

# Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice Ruth Chance Lecture Series

Presents:

## Philadelphia Freedom: Memoir of a Civil Rights Lawyer

March 9, 2009

Boalt - 140

12:45 - 1:45 p.m.

**David Kairys** is a former civil rights lawyer who in the 1960s and 1970s gained renown for his creative, ingenious, and ultimately successful litigation of cases that others had dismissed as lost causes.

His memoir, *Philadelphia Freedom: Memoir of a Civil Rights Lawyer*, is the subject of his Ruth Chance Lecture.

*Philadelphia Freedom* is the story of Kairys' life as a civil rights lawyer, beginning just after graduation from Columbia University's law school, and continuing through starting and running his own successful, Philadelphia civil rights law firm.

Mr. Kairys was responsible for stopping police sweeps of minority neighborhoods in Philadelphia. He won the leading race discrimination and harassment case against the FBI, challenged the CIA's LSD drugging of an unwitting scientist, represented Dr. Spock in a free speech case before the United States Supreme Court, and was the lead lawyer in the most significant acquittal of Vietnam-era, antiwar activists.

In 1996, he conceived the lawsuits prosecuted by municipalities against handgun manufacturers, and his public-nuisance theory has become the major basis for a range of challenges to corporate practices that endanger public health or safety.

He co-authored the bestselling progressive critique of the law, *The Politics of Law*, and authored *With Liberty and Justice for Some*, and over 35 articles and book chapters.

His recent articles focus on the history of civil rights, particularly the Supreme Court's decisions on racial issues, the meaning of the rule of law, and a range of issues related to handgun violence.

He is currently a Professor of Law at Temple University Beasley School of Law.

