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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

RWU Law Celebrates Commencement 2011!

The Honorable Paul A. Suttell, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, will receive an honorary degree at RWU Law's Commencement on May 20.

RWU Law Celebrates Commencement 2011!



BRISTOL, R.I., May 3, 2011 – The Honorable Paul A.

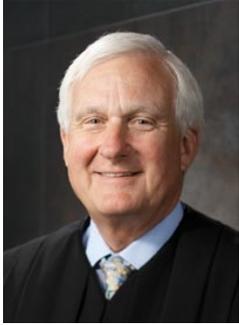
Suttell, chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, will be presented with an honorary degree and deliver the keynote address at the Roger Williams University School of Law Commencement Ceremony on Friday, May 20, at 1 p.m.

The **Honorable Robert G. Flanders, Jr.**, and **Betty Anne Waters '98** will also receive honorary degrees during the ceremony, at which more than 150 juris doctor degrees will be awarded.

"Each year, our honorary degree recipients are chosen to exemplify the commitment to community and the dedication to service that we so deeply value at RWU Law," said **Dean David A. Logan**. Added **Richard L. Bready**, chairman of the Roger Williams University Board of Trustees, "We are honored to celebrate Commencement with speakers who offer our graduates a wonderful illustration of the intellect, integrity and dedication that truly sets leaders apart, even in a state filled with committed public servants."

The Class of 2011 has selected **Anthony Santoro** as Professor of the Year and the **Hon. Daniel Procaccini** as Adjunct Professor of the Year, and the two awardees will lead the class through its commencement processions.

The 2011 RWU Law Commencement exercises are closed to the public, but members of the media are encouraged to attend with advance reservations only. Biographical information for honorary doctorate recipients follows:



The Honorable Paul A. Suttell

Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

Chief Justice, Rhode Island Supreme Court

B.A. Northwestern University

J.D. Suffolk University Law School

The Honorable Paul A. Suttell is Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. He was first named to the court by Governor Donald L. Carcieri in 2003, and became Chief Justice in 2009. Prior to that, he served for 13 years as an associate justice on the Rhode Island Family Court.

Suttell began his legal career in the Pawtucket law office of Beals & DiFiore before moving on to Crowe, Chester & Adams in Providence. From 1979 to 1982, he was legal counsel to the Rhode Island House Minority Leader. In 1983, Suttell was himself elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives, where he served until 1990, including a five-year stint as deputy minority leader. In 1988, he was a Rhode Island delegate to the Republican National Convention.

Suttell has also served on a number of nonprofit boards and associations in the state, including as director and past president of the Little Compton Historical Society and Sakonnet Preservation Association; as director of the Rhode Island Lung Association; and as a member of the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission. He has also served as moderator, youth group advisor and past chair of the board of deacons and trustees for the United Congregational Church of Little Compton.

Today he lives in Little Compton with his wife, Mary. They have two children, William and Grace.



The Honorable Robert G. Flanders, Jr.

Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

Partner, Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP

Justice, Rhode Island Supreme Court, Retired

A.B. Brown University

J.D. Harvard Law School

Robert G. Flanders, Jr., is a partner in the law firm of Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP, where he chairs the firm's business litigation practice group. He is a former Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, where he served from 1996 to 2004.

As a lawyer and advisor, Justice Flanders has represented and counseled each of the last five Governors on various matters, including government litigation. He has served on the Barrington Town Council, as Town Solicitor of Glocester, R.I., and as Special Prosecutor for the Judicial Tenure and Discipline Commission. He chaired the State Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education from 2007 until 2011, and served as a Governor on the State Board of Higher Education. Earlier this year, Rhode Island Governor Lincoln D. Chafee appointed him as State Receiver for the financially troubled City of Central Falls.

Justice Flanders also serves on numerous boards of directors in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors, including the Care New England Health System, Women & Infants Hospital, the Greater Providence YMCA, the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Providence Performing Arts Center, the Providence Public Library Foundation, the Veterans Memorial Auditorium Foundation and the Brown University Leadership Advisory Council.

He and his wife Ann will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this year. They reside in East Greenwich and have three grown children and four grandchildren.



Betty Anne Waters '98, Esq.

Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

Legal Activist

B.A. Community College of Rhode Island

J.D. Roger Williams University School of Law

Betty Anne Waters '98, Esq., had only a job as a waitress, her high school equivalency, two children and a stack of bills when she set out to rescue her brother Kenneth Waters, who served 18 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Now she has a college degree, a Roger Williams law degree and the stunning achievement of having succeeded, after nearly two decades, in overturning her brother's conviction.

In 2010, Waters' story was turned into a major motion picture, "Conviction" (2010). The movie, starring Hilary Swank as Waters, tells how she doggedly searched for exculpatory DNA evidence that had supposedly been destroyed; how she enlisted noted defense attorney Barry Scheck and his Innocence Project to join in her quest; and how she, Scheck (played by Peter Gallagher in the film) and her RWU Law classmate Abra Rice '98 (played by Minnie Driver) went from house to house, convincing witnesses to admit they had lied under police pressure.

Waters now volunteers for the Innocence Project, working to exonerate the wrongfully accused. She speaks out against the death penalty, lobbies for legislation on criminal-justice reform and evidence preservation, and meets with prisoners who have been freed. As Swank recently told the New York Times, "I don't think Betty Anne feels like she put herself on hold. I think she feels: 'That's my life. That's what I was here to do – to help and be of service to people who are innocent.'"

Waters lives with her family in Bristol, R.I.