In the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, legislation was born, rules of legal ethics were shaped, and presidential powers and immunities were altered forever. For the legal community, Watergate is a pivotal marker in the development of modern law. At Chapman, we strive to equip our students with the necessary tools to provide accurate and ethical service to clients and to society. The rule of law is a critical thread that runs through the training of all our future lawyers.

Dean Campbell Reflects on Watergate and the Rule of Law

“For my generation of lawyers and legal scholars, Watergate was the defining event. The Senate hearings were ongoing as we entered law school; shortly thereafter came the resignations of the attorney general and deputy attorney general, the firing of the Watergate special prosecutor (dubbed “The Saturday Night Massacre”), the conviction of members of the cabinet, and the only Presidential resignation in American history. All these developments created ripples that continue to be felt to this day.

The fundamental lessons that no one is above the law, and that ours is a government of separated powers, were re-learned in the Watergate era and reinforced in modern contexts of impeachment, Congressional approval for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the prosecution of wars without Congressional approval in Yugoslavia and Libya. The 40th anniversary of the beginning of all these developments is an appropriate occasion to reflect on what we have learned, and still have to learn, about the extent of Presidential authority, and separation of powers.”

Live Symposium Webcast at www.chapman.edu/law