

2008
CLIFFORD & VIRGINIA DURR
Lecture Series



AUBURN
MONTGOMERY

Psychic Harm and Race: The American
Legacy of No "Truth and Reconciliation"

Clifford Judkins (1899-1975) and Virginia F. Durr (1903-1999)

Clifford Judkins Durr was born and raised in Montgomery and Virginia Heard Foster in Birmingham. He attended Montgomery schools and the University of Alabama and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. Virginia attended Birmingham schools and Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

They moved to Washington, D.C., in 1933 when Clifford was appointed legal counsel to the Reconstruction Finance Corp. He later served as counsel to the Defense Plant Corp. Their home on Seminary Hill was a center of lively political discussion with distinguished guests.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Clifford to the Federal Communications Commission, where he distinguished himself as a strong

advocate for public television and was instrumental in obtaining for Alabama the first public educational channel. Virginia became active in the fight to eradicate the poll tax and was a founding member of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

While at the FCC, Clifford challenged J. Edgar Hoover by protecting the free speech rights of those with alleged communist connections, which included such innocent activities as belonging to wartime committees headed by Supreme Court justices and the vice president. Clifford refused reappointment to the FCC rather than implement a loyalty oath he believed violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court later declared the loyalty oath to be unconstitutional, but Clifford's career

as a public servant was over.

The Durr family returned to Montgomery in the midst of the challenges and divisiveness of the civil rights struggle. One night E.D. Nixon called on Clifford and Virginia to come post bail for Virginia's friend, Rosa Parks, who had refused to give up her bus seat. Later, Clifford loaned his legal expertise to a young lawyer, Fred Gray, in bringing lawsuits that successfully challenged discrimination in public accommodations and education. Despite their travails, Clifford and Virginia were devoted to Alabama and to their family and many friends here.

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Speaker Bio

Bryan Stevenson is executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama in Montgomery, Alabama, and a professor of law at New York University School of Law. He is widely acclaimed as one of the most effective public service lawyers in America. A graduate of both the Harvard Law School, where he was awarded the Harvard Fellowship in Public Interest Law, and the Harvard School of Government, where he was awarded the Kennedy Fellowship in Criminal Justice, Mr. Stevenson has devoted his life to helping disadvantaged people in the Deep South. He and his staff have been largely responsible for reversals or reduced sentences in over 65 death penalty cases.

In 1985, Mr. Stevenson joined the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta as a staff attorney. From 1989-1995, he represented capital defendants as executive director of the Alabama Capital Representation Resource Center. As executive director of EJI, Mr. Stevenson represents indigent defendants, death row prisoners and juveniles who have been denied fair and just treatment in the legal system. He is committed to informing policy makers in the critically important work of reforming the administration of criminal justice, and he assists counsel representing death row inmates by providing training materials and consultation.

Mr. Stevenson's work on behalf of condemned prisoners has attracted national acclaim from the Washington Post, the New York Times, People Magazine, Life Magazine

and several national television programs, including Nightline and 60 Minutes, which featured a case in-which he and his staff won the release of a death row prisoner who had spent six years on death row for a crime he did not commit.



In 1995, Mr. Stevenson was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship Award for his work. In 1989, he received the Reebok Human Rights Award along with the Chinese student leaders at the Tiananmen Square massacre. In 1991, he received the National Medal of

Liberty from the American Civil Liberties Union after he was nominated by United States Supreme Court Justice John Stevens. Mr. Stevenson was named the 1996 Public Interest Lawyer of the Year by the National Association of Public Interest Lawyers. He is also a recipient of the Gleitsman Foundation's National Citizen Activist Award and in 2000, he received the Olaf Palme Prize in Stockholm, Sweden, for international human rights.

The American Bar Association has honored Mr. Stevenson with its John Minor Public Service and Professionalism Award.

He also has received the Alabama State Bar Commissioners Award, the SALT Human Rights Award from The Society of American Law Teachers, the American College of Trial Lawyers' Award for Courageous Advocacy and the National Lawyers Guild's Lawyer for the People Award.

Mr. Stevenson has received honorary degrees from Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown University, Washington University, Eastern University, City University of New York School of Law, Metropolitan College of New York, The Bank Street College of Education, Bard College and Villanova University.

Agenda

Psychic Harm and Race: The American Legacy of No “Truth and Reconciliation”
Presented by the Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures and Auburn University at Montgomery

7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 6

Welcome – Dr. John G. Veres III

Greetings from Durr Family – Ann Durr Lyon

Introduction of Speaker – Dr. John G. Veres III

Lecturer – Bryan A. Stevenson

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks – Dr. John G. Veres III

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