

Wake Forest Journal of Law and Policy Presents:
**Principles in Practice: Integrity and the
Rule of Law in an Era of Uncertainty**



PANELISTS

November 7, 2025



RACHEL COHEN

Organizer and Former Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom Associate

Rachel A. Cohen is a Harvard Law School graduate (J.D. 2022) and former finance associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. Before joining Skadden, she earned her B.A. from Ohio State University, engaged in pro bono work during law school, and held leadership roles in organizations like the Harvard Immigration Project, the Journal of Law & Gender, and the Women's Law Association. Her activism is a central part of her professional identity. In 2025, she organized one of the largest open-letters signed by Big Law associates, urging firms to defend the rule of law in response to executive orders targeting law firms. Dissatisfied with her firm's response, she tendered a highly visible conditional resignation at Skadden and created a public "toolkit" recommending ways for associates and law students to push back, including boycotting firm recruiting until leadership took a stronger stand. She now works with a law firm led by Abbe Lowell, continuing her advocacy for legal integrity and institutional accountability.

Panel:

The Meaning of Integrity in Light of Recent Executive Orders Targeting Big Law Firms and Higher Education



JUSTICE RICHARD DIETZ

North Carolina Supreme Court Justice

Justice Richard Dietz serves on the North Carolina Supreme Court, bringing more than twenty years of experience in appellate advocacy and judicial service. Before his election to the state's highest court, he was appointed to the North Carolina Court of Appeals, where he authored numerous published opinions on constitutional, business, and criminal law. Earlier in his career, Justice Dietz practiced appellate litigation at a national law firm, representing clients in complex civil and constitutional cases across the country. He has argued before the Supreme Court of the United States and frequently lectured on appellate practice, judicial decision-making, and the rule of law. His career reflects a consistent focus on rigorous legal analysis, respect for precedent, and service to the state's judiciary.

Panel: The Role of Integrity within the Judiciary



JUDGE ELIZABETH DILLON

Chief United States District Judge of
the United States District Court for the
Western District of Virginia

Chief Judge Elizabeth Dillon is the Chief United States District Judge of the Western District of Virginia, where she has served since her appointment to the federal bench in 2014. She previously built a successful career as a civil litigator at a regional firm, representing clients in constitutional, employment, and commercial disputes. Throughout her private practice, she gained a reputation for her meticulous preparation and skillful advocacy in both trial and appellate courts. As a federal judge, she has presided over a wide range of matters, from civil rights and constitutional questions to complex commercial litigation and federal criminal prosecutions. In 2021, she became the first woman to serve as Chief Judge of the district, reflecting her leadership and contributions to the federal judiciary.



YOSEPH DESTA

Litigation Counsel at Citizens for
Responsibility and Ethics in Washington

Yoseph Desta, Harvard Law graduate, is currently serving as Litigation Counsel for Citizen for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW). CREW is a nonpartisan nonprofit legal organization aimed at holding public officials accountable for ethical misconduct, corruption, and abuse of power. Prior to joining CREW, Mr. Desta worked as a Trial Attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice in the Civil Division in addition to working as a Litigation Associate for WilmerHale. As a dedicated and experienced litigator, Mr. Desta's legal practice is centered around public interest, ethics, government oversight, and accountability.

Panel: Governmental Integrity and Accountability



DONNA EDWARDS

Former U.S. Representative for
Maryland's 4th Congressional District

Donna Edwards, North Carolina native and Wake Forest Alumna, is an American lawyer, activist, and former U.S. Representative for Maryland's 4th Congressional District. Before running for Congress, Ms. Edwards worked in the nonprofit sector, including as co-founder and first executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Ms. Edwards was the first African American woman ever elected to Congress from Maryland. She served in the U.S. House from 2008 to 2017, and became known for her progressive advocacy — raising the minimum wage, supporting health care reform, protecting women's rights, promoting scientific research, and pushing for campaign finance & election reform. Ms. Edwards has remained active in public policy and advocacy — including a role as Senior Fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice.

