

WILBANKS CEASE CLINIC

Lecture features key leader in sex abuse prosecution

The Wilbanks Child Endangerment and Sexual Exploitation Clinic hosted Daniel J. Dye, the senior deputy attorney general in criminal prosecutions for the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, to speak on his experience as part of a landmark investigation.

In his lecture “Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report,” Dye described the years-long investigation and consequent presentation of evidence to a grand jury that resulted in numerous arrests and convictions of priests and their supervisors.

After receiving a call from a district attorney regarding allegations of abuse by priests, Dye led a review that eventually spread to all but one Catholic diocese in Pennsylvania. Over the course of the investigation, authorities obtained more than half a million reports that included documentation of incidents for more than 1,000 victims.

Noting that the state’s case “could not have been done” without the grand jury, Dye said that after the Office of Attorney General revealed the results of its probe, other states – but not Georgia – also launched their own investigations.

In closing, Dye shared the summary statement he shares with all of the juries he argues before and encouraged lecture attendees to take



it with them: “You now know what happened here. You now know what was done. The only question left to decide is what are you going to do about it?”

The Wilbanks CEASE Clinic is the first of its kind in the nation dedicated solely to the assistance of survivors of child sexual abuse. Funded by a donation from School of Law alumnus Marlan B. Wilbanks (J.D.’86), the clinic seeks to educate and prepare the next generation of lawyers to represent survivors of child sexual abuse as well as to serve as a center of excellence for survivors and attorneys who are seeking these types of claims.

Before Dye spoke, Wilbanks welcomed the crowd and said he believes Georgia needs to update its laws protecting children from such atrocities.

“I feel like Georgia’s values, and the values of our citizens, strongly support what we’re trying to do, which is to try and support victims of child sexual abuse. But that being true, it’s not translating into action in politics,” he said, urging attendees to fight for and advocate for survivors.

Sibley Lecturer asks if SCOTUS decisions are the law of the land

In his research, David A. Strauss – the law school’s 117th Sibley Lecturer – ponders a seemingly simple question: Are Supreme Court decisions the law of the land?

At first glance, the answer seems obvious. Of course, the Supreme Court is the final verdict on legal questions. Why even ask? But then one might remember the U.S. Constitution actually is the legal framework of the country. The Supreme Court’s job is to make sure that law is properly followed. Or is it a combination of both? Everyone knows the Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is.

The question, Strauss argues, is much more complex than it appears.

Strauss – the University of Chicago Law School’s Ratner Distinguished Service Professor – has argued 19 cases before the Supreme Court. He said he believes



these questions are framed incorrectly, focusing on what a given law is supposed to mean rather than what that law requires citizens and elected officials alike to do.

The waters become muddied, though, when executives, like the president, disagree with the Supreme Court’s rulings. One such example Strauss provided was President Abraham Lincoln’s response to *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which