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Victoria Kennedy to Speak at 2012 Commencement

04/11/12

NEWTON, MA--Victoria Reggie Kennedy, President, Board of Trustees, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, will give the Commencement Address at the 2012 Boston College Law School Commencement on Friday, May 25 at 10:30 a.m.

The Law School’s graduation ceremonies will take place at Conte Forum on BC’s Chestnut Hill campus this year. For more information, please see the School’s Commencement Guide: /content/dam/files/schools/law/pdf/12_commence_guide.pdf

“Victoria Kennedy has been a powerful advocate for the powerless on issues such as gun control and education, among many others,” said BC Law Dean Vincent Rougeau. “Her perspective on these issues, as well as her experience as a practicing attorney for nearly twenty years, should be very interesting to our graduating class. I’m pleased that she has agreed to speak at Commencement.”

Victoria Kennedy practiced law in the private sector for nearly two decades, with special emphasis on the federal and state regulation of domestic commercial banks and savings and loan institutions. Throughout her legal career, she delivered a creative and strategic approach to the practice of law. She established, launched and served as the Managing Partner of Smith, Raclin and Hirasuna, a D.C.-based boutique law firm that eventually merged into Keck Mahin and Cate. She devised innovative strategies for recapitalization, reorganization and regulatory compliance in the successful representation of commercial banks and savings and loan associations. Kennedy successfully restructured and renegotiated complex loan transactions on behalf of both banks and borrowers and represented officers and directors of financial institutions before state and federal regulatory agencies. She also served Of Counsel, with Greenberg Traurig and earlier as an associate attorney with Caplin & Drysdale in D.C. and Mayer Brown in Chicago. Mrs. Kennedy began her legal career as a law clerk for Judge Robert Sprecher in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago.

She has served in key strategic and political roles on issues ranging from health and education to labor, especially as those issues affect women and children, and she advocates for involvement in the political process. In 1994 she established the Massachusetts Women’s Council during the election campaign, which served as a model for women’s councils in other campaigns around the country. Kennedy was actively involved in the passage of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 and stood at President Obama’s side at the signing of the bill into law. She continues to discuss the benefits of the law to constituency groups around the country.

She is the wife of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy and is Co-Founder and President of the Board of Trustees of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate in Boston. The Institute has been established to invigorate public discourse, encourage participatory democracy and inspire the next generation of citizens and leaders. Kennedy has served in a hands-on capacity throughout the Institute’s development and endowment campaign. She continues to spearhead the design, planning, oversight and building of the 40,000 sq. ft. institute, which will include a representation of the U.S. Senate Chamber. The building will be located on the campus of UMass Boston, adjacent to the John F. Kennedy Library. Her efforts
are bringing together innovative, interactive, high technology programming to educate visitors about the essential role of the U.S. Senate.

Kennedy is a member of the Board of Trustees (a Presidential appointment) of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where she chairs its Education Committee and is a member of the ad hoc Committee on Architecture and Design.

She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, a lay initiative to assist Catholic Church parishes, church organizations and religious orders promote excellence and best practices in management, finances and human resource development. She also serves on the Board of the national, Boston-based organization Catholic Democrats. Her other Boston based roles include current service as a Distinguished Professor and Mentor at the University of Massachusetts and as a member of the Board of Overseers of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

She co-founded and served as President of Common Sense About Kids and Guns, a diverse coalition of gun control advocates, health professional and gun manufacturers working together to reduce gun deaths and injuries to children in the United States. Mrs. Kennedy is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence where she chaired the Governance and Program & Planning Committees and also served on the Executive Committee and Special Committees including Strategic Planning, Executive Search and Million Mom March. She was also an active Board member of the Maret School serving as Secretary of the Board, a member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Education Committee and Plant & Facilities Subcommittee on Strategic Planning.

In recognition of her leadership and management expertise, she has received numerous awards including Honorary Doctorates from Boston University, Northeastern University, University of Massachusetts Boston, Lesley University, Emmanuel College, and Suffolk University Law School.

Mrs. Kennedy received a J.D., summa cum laude, from Tulane University School of Law, where she ranked second in the class and was elected to the Order of the Coif. She was a member of the Board of Editors and the Notes Editor of the Tulane Law Review. She earned a B.A. in English, magna cum laude, from Newcomb College at Tulane University and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Mrs. Kennedy divides her time between Washington, D.C. and Boston.

Boston College Law School opened in 1929 in a small downtown Boston office building with 54 students and two full-time faculty members. Currently ranked 29th in the country by the annual US News & World Report survey, the law school’s highly qualified students are drawn from more than 230 colleges and universities across the United States, as well as in other countries. Over 5,600 applicants competed for 268 seats in the entering class this year. The law school’s 12,000 alumni practice in 50 states and many foreign countries, holding positions in major law firms, corporate in-house legal departments, the judiciary, government agencies, private industry, academic and public interest organizations, and serving as elected state legislators and members of the U.S. Congress.

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