Panel: Governmental Integrity and Accountability



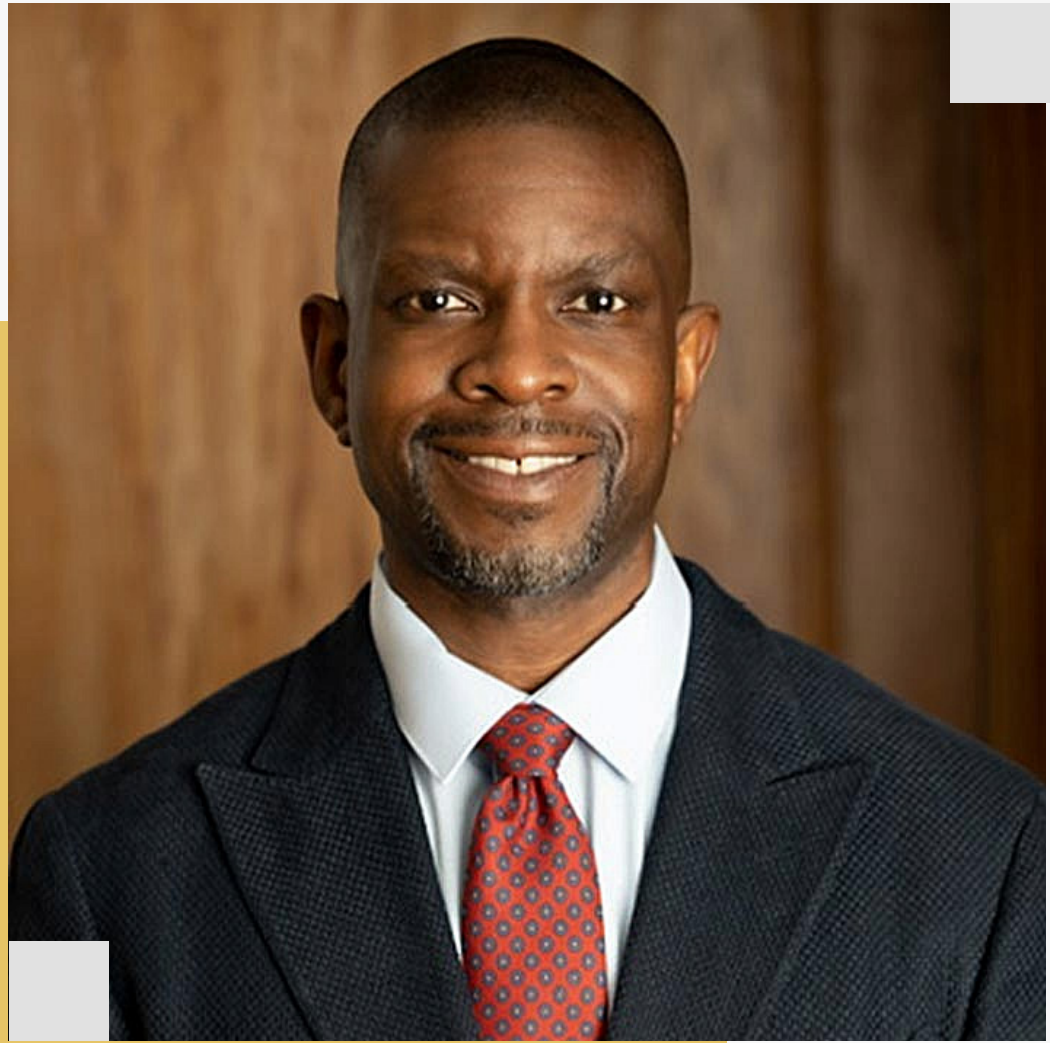
ALBERTO GONZALEZ

Dean of Belmont University College of Law,
Former United States Attorney General

Alberto R. Gonzales served as the 80th Attorney General of the United States, and is currently the Dean of Belmont University College of Law, where he teaches constitutional law, national security law, First Amendment law, and separation of powers. His diverse legal career includes several prominent government roles including Texas Secretary of State, Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, White House Counsel under President George W. Bush. For his many accomplishments and years of public service, Dean Gonzales has been recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of Rice University and received the Harvard Law School Association Award, the Central Intelligence Agency's Director's Award and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

