Bernard Siegan USD Law Professor and Member of President's U.S. Constitution Bicentennial Commission

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USD Law Professor Bernard Siegan has been keeping some high profile company of late, namely Senators Ted Kennedy and Strom Thurmond, Chief Justice Warren Burger, Phyllis Schlafly, House Speaker Tip O'Neill and others.

Siegan and company are members of the fledgling President's Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, a 23-member panel charged with developing activities and programs to commemorate the framing of the Constitution in 1787 and its ratification in 1789.

And how is it that this unimposing academic man was able to be named--by President Reagan himself--to such a prestigious position?

Simply put, Siegan is an authority on the Constitution, recognized nationally. He's published books and papers on the subject and, of course, he teaches the subject at USD.

Not surprisingly, his view of the commission's role is one of an academic "It is a gigantic civics lesson. As a society dedicated to the rule of law, it is most desirable that the public knows more about and better understand the Constitution which is the most important of all the nation's laws."
Siegan is often interviewed by the press on the subject of Constitutional law. In fact, he wrote a legal column for five years for 23 newspapers belonging to the Freedom Newspapers chain.

Although Siegan is a cautious man, he is unafraid of tackling controversial legal subjects. His book, "Economic Liberties and the Constitution," created a stir when published in 1980.

In it he argues that the framers of the Constitution clearly believed property rights are as essential as personal rights in a free society.

His position goes against many Supreme Court decisions. In an 1980 interview with the San Diego Union, Siegan stated, "The legal scholars tend to like the results of the court's position on such, but I believe the results of these decisions have been terrible.

"A lot of people are being denied the opportunity engage in business, and the people lowest on the economic ladder often hurt the most."

Today, Siegan has in the works a book on the Supreme Court and its interpretation of the Constitution. Expect Siegan to pull no punches.

Siegan, a Distinguished Professor of Law and Director of Law and Economics Studies at USD, is author and/or editor of seven books and has written chapters in 11 others.

He is a former columnist for 23 newspapers in the Freedom Newspaper chain, has appeared on "The Advocates," a
nationally aired public television program and once debated economist John Kenneth Galbraith at a university forum.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman, during a USD function, referred to Siegan as a leading authority on land use.

Siegan is a 1949 University of Chicago Law School graduate, practicing law in Chicago until moving to La Jolla in 1973.


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Founded in 1954, the law school has in three decades emerged as one of California's major law centers. The school has more than 4,000 alumni, many prominent in law practice, business and government service.

Degrees offered include Juris Doctor, Master of Laws, Master of Comparative Law and Master of Laws in Taxation.

The bulk of the law school's enrollment, estimated at 1,100, is in the Juris Doctor program. They are taught by some 50 full-time and 65 part-time instructors. Attorney General Edwin Meese taught here.

The educational experience is enhanced by interdisciplinary course offerings, joint degree programs in business administration and international relations, an aggressive legal clinic, foreign study, specialized research centers and active placement services.

Sheldon Krantz, the law school dean since 1981, is known for his active role in the community. Six months after his arrival, he established the USD Law Center in conjunction with the San Diego County Bar Association.

The Center provides neighborhood mediation and other alternatives to litigation to the San Diego community.

Krantz, formerly director of Boston University's Center for Criminal Justice, is currently serving as chairman of the American Bar Association's committee on prison overcrowding.