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Loyola's law forum allows scholars to share ideas

BY SARAH MANSUR
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At Loyola University Chicago School of Law's two-day Constitutional Law Colloquium, scholars from around the globe will present on topics that run the gamut from international law and artistic expression to voting law and judicial politics.

"If you are a constitutional law professor, it's like being a kid in a candy shop," said Barry Sullivan, a Loyola law professor who helped organize the event.

The eighth annual colloquium starts on Friday at 8 a.m. in the school's Phillip H. Corboy Law Center on the Near North Side and continues through Saturday. More than 80 constitutional law scholars will be presenting.

"You can wander into one room and hear about human rights law, you can wander next door and hear about government speech or equality, all at the same time," Sullivan said of the colloquium. "It's an extraordinary opportunity for people from all over the country not just to give papers and get response to their own research but also to get exposed to what other people think is important and what they are doing."

Alexander V. Tsesis, a Loyola law professor, said the main purpose is to help develop key views about the interpretation of constitutional law.

"And, to have Loyola be involved in some of the most cutting-edge ideas, for Loyola to demonstrate its leadership in bringing together scholars from

all over the world and the United States and giving them an open forum where controversial views about everything from national security to free speech and freedom of religion to family law-related constitutional matters can be discussed in a way that will be both congenial and also a rigorous and thorough investigation of the arguments articulated by various authors and presenters," said Tsesis, who also helped organize the event.

Tsesis said President Donald Trump's administration has prompted an increase in certain presentation topics this year.

"I think if we are seeing any issue that is really standing out more than in other times, it's issues related to how the press freedoms are treated," he said. "That's a significant uptick from previous administrations."

He said relatively obscure topics that are not often discussed in scholarly literature, like the foreign emoluments clause, are also in this year's colloquium.

"The conference doesn't lend itself to one particular political view," he said. "We want to be very careful to have an equal representation of views, not that we fish for that but more so that we aim to have a diversity of voices and not to limit ourselves based on any sort of political leaning."

The colloquium's keynote speaker this year is H. Jefferson Powell, a faculty member at Duke University School of Law.

Powell has served as deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel at the U.S.



Barry Sullivan

Department of Justice and special counsel to the North Carolina attorney general.

He has a master's degree and Ph.D. from Duke and a master's of divinity and law degree from Yale University.

Sullivan said Powell is a particularly interesting constitutional law scholar because of his extensive experience practicing constitutional law both at the state and federal levels of government.

"He brings a particular wealth of background on the issue of representing the executive branch of the government," Sullivan said.

In an written statement to the Daily Law Bulletin, Powell said his remarks will propose that constitutional lawyers have something valuable to add to a national conversation about what ideas unite Americans, "because constitutional law is an argument that never ends."

"Our unique contribution will come from what we can discover in



Alexander V. Tsesis

our tradition of unending controversy that may shed light on the unity beneath contemporary American conflicts," he said in the e-mail.

Though Powell has not attended the colloquium before, he said the event is a "wonderful service that Loyola provides everyone who works, as a lawyer, scholar or judge, on constitutional law and because constitutional law is vital to the nation, to everyone, period."

"I call it a service because there are few if any parallels, in terms of the number of scholars who attend, the range of topics and interests and schools of thought the attendees represent, and the fact that Loyola invites young scholars as well as graybeards like me," Powell wrote. "It is important to the health of any discipline, constitutional law included, that there are institutionalized means of encouraging younger scholars, and Loyola's colloquium plays an important role in that respect."

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