

Campus News (/campus-news)

Chief Justice of the United States Visits UK

By Whitney Harder (/authors/whitney-harder) Feb. 1, 2017



The Hon. John G. Roberts Jr., Chief Justice of the United States, speaking at UK.

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Feb. 1, 2017) — University of Kentucky College of Law (<http://law.uky.edu/>) students as well as judges, lawyers and clerks from across Kentucky were provided an extraordinary opportunity today as the Hon. John G. Roberts Jr., Chief Justice of the United States, visited the UK campus.

Chief Justice Roberts was here as the first speaker for the newly established John G. Heyburn II Initiative for Excellence in the Federal Judiciary.

“It is both an honor and a privilege to welcome the Hon. Chief Justice Roberts as the first speaker in the John G. Heyburn II Lecture Series,” said David A. Brennen, dean of the College of Law. “The inaugural Heyburn Initiative event marks the beginning of countless opportunities for our students to hear firsthand from some of our nation’s leaders in law, including other distinguished members of the judiciary and lawmakers, and helps UK Law continue its tradition of excellence.”

The chief justice and James C. Duff, director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, spoke to a large audience in the Kincaid Auditorium located in the Gatton College of Business and Economics (<http://gatton.uky.edu/>). Their conversation followed a Judicial Courage Panel, featuring University of Michigan Professor Pamela Brandwein, Federal Judicial Center Director Jeremy Fogel and Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit Carl E. Stewart. Preceding the event, the chief justice also met with a small group of UK law students.

Chief Justice Roberts was born in Buffalo, New York, Jan. 27, 1955. He married Jane Marie Sullivan in 1996 and they have two children — Josephine and Jack. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1976 and a juris doctor from Harvard Law School in 1979. He served as a law clerk for Judge Henry J. Friendly of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit from 1979–1980 and as a law clerk for then-Associate Justice William H. Rehnquist of the Supreme Court of the United States during the 1980 term.

He was special assistant to the attorney general, U.S. Department of Justice from 1981–1982; associate counsel to President Ronald Reagan, White House Counsel’s Office from 1982–1986; and principal deputy solicitor general, U.S. Department of Justice from 1989–1993. From 1986–1989 and 1993–2003, he practiced law in Washington, D.C. He was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 2003.

President George W. Bush nominated him as chief justice of the United States, and he took his seat Sept. 29, 2005.

The Heyburn Initiative, a national, nonpartisan federal judicial initiative, was announced (<https://uknow.uky.edu/campus-news/uk-announces-establishment-heyburn-initiative>) in October 2016 by President Eli Capilouto, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Dr. Martha K. Heyburn. In partnership with the UK College of Law (<http://law.uky.edu/>) and UK Libraries (<http://libraries.uky.edu/>), the initiative established a national lecture series on relevant judicial topics and is launching an archives and oral history program for Kentucky’s federal judges.

Based on the recommendation of Sen. McConnell, President George H.W. Bush appointed Judge Heyburn to the United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky in 1992. He

Heyburn to the United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky in 1992. He served as chief judge in the Western District of Kentucky from 2001 to 2008.

"The John G. Heyburn Initiative for Judicial Excellence is a perfect tribute to my friend," Sen. McConnell said in October. "John was kind, he was thoughtful, he was principled — and the Heyburn Initiative will remind us that these virtues count both on the bench and in life. Dedicated to the preservation and study of judicial history in Kentucky, I look forward to the Heyburn Initiative becoming an integral part of Kentucky's judicial community and a national focal point and destination for all students of our legal system."

For more information about the John G. Heyburn II Initiative for Excellence in the Federal Judiciary, visit www.heyburninitiative.org (<http://www.heyburninitiative.org>).

UK is the University for Kentucky. At UK, we are educating more students, treating more patients with complex illnesses and conducting more research and service than at any time in our 150-year history. To read more about the UK story and how you can support continued investment in your university and the Commonwealth, go to: [uky.edu/uk4ky](http://www.uky.edu/uk4ky) (<http://www.uky.edu/uk4ky>). #uk4ky #seeblue