Panel:

Teaching Lawyers Integrity: Conversation with the Dean



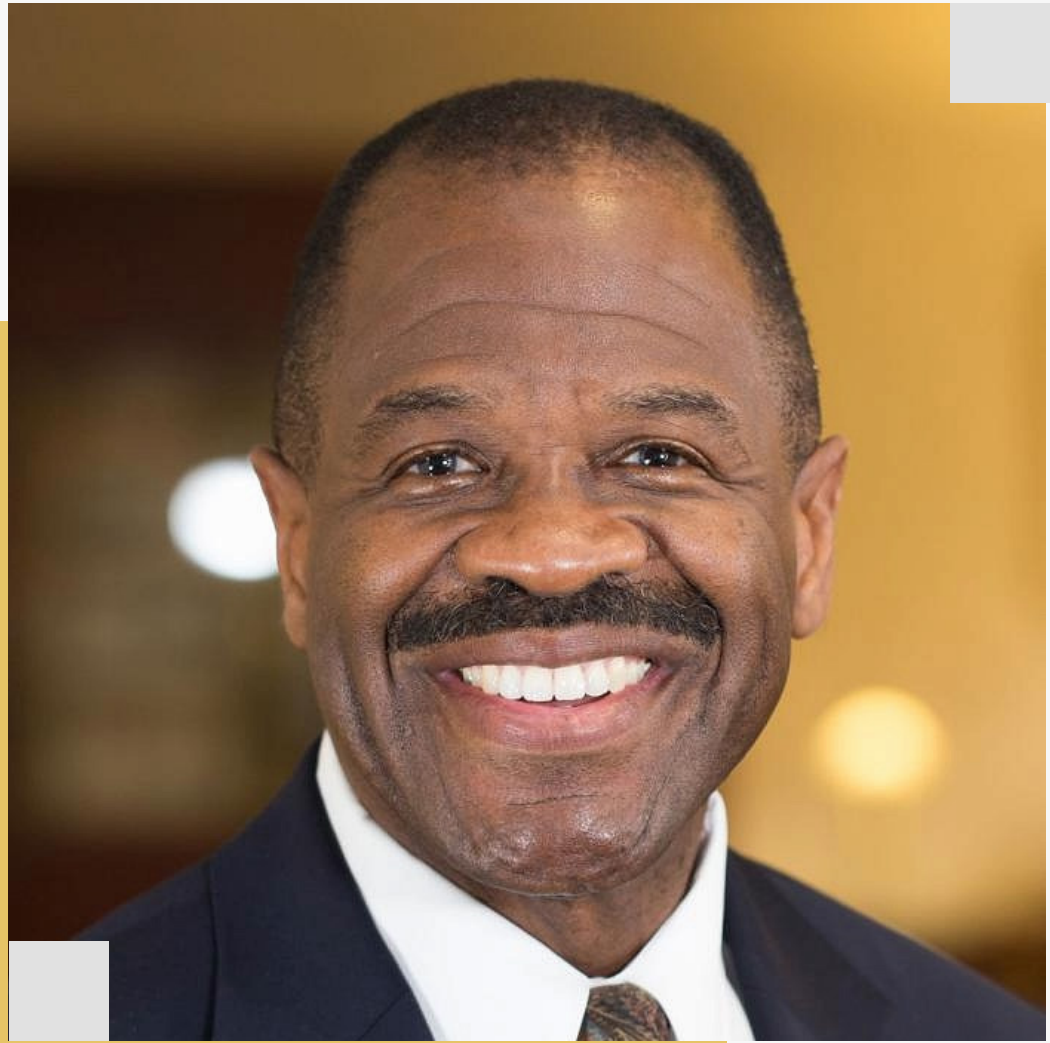
RASHAD NELMS

Former C-Suite Executive, Global
Leadership Coach

Rashad Nelms is a former C-suite executive and global leadership coach with extensive experience leading organizations through growth, transformation, and strategic realignment. Over his career, he has held senior executive positions in both corporate and nonprofit environments, managing teams across multiple sectors and geographies. His work has included oversight of operations, organizational development, and international programming, with a focus on building effective leadership pipelines and advancing mission-driven initiatives. As a global leadership coach, he draws on this executive background to advise business and nonprofit leaders, offering guidance on organizational strategy, executive presence, and leadership effectiveness. His career reflects a blend of operational expertise and a commitment to leadership development on a global scale.

Panel:

The Meaning of Integrity in Light of Recent Executive Orders Targeting Big Law Firms and Higher Education



BLAKE MORANT

Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law
and Former Dean of George Washington Law
School

Blake Morant is the Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law at George Washington University and the former Dean of the George Washington University Law School. Prior to his tenure at GW, he served as Dean of the Wake Forest University School of Law, where he spearheaded significant initiatives in curriculum development, experiential learning, and student engagement. Earlier in his career, Professor Morant taught at several law schools, publishing widely in business law, contracts, and media law. He has also served in leadership roles for national legal organizations, including the Association of American Law Schools. Throughout his career, he has been recognized for his scholarship, teaching, and leadership in advancing legal education and preparing lawyers for a changing profession.

Panel:

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JEFFREY SCHWAB

Senior Counsel and Interim Director of
Litigation at the Liberty Justice Center

Jeffrey Schwab is Senior Counsel & Interim Director of Litigation at the Liberty Justice Center. He works on defending civil liberties and constitutional rights, with a strong focus on free speech and limiting governmental overreach. Before joining the Liberty Justice Center in September 2014, he worked at a boutique Chicago law firm, where his cases covered religious liberty under the First Amendment and RLUIPA, zoning, real estate, contract and small business law, consumer litigation, and bankruptcy. Mr. Schwab holds a B.S. in Business Management from Grove City College, and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. He is admitted to practice law in Illinois and licensed in the U.S. Supreme Court, several U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, and federal district courts in Illinois.

Panel: Governmental Integrity and Accountability



JUDGE RAAG SINGHAL

United States District Court Judge
for the Southern District of Florida

Judge Raag Singhal serves as a United States District Court Judge for the Southern District of Florida, one of the busiest trial courts in the country. He was nominated to the federal bench in 2019 following his service as a circuit court judge in Florida's Seventeenth Judicial Circuit. Prior to his judicial career, Judge Singhal worked as both a state prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney, handling a wide array of felony trials and appeals. In private practice, he gained extensive experience in complex litigation, criminal defense, and professional responsibility matters. His diverse background—spanning prosecution, defense, and judicial service—provides him with a broad perspective on the administration of justice and the demands of federal trial practice.

Panel: The Role of Integrity within the Judiciary



BRIAN WHITE

Vice President and General
Counsel of Wake Forest University

Brian White is Vice President and General Counsel of Wake Forest University, where he directs the institution's legal affairs and provides strategic counsel to the president, trustees, and senior leadership. He oversees a wide range of issues affecting higher education, including governance, compliance, employment, risk management, and intellectual property. Before joining Wake Forest, Mr. White practiced law in the private sector, advising clients on corporate transactions, regulatory matters, and litigation. His career reflects a steady progression from private practice to senior in-house leadership, with a consistent focus on advancing the mission of higher education through sound legal guidance.

Panel:

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MODERATORS

PANEL 1

The Meaning of Integrity in Light of Recent Executive Orders Targeting Big Law Firms and Higher Education

Moderator: Prof. Brenda Gibson



PANEL 2

Teaching Lawyers Integrity: Conversation with the Dean

Moderator: Dean Andrew Klein



PANEL 3

The Role of Integrity within the Judiciary

Moderator: Prof. Nia Johnson



PANEL 4

Governmental Integrity and Accountability

Moderator: Prof. Nathan Fleming



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