

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Stella Frances

## **Civil rights lawyer Sherrilyn Ifill reimagines democracy in talk for UCSB Arts & Lectures**

What will it take to strengthen democracy in a time of division?

Sherrilyn Ifill, a civil rights lawyer, Howard Law School professor and former president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, has dedicated her career to answering that question — not in theory but through action. As one of the nation’s foremost legal minds, Ifill has devoted decades to protecting voting rights, advancing equal justice and envisioning a more inclusive American democracy.

Drawing on her extensive experience and steadfast commitment to truth and equity, Ifill will speak at Campbell Hall on Thursday, Nov. 6 at 7:30 p.m., as part of UCSB Arts & Lectures Justice for All initiative. Her talk, “Reimagining a New American Democracy,” will explore themes including the 14th Amendment, the power of civic participation and the essential role of higher education in shaping engaged citizens.

Earlier that day, Ifill will meet with UCSB students in the English course “Introduction to Legal Humanities” for a Q&A moderated by professors Jeannine Marie DeLombard (English) and Kathleen M. Moore (Religious Studies). The discussion, scheduled for 2-3:15 p.m. in 1920 Buchanan, offers students a rare opportunity to engage directly with an influential voice in contemporary American public life.

As president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund from 2013 to 2022, Ifill guided the organization through a renewed national reckoning on race. Under her leadership, the LDF secured major victories in voting rights, police reform and educational equity. Her public commentary and advocacy have reshaped how Americans think about democracy. Ifill often invokes her personal mantra to “leave no power on the table” as a call to action that civic power resides in individuals, communities, voters and classrooms.

In her talks, Ifill challenges audiences to imagine and to build a democracy that fulfills its founding ideals, here and now. Arts & Lectures’ Justice For All programming initiative amplifies voices advancing equity, justice and social transformation, such as Ifill’s.

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.