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SYMPOSIUM

Honorable Mario G. Olmos Law and Cultural Diversity Memorial Lecture

Mary Louise Frampton†

This annual lecture honors the Honorable Mario G. Olmos ‘71, who dedicated his life to promoting equality and justice for people of diverse national, economic, racial, and cultural origins. Born on July 24, 1946, in Nogales, Arizona, Judge Olmos graduated from Reedley Junior College and UC Berkeley where he was named to Phi Beta Kappa. At