

Charleston School of Law, Riley Institute at Furman to Host Symposium on Crime and Punishment



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CHARLESTON, SC - February 18 - 19, 2010 - The Charleston School of Law and the Riley Institute at Furman University are partnering for the second annual Law and Society Series Symposium **Feb. 18-19** that will focus on the topic of crime and punishment.

By bringing together different legal constituencies, the "Crime and Punishment" symposium will explore the range and functions of criminal punishment, evaluate whether existing law meets identified objectives, revisit the definition of cruel and unusual punishment, analyze the effect of the financial crisis on white collar crime, and examine the troubled relationship between schools and prison. In addition to identifying problems in the crime and punishment system, speakers will offer constructive solutions.

The symposium is the second offering in the annual "Law and Society" series, which is presented by the Charleston Law Review of the Charleston School of Law and the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics, and Public Leadership at Furman.

The program begins Thursday, Feb. 18 at 5 p.m. in the Charleston Music Hall with a keynote address by Bryan A. Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative based in Montgomery, Alabama. The title of Mr. Stevenson's address is "The Politics of Crime and Punishment: Condemnation, Mercy, and Justice." Mr. Stevenson is also a professor at NYU Law School and argued recently before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The symposium continues on Friday, February 19 from 8:30 to 5 p.m. with a

series of panel discussions by scholars, judges, lawmakers, lawyers, and public advocates. The second day's activities take place at the Charleston Museum.

Although there is no charge for attending Thursday afternoon's keynote address, cost for Friday's events is \$50 for those in the non-profit sector and \$75 for attorneys in the private sector.

Students are offered free admission. Participants can register online at www.charlestonlawreview.org.

"The crime and punishment symposium will survey the functions of criminal punishment in law and society, determine shortcomings, and offer a look at suggested reforms," explained Will Cook, assistant professor at the Charleston School of Law. "These issues are relevant to everyone, including lawyers in every discipline. When laws that criminalize and punish conduct create unintended consequences, social cost is high."

According to Don Gordon, executive director of the Riley Institute at Furman, the symposium could not come at a more appropriate time. "Our state and others are confronted by a series of extremely important issues," he said. "The conference represents an opportunity for a common sense discussion about why we criminalize and punish, and whether the systems our governments have created are accomplishing these goals." The Charleston Law Review is the flagship journal of the Charleston School of Law. The Law Review will publish a companion issue to the symposium that may be ordered at www.charlestonlawreview.org. In its past issues, the Charleston Law Review has published significant public figures ranging across the political spectrum from President-elect Barack Obama to former presidential legal advisor John Yoo.

The Riley Institute at Furman

The Riley Institute at Furman, named for Furman graduate Richard Riley, offers a broad array of programs designed to engage students and citizens across South Carolina in the various arenas of politics, public policy, and public leadership. It is associated with the university's Department of Political Science.

A complete schedule for the symposium is available at <http://www.charlestonlawreview.org/docs/mailler.pdf>

For more information, contact Prof. Will Cook at the Charleston School of Law: 843-801-3366.