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Roger Williams University School of Law

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May 10, 2020

Law School News

The Honorable Margaret H. Marshall: Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

The 35th Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court — the nation's oldest continually existing court, founded in 1692 — Justice Marshall will virtually address the Class of 2020 on Friday.

May 10, 2020



The Honorable Margaret H. Marshall, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (Ret.); RWU Law Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa.

On Friday, May 15, 2020,

The Honorable Margaret H. Marshall

Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (Ret.)

will virtually address the Class of 2020, and be presented by Roger Williams University School of Law with the degree of *Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa*.

B.A. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

M.A. Harvard University

J.D. Yale Law School

Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall is the 35th Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, a position she held from 1999 until her retirement in December 2010. The Court, which dates from 1692, is the oldest in continuous existence in the United States, and Marshall is the only woman ever to have served as its Chief Justice.

Marshall was first appointed to the Court in 1996. Among the many opinions she has written was the 2003 decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, holding that Massachusetts could not deny same-sex couples the right to marry. That ruling made Massachusetts the first state in the nation to legalize gay marriage.

Chief Justice Marshall was born and raised in South Africa. As an undergraduate, she was elected President of the National Union of South African Students, at the time a leading anti-apartheid organization. She later emigrated to the United States.

Over the course of her legal career, Marshall has been involved in numerous professional activities. She served as President of the United States Conference of Chief Justices, and as Chair of the Board of the National Center for State Courts. She is a fellow of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a former member of the Council and Executive Committee of the American Law Institute. From 2004 to 2010, she served on the Board of Trustees of Yale University. She was reappointed to a second term in 2012, and until 2016 served as Senior Trustee, the first woman to hold that position.