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Civil rights crusader Constance Rice to speak April 20

By [Jennifer McNulty](#)

Over the years, civil rights attorney Connie Rice has tackled incendiary social problems, from urban police misconduct to inequitable patterns of school construction in Los Angeles.

Along the way, she has won widespread acclaim for her work expanding opportunity and advancing multiracial democracy.

On April 20, Rice will deliver a free public lecture titled "Pushing for Justice, Collaborating for Change: Educational Equity and the Future of California."

The event is the seventh annual spring lecture sponsored by the UCSC Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community. It will take place from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Holy Cross Hall, 170 High Street, in Santa Cruz.

Named one of California's top 10 most influential lawyers, Rice is codirector of the Advancement Project in Los Angeles, which promotes opportunity and inclusion by combining litigation with consensus-based problem solving and intergroup collaboration.

A graduate of Harvard University, Rice earned her law degree from New York University School of Law. As a litigator with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Los Angeles, Rice filed a landmark case on behalf of low-income bus riders that resulted in a mandate that more than \$1 billion be spent to improve the bus system. In 1999, she launched a coalition lawsuit that won \$750 million for new school construction in Los Angeles--money previously slated for less crowded, more affluent suburban school districts. Rice has led multiracial coalitions of lawyers and clients to win more than \$4 billion worth of relief and damages.



Connie Rice has been named one of California's most influential lawyers.

The *Los Angeles Times* designated her one of 24 leaders considered "the most experienced, civic-minded and thoughtful people on the subject of Los Angeles."

Rice is frequently interviewed by local and national media, having appeared on *60 Minutes*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, *Nightline*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and dozens of cable, network, web, and radio programs.

"Connie Rice has both challenged the system and worked within it to make major changes in policies and practices," said Manuel Pastor, codirector of CJTC and a professor of Latin American and Latino studies at UCSC. "She is at the forefront of efforts to build new and more effective coalitions for justice. She is truly a role model for social activism in the 21st century."