

Program on Church, State & Society announces endowed lecture series

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Notre Dame Law School's [Program on Church, State & Society](https://churchstate.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://churchstate.nd.edu/\]](https://churchstate.nd.edu/) has received a generous gift to endow a new lecture and conference series. The benefactors, who wish to remain anonymous, have named the series the Rice-Hasson Distinguished Lecture Series in honor of the late Notre Dame Law Professor Charles E. Rice and of Kevin J. "Seamus" Hasson '79, '82 M.A., '85 J.D., '12 Doctor of Laws (h.c.), and his wife, Mary Rice Hasson '82, '85 J.D.



The Rice-Hasson Distinguished Lecture Series will serve as a flagship annual event and celebration of the Program on Church, State & Society. It will reflect and advance the mission of the program, the Law School, and the University by bringing accomplished and influential scholars and jurists to Notre Dame to engage students, faculty, and the entire Notre Dame community.

"The Program on Church, State & Society promotes student formation and education, scholarly engagement, and public conversation on cutting-edge and timeless questions about the role of religious communities and institutions in the public square and about the legal and other relationships between political and religious authorities," said [Richard W. Garnett](https://directory/richard-garnett/) [\[link:/directory/richard-garnett/\]](https://directory/richard-garnett/), the Program's founding director. "The Law School is honored by, and grateful for, the benefaction that has made the Rice-Hasson Distinguished Lecture Series possible."

In order to achieve its special goal of inviting undergraduate students into the scholarly and public debates about the law of religious freedom, the program will cooperate with an array of other units, centers, institutes, and programs at the University. The inaugural lecture will take place in spring 2020.

[Charles Rice](https://news-events/news/in-memoriam-charles-rice/) [\[link:/news-events/news/in-memoriam-charles-rice/\]](https://news-events/news/in-memoriam-charles-rice/) was a beloved and prolific Notre Dame Law School professor who served the Law School for over 45 years, teaching courses on jurisprudence and constitutional law. He was a member of the Education Appeal Board of the U.S. Department of Education and served as a consultant to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and to various congressional committees on constitutional issues. He authored many articles and several books about religious freedom, and had a profound impact on generations of Notre Dame Law School students.

Kevin Hasson, a "quadruple Domer," is the visionary founder and president emeritus of [The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty](https://www.becketlaw.org/staff/kevin-seamus-hasson-2/) [\[link:https://www.becketlaw.org/staff/kevin-seamus-hasson-2/\]](https://www.becketlaw.org/staff/kevin-seamus-hasson-2/), the country's leading religious liberty law firm, which is dedicated to protecting the fundamental rights of all religious believers and institutions in both the courts of law and the court of public opinion. Mary Rice Hasson is the Kate O'Beirne Fellow in Catholic Studies at the [Ethics & Public Policy Center](https://eppc.org/author/marv_hasson/) [\[link:https://eppc.org/author/marv_hasson/\]](https://eppc.org/author/marv_hasson/) in Washington, D.C. She also directs the Catholic Women's Forum, a network of Catholic professional women and scholars.

"It is a privilege for Notre Dame Law School and for the Program on Church, State & Society to be associated with the Rice and Hasson names, work, and legacies. Through their teaching, scholarship, litigation, advocacy, and vision, Professor Rice and the Hassons have been tireless and invaluable defenders of our 'first freedom,' the right to religious liberty," Garnett said.

[Nell Jessup Newton](https://directory/nell-newton/) [\[link:/directory/nell-newton/\]](https://directory/nell-newton/), the Joseph A. Matson Dean and Professor of Law at Notre Dame Law School, said, "The Rice-Hasson Distinguished Lecture Series will help cement the national reputation that the Program on Church, State & Society has already earned under Rick Garnett's visionary leadership, and it promises to be one of the Law School's premier events for many years to come."

The Program on Church, State & Society focuses on the complex and crucially important relationships among church, state, and society and on how the law structures and regulates them. This Law School program encourages scholarship and dialogue about the role of religious institutions, communities, and authorities in the social order and seeks to highlight the important role they play in the protection of religious freedom.

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