general.

As part of the dialogue, Yates discussed her law school years. “The thing I loved most about my law school experience were my classmates,” she said. “Here it is competitive, but not in a cutthroat kind of way. That mindset of rigorous academics, of being competitive but being supportive with your colleagues, carries over in how you practice law.”

Yates’ advice to current UGA law students was to take their time deciding what they want to do with their career.

“You don’t have to have it all figured out right now,” she said. “When I was in law school, I had absolutely no thought whatsoever of becoming a prosecutor. Had I stayed into what I thought I wanted to do when I graduated from law school, I wouldn’t have taken the chance to try and experience something else. Stay open to other opportunities and keep your eyes open to other experiences, because you never know what else might be out there.”



Former Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates (J.D.'86), the 36th Edith House lecturer, was interviewed by third-year student Gracie Shepherd (left) and Associate Dean Usha Rodrigues (right) earlier this spring. Photo by UGA's Andrew Davis Tucker.

Noting that attorneys have certain skills and opportunities that others do not have, Yates said lawyers should devote some portion of their careers to public service.

“I am always going to be an advocate for public service because I was someone who didn’t expect to get the bug, but once you do you really feel like you’re making a difference in the world,” she said. “Take a chance at some point in your career to grab hold of that. You may find, like I did, that you just couldn’t let go.”

The discussion was moderated by Associate Dean Usha Rodrigues and third-year student Gracie Shepherd, who also served as the Edith House Lecture committee chair and vice president of the school’s Women Law Students Association.

The Edith House Lecture is sponsored by the Women Law Students Association in honor of one of the first female graduates of the School of Law. House, a native of Winder, Georgia, was co-valedictorian of the law class of 1925, the first to graduate women.

*Portions of this article were taken, with permission, from coverage of the event written by Emily Webb for Columns, UGA's faculty/staff newspaper.*

### Melton to become chief justice of Georgia Supreme Court

On September 4, Harold D. Melton (J.D.'91) will become the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. He was appointed to the state's highest court by Gov. Sonny Perdue in 2005 and has served as presiding justice since January 2017.



Prior to joining the court, Melton served as executive counsel to Perdue, representing the governor on legal issues covering the entire scope of state government. He helped safeguard Georgia’s interests in water rights disputes with Alabama and Florida, and he actively participated in administration efforts to advance the delivery of criminal justice services in the state.

He also worked in the Georgia Department of Law, where he served as section leader over the Consumer Interests Division.

### Five graduates join the federal bench

Congratulations to the following School of Law graduates on their federal judicial appointments. The list below includes those appointed from 2017 to date.

**Michele Kim (J.D.'06)**, Bankruptcy Judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, appointed 2017

**Michael L. Brown (J.D.'94)**, District Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, appointed 2018

**Jeffrey W. Cavender (J.D.'93)**, Bankruptcy Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, appointed 2018

**J. Clay Fuller (J.D.'99)**, Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, appointed 2018

**Tilman E. “Tripp” Self III (J.D.'97)**, District Judge, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, appointed 2018