

Sibley Lectures

Renowned tax scholar focuses on fiscal policy

Edward D. Kleinbard, the holder of the Packard Trustee Chair in Law at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law and Fellow at The Century Foundation, delivered the School of Law's 115th Sibley Lecture titled "What's a Government Good For?: Fiscal Policy in an Age of Inequality."

"Fiscal policy means thinking about a relationship [with] government from the point of view not just of the taxes we pay, but of government spending," Kleinbard said. "That means in turn that we have to think beyond simplistic labels of just 'taxes,' [and] 'are tax cuts good for us?' ... We need to think about what the net of taxing and spending policies mean for our welfare in the technical sense – that is, our well-being."

Describing the United States as an "inequality outlier" due to its high levels of both income and income inequality, Kleinbard noted that current fiscal responses to the inequality include taxation as well as inclusive growth strategies, such as investing in education, health and public infrastructure.

"We have more policy instruments available on the financing side, and we have powerful investment opportunities and insurance opportunities that we as the richest, largest economy can afford and by doing so can actually lead to a more prosperous and, I believe, a happier society," he said.

This lecture was included on the University of Georgia Signature Lecture Series notable lecture list.



Yale Law School dean defends legal profession

Yale Law School Dean Heather Gerken presented "The Lessons of Lawyering: Why Ours is an Honorable Profession" as the law school's 116th Sibley Lecturer.

Gerken, who also serves as Yale's Sol and Lillian Goldman Professor of Law, defended the honor of the legal profession

and argued that lawyers are defenders of the rule of law who fight with integrity and ensure that everyone has the right to be heard.

She told the audience that lawyers stand up for what is most important, including the rule of law.

"If you want proof of the important role that lawyers play in defending the rule of law, you just need to read the newspaper. Look at what is happening in Egypt, in Pakistan, in Guatemala, in France and Turkey," Gerken said. "When countries slide into authoritarianism, you will always see lawyers. You will see those lawyers standing up for voting rights, for due process, for integrity and government, and for equality under the law."

According to Gerken, lawyers are trained to see the flaws in both their arguments and their opposition's.

"The day that you become a lawyer is the day that you realize the law does not and should not mirror every single thing that you believe as a person," Gerken said. "We must recognize the best in the other side and the worst in our own. That's what it means to be a lawyer."

Gerken's April presentation was named part of the University of Georgia Signature Lecture Series. UGA Signature Lectures feature speakers noted for their broad, multidisciplinary appeal and compelling bodies of work.

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



The Sibley Lecture Series, established in 1964 by the Charles Loidans Foundation of Atlanta in tribute to the late John A. Sibley, is designed to attract outstanding legal scholars and jurists of national prominence to the School of Law. Sibley was a 1911 graduate of the law school.