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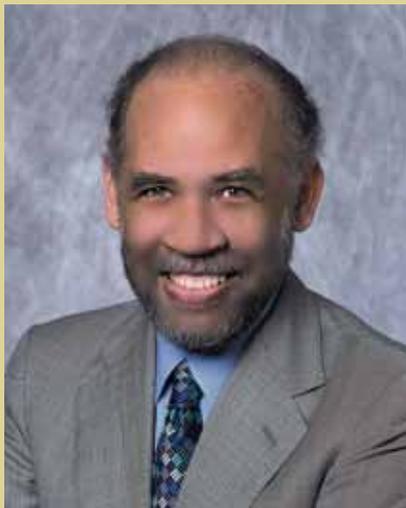
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NAACP counsel will deliver Mitchell Lecture



In a year that saw the inauguration of America's first black president, the fall Mitchell Lecture will feature a strong voice for African-American progress.

John Payton is president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the nation's oldest human rights law firm. He will speak at 2 p.m., **Thursday, Oct. 22** at UB Law School as part of a two-day appearance that also includes class visits and a dinner with faculty members. Payton was invited by Dean Makau Mutua, with whom he served as an election observer in South Africa in 1994.

"Race, Law and Politics in America" is the broad theme of his address, Payton said, starting with a review of what happened in the United States during the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. "We had 10 years or less of a pretty open democracy, certainly for men," Payton said. "Black people partici-

parted and were elected to Congress, but with the end of Reconstruction, all black people were disenfranchised. That was dramatic. It happened after a contested presidential election and was unbelievably effective. It was not seen as a national problem." The lesson of that backsliding era, he said, is that "sometimes we act as though progress is in one direction and a straight line, that it never goes backward. But things don't always go in just one direction."

With that historical perspective, Payton said, he'll address the question of whether we have become a "post-racial" society – whether "we are past all of these issues that have plagued us for 200-plus years?"

"Here we are now," he said, "we have made enormous progress again, and it seems far more lasting and has embedded itself in our national psyche. But there are still serious problems we have to deal with. We just went through a Supreme Court battle over the most important civil rights statute we have, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. That was our case, and it was decided in June.

"If we were trying to figure out whether or not we were actually at a point of progress and these issues of race are really behind us – if we were in France, say, and wanted to figure out the same question and the answer to it – we'd say, how are the racial minorities doing in educational achievement? How are they doing with respect to the criminal justice system? How are they doing in terms of economic equity, political participation, health care and housing?"

On all of those measures, he said, African-Americans as a group still struggle to achieve equality – something even a black president cannot make up for. "Obama's victory didn't change any of those markers," Payton said. "But his election presents an opportunity to address some of these remaining problems. He is as aware of these problems as anybody in our national leadership has ever been, and is as committed to resolving them as anyone has ever been."

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Jaeckle Award to be presented at NYC Alumni Luncheon



The New York City Chapter of the UB Law Alumni Association will host the annual NYC Alumni Luncheon at noon on **Friday, Jan. 29**, at the Union

League Club, 38 E. 37th St. at the corner of Park Avenue. For the first time, the Edwin F. Jaeckle Award — the highest honor UB Law School and the Law Alumni Association can bestow — will be presented in New York City at the luncheon. **Kenneth B. Forrest '76**, a partner in the New York City law firm Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, and former chair of the Dean's Advisory Council, will receive the award. For details, e-mail Ilene Fleischmann at fleisch@buffalo.edu.

UB Law to visit Kenyan Embassy



The D.C. Chapter of the UB Law Alumni Association will host a cocktail reception at the Kenyan Embassy on **Thursday, Nov. 19**. The embassy is at 2249 R Street N.W.

in Washington. The event will be held at 6 p.m. The Kenyan ambassador to the United States, **His Excellency Peter N.R.O. Ogego**, will be present to greet guests. Dean Makau W. Mutua will provide an update on the state of the Law School. Alumni and students are invited to attend. For details, e-mail Lisa Mueller at lmuller@buffalo.edu.