

Kenneth Townsend
Wake Forest University
School of Law and Program for Leadership and Character
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wake Forest University • Winston-Salem, NC • 2019–present

Executive Director of Leadership and Character in the Professional Schools (effective July 1, 2023)

Director of Leadership and Character in the Professional Schools (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2023)

- Established the Program's presence in Wake Forest's professional schools by working with key university leaders to identify needs, clarify priorities, and to secure necessary financial support.
- Cultivate and manage relationships with external stakeholders to ensure support for the Program, including by securing grants and gifts to support staff, programs, and student scholarships. Have served as PI, co-PI, and/or point of contact for \$90+ million in support.
- Hired and currently manage the 15-person team in the professional schools that is tasked with promoting character-based leadership through curricular development, student programming, research and assessment, and external engagement with leaders in the professions.
- Oversee an annual budget of approximately \$2.2m.
- Report to the President of the University.

University Professor (effective July 1, 2025)

Teaching Professor of Law (effective July 1, 2023)

Scholar-in-Residence in the School of Law (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2023)

- Design and teach 1-2 courses per semester related to ethics and leadership, primarily focused in the School of Law.
- Produce legal scholarship in the fields of leadership, legal ethics and professional responsibility, constitutional law, and legal and political theory.
- Serve on various faculty and university committees, advise student organization efforts, and participate in the life of the School of Law as a member of the residential faculty.

Kirby Foundation Campus Debate Faculty Fellow (effective September 1, 2025)

- Collaborate with students and leaders across campus in partnership with the College Debates and Discourse Alliance to organize and host debates that promote civil discourse.

Presidential Higher Education Fellow (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025)

- Worked with the President and her staff on special projects.

Millsaps College • Jackson, MS • 2012–2019

Founding Executive Director of the Institute for Civic & Professional Engagement (April 2016–June 2019)

- Oversaw the Office of Continuing Education, the Center for Career Education, the Center for Ministry, church relations, service learning, vocational discernment, national fellowships, and various other engagement initiatives and programs.
- Supervised a team of 13 people and managed an annual budget of \$1.1m.

Special Assistant to the President (2012–2019)

- Served on the College’s Cabinet and Executive Staff leadership team.
- Played a leading role in College-wide initiatives such as implementing the strategic plan and balancing the budget.
- Assisted the President with special projects and led various Cabinet-level searches.
- Represented the President’s Office and the College in the community.
- Acted as a liaison with the Board of Trustees and re-designed the trustee orientation process.
- Provided legal counsel on a range of issues and liaised with the College’s outside counsel on major matters.

Assistant Professor of Political Science (non-tenure-track) (2012–2019)

- Designed and taught one course per semester, focusing on constitutional law, civil rights and liberties, legal and political theory, and the U.S. judiciary.

Interim Director of Marketing & Communications (2013)

- Managed the Marketing & Communications staff.
- Oversaw all official College communication, including the monthly e-news Bulletin and the Millsaps Magazine.

Director of National Fellowships (2013–2019)

- Directed the national fellowships program and enhanced support systems for fellowship applicants. In addition to success with the Truman, Goldwater, and Fulbright Scholarships, Millsaps was the only private liberal arts college in the nation to produce a 2018 Rhodes Scholar and was one of only 12 colleges in the U.S. to produce two or more Rhodes Scholars from 2016-18.

Yale University • New Haven, CT • 2008–2012

Yale College Teaching Fellow (Spring 2012)

- Designed and taught undergraduate seminar: *Religion and the U.S. Constitution in Theoretical Context*.

Residential Graduate Affiliate, Saybrook College (2008-2012)

- Advised national fellowship applicants, including several Truman, Rhodes, and Marshall winners.
- Organized weekly presentations in which Yale undergraduates presented senior theses.

University of Mississippi • 2006–2008

Barksdale Political Science Teaching Fellow in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College
Instructor of Public Policy Leadership in the Lott Leadership Institute

- Served as one of two faculty members involved in designing and launching the academic major in Public Policy Leadership.
- Taught 2-3 courses related to ethics, politics, and public policy per semester in the Honors College and Leadership Institute.
- Mentored honors students and worked with the Fellowships Office, during which time I closely advised three successful Truman Scholars, a Rhodes Scholar, and Mitchell Scholar.
- Design, led, and taught three exchange courses between the University of Mississippi and the Nelson Mandela University in South Africa. Courses focused on ethical leadership and the history of racial reconciliation in the American South and South Africa.

Nelson Mandela University • Port Elizabeth, South Africa • summer 2009

Visiting Lecturer

- Prepared and delivered a series of lectures on legal and political theory, ethical leadership, and race in America.

Arnold & Porter LLP • Washington, DC • May–July 2011

Summer Associate with focus on environmental litigation

Becket Fund for Religious Liberty • Washington, DC • July–August 2011

Legal Intern focusing on religious liberty litigation before U.S. Courts of Appeals and U.S. Supreme Court

Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP • Jackson, MS • summer 2010

Summer Associate in the commercial defense litigation practice group

University of Oxford • Oxford, UK • 2004–2006

Head Coach, Oxford University Women's Basketball (2004-2006)

- Served as head coach of the university's women's basketball team for two seasons, including an undefeated regular season in 2005-2006.

Junior Dean, Trinity College (2005–2006)

- Enforced College policies to ensure a safe, quiet, and healthy environment for undergraduates of Trinity College.

EDUCATION

J.D., Yale Law School, New Haven, CT, 2012

- Yale Law and Policy Review, editor
- Debating Law & Religion Series, co-founder

M.A.R., Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT., 2012

- Marquand Scholar: full tuition scholarship with stipend
- Seminararian, Episcopal Church at Yale

M.Phil. Politics: Political Theory, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, 2006

- Rhodes Scholar
- Varsity Basketball

B.A. (English and Political Science), Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, 2004

- Harry S. Truman Scholar for Leadership and Public Service
- Founders Medal for highest GPA among graduates
- Phi Beta Kappa

SCHOLARSHIP

Law Journal Articles

- *Leadership and Character in the Law*, JOURNAL OF LEGAL EDUCATION (forthcoming 2026)
- *Pro Humanitate: Developing Leaders of Character in the Law*, 36 ST. THOMAS L.J. 847 (2024)
- *Purpose, Practical Wisdom, and the Formation of Trustworthy Lawyers*, 75 MERCER L. REV. 1399 (2024)
- *The Necessity of Hope in Legal Education: Character Development in Pluralist Contexts*, 13 J. OF CHRISTIAN LEGAL THOUGHT 124 (2023)
- *Forming Good Lawyers*, 58 WAKE FOREST L. REV. 981 (2023)
- *Preconditions of Leadership in Law*, 56 WAKE FOREST L. REV. 859 (2021)
- *Why Liberalism Persists: The Neglected Life of Law in the Story of Liberalism's Decline*, 94 ST. JOHN'S L. REV. 457 (2020)
- *A Common Enterprise: Law and The Connection Between Civil and Heavenly Realms in The Writings of John Calvin*, 4 CONCORDIA L. 36 (2019)
- *Education and the Constitution: Three Threats to Public Schools and the Theories that Inspire Them*, 85 MISS L.J. 327 (2016)

Other Publications and Scholarship (selected)

- *The Evolution of Character Education in Medicine* (co-authored with Julie K. Silver et. al., MEDICAL EDUCATION ONLINE (2025))

- *Wake Forest University Program for Leadership and Character: A Case Study* (co-authored with Michael Lamb), *MULTIDISCIPLINARY HANDBOOK OF CHARACTER VIRTUE DEVELOPMENT*, Michael D. Matthews and Richard M. Lerner, eds. (Routledge Press (2024)
- *Shifting Alliances and the Lost Consensus: The Religious Freedom Restoration Act at Thirty*, CANOPY FORUM ON THE INTERACTIONS OF LAW AND RELIGION AT EMORY LAW SCHOOL (2023)
- *Pro Humanitate and the Formation of Lawyers*, *THE JURIST* (2022)
- *Ethics and Professional Responsibility: What Lawyers Should Know and Trauma-Informed Lawyering as a Legal Competency*, *TRAUMA-INFORMED LAW: A PRIMER FOR LAWYERS IN PRACTICE* (ABA Publishing, 2022)
- *Religious Liberty and Social Equality in the Aftermath of* *Fulton v. Philadelphia*, CANOPY FORUM ON THE INTERACTIONS OF LAW AND RELIGION AT EMORY LAW SCHOOL (2021)
- *Leadership and Character in the Law*, *THE JURIST* (2020)

Works in Progress (selected)

- *LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER IN THE LAW*, West Academic Press (co-authored with Christine Coughlin, under contract; forthcoming 2026)
- *CHARACTER AND THE PROFESSIONS* edited volume (co-edited with Michael Lamb)

SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

- “Faith, Morality, and Professional Ethics,” Yale University School of Divinity (November 2025)
- Presenter and faculty organizer at the Wake Forest Journal of Law and Policy Symposium “Principles in Practice: Integrity and the Rule of Law in Uncertain Times” (November 2025).
- Character and Ethics for Commission Staff Attorneys” at the National Council of Regulatory Attorneys annual meeting Raleigh, NC (May 2025)
- “Advancing Lawyer Leadership: Why Scholarship Matters” Association of American Law Schools webinar (May 2025)
- Lead organizer and presenter at the “Leadership and Character in the Law” conference, Winston-Salem, NC (March 2025)
- “Developing Courageous Leaders: Trailblazing and Diverse Approaches to Leadership Education for Law Students” Association of American Law Schools annual meeting, San Francisco, CA (January 2025)
- “Interview with Jesmyn Ward,” keynote kick-off to the Educating Character Across Differences conference, Winston-Salem, NC (December 2024)
- “Leadership Training and Character Development to Equip Graduates for Ethical Leadership and Service” at the Baylor University conference Renewing and Reimagining Institutions for the Common Good, Waco, TX (October 2024)
- “Human Leadership in an AI World,” Wake 360, School of Professional Studies, Charlotte, NC (October 2024)

- “General Counsel Roundtable: Legal Ethics,” presentation to Epstein Becker Green LLP, Charlotte, NC. (May 2024)
- “The Role of Purpose in Professional Identity,” Mercer Law Review Symposium, Macon, GA. (March 2024)
- “Forming Good Lawyers,” presentation to the American Academy of Trial Lawyers, Phoenix, AZ (March 2024)
- “Legal Ethics Update,” Continuing Legal Education presentation to Kilpatrick LLP, Winston-Salem, NC. (February 2024)
- “Understanding Professional Identity Formation and Integrating Professional Identity Formation into the Required Curriculum,” Association of American Law Schools annual meeting, Washington, D.C. (January 2024)
- “Integrating Leadership and Character in the University,” Coalition for Transformational Education, Chicago, IL (October 2023)
- “Shifting Alliances and the Lost Consensus: The Religious Freedom Restoration Act at Thirty,” Canopy Forum on Law and Religion at Emory, fall symposium (October 2023)
- “How to Cultivate Character in Professional Education,” Project on the Good Surgeon Conference, Duke University (May 2023)
- “Pro Humanitate: Developing Leaders of Character in the Law,” University of St. Thomas School of Law, Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions (April 2023)
- Faculty organizer, sponsor, and moderator for “Leading Change in the Legal Profession,” Wake Forest Law Review Symposium (February 2023)
- “Radical Collaboration in the Professions,” moderator for Bryan Stevenson student event at Wake Forest (February 2023)
- “Preconditions of Leadership in Law,” Chief Justice Joseph Branch Inn of Court Keynote address, Winston-Salem, NC (February 2023)
- “Responsible Leadership in Law and Public Life,” hosted by the Global Leadership Initiative and the Oxford Character Project at the University of Oxford (May 2021)
- Lead organizer for “Character and the Professions” conference, hosted by the Wake Forest Program for Leadership and Character and the Oxford Character Project; conference included over 2300 registrants from 47 countries (March 2021)
- Co-faculty organizer for “Secondary Trauma and the Legal Profession,” Wake Forest Law Review Symposium; symposium included over 900 participants from around the nation. (February 2021)
- “Leadership and Character in the Law” Continuing Legal Education seminar (4-hours) delivered at Smith Anderson law firm in Raleigh, NC (December 2019)
- “Troubled Bridges: Ideological Explanations for Mississippi’s Infrastructure Crisis,” Mississippi Humanities Council (May 2018)
- “Renewal Strategies for Vocational Exploration Programs” at the 2017 Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education conference
- “Interpreting the 2016 Election,” Mississippi Humanities Council (November 2016)

- “Immigration and Integration in the United States and Germany” at the 2015 American Council on Germany’s Young Leaders Conference (July 2015)
- “Norms and Narratives: Law’s Latent Supports and the Challenge of International Human Rights” for the Mississippi College School of Law conference Law and Human Rights in a Post-Secular World (March 2014)
- “Liberty, Justice, and Equality: Rights in Conflict” for the 2013 Millsaps College Constitution Day Event
- “Race, Transformation, and the University of Mississippi” at the Diversification in Higher Education Conference at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (August 2009)
- “Health Care: Universal Right or Personal Responsibility?” at the 2007 University of Mississippi Lott Institute Leadership Conference
- “Negative Liberty and the PATRIOT Act” for 2007 University of Mississippi Law School Constitution Day Panel: “The Constitution and National Security”

VOLUNTEERING AND PUBLIC SERVICE (SELECTED)

- Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Section on Leadership; member of Executive Committee and Secretary-elect (2024-present)
- American Bar Association (ABA) National Ethics Advisory Board member (2025-present)
- Youth baseball coach, Winston-Salem National Little League and Pfafftown Raiders travel club (2022-present)
- Youth basketball coach, YMCA of Winston-Salem (2020-present)
- Mississippi Humanities Council Grants Committee member (2018–2019)
- Named one of Jackson’s top 10 emerging lawyers serving the community by Portico magazine (January 2018)
- William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation: volunteer consultant and pro bono advisor (2017–2019)
- Pro bono advisor for the Planning and Development Department of the City of Jackson (2017–2019)
- Frequent political and legal analyst for Jackson’s ABC, NBC, FOX television networks, Clarion Ledger newspaper, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, and, occasionally, for National Public Radio (2013–2019)
- Planned and managed the 2015 annual conference of the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities “Civic Education: Partnerships and Influence in Higher Education.” Conference included 300 participants from around the state. (2015)
- Leadership Greater Jackson: graduate, pro bono advisor, and member of the board of directors (2012–2019)
- Co-founded and organized the Debating Law & Religion Series at Yale (2009–2012)
- Created and Convened the Law & Religion reading group at Yale (2009)
- “Faith and Arms in a Democratic Society: A Working Conference on Religion and the Military,” student organizer (2009)

BAR ADMISSION

Mississippi (2012)

References

Available upon request