



DETROIT MERCY LAW

EDUCATING THE COMPLETE LAWYER

McElroy Lecture on
Law & Religion

**THE IRONIES OF
RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES
LITIGATION**

Professor Cathleen Kaveny of
Boston College Law School

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

5:00 PM (EST)

Hosted Via Zoom

About the Event

The McElroy Lecture on Law and Religion provides a forum for prominent thinkers to address fundamental issues of law and religion. This year's lecture, titled "The Ironies of Religious Liberties Litigation," will be presented by Professor Cathleen Kaveny of Boston College Law School. Kaveny will examine the legal victories of religious believers and how they are premised on our own rights instead of what we owe others with different beliefs.

Biography

Professor Cathleen Kaveny is a scholar who focuses on the relationship of law, religion, and morality. Kaveny serves as the Darald and Juliet Libby Professor at Boston College, a position that includes appointments in both the department of theology and the law school; she is the first faculty member to hold this joint appointment. Kaveny is a member of the Massachusetts Bar, having clerked for the Honorable John T. Noonan Jr. of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and worked as an associate at the Boston branch of the law firm Ropes and Gray. She was the 2018-2019 Cary and Ann Maguire Chair of Ethics and American History at the Kluge Center for the Library of Congress. She has published four books and over a hundred articles and essays in journals and books, specializing in law, ethics, and medical ethics.

About the Lecture

Objecting to practices such as abortion, contraception, and same sex marriage, some religious believers have claimed that the First Amendment's guarantee of religious liberty should insulate them not only from direct involvement from such activities, but also from more remote connection and complicity. And from a legal point of view, their claims have been quite successful. But what have they lost in their quest for legal victory? In this lecture, Kaveny will argue that the lawyers for the plaintiffs have unfortunately advanced a way of viewing human beings and human society that has been heavily and persuasively critiqued by Christian philosophers and theologians over the past thirty years. Is there a way forward now that the legal questions are settled? Kaveny suggests that religious communities ought to reframe the inquiry. Rather than asking, "what are our rights?" we should instead focus on the question: "What do we owe our friends, neighbors, customers, and employees who believe differently than we do?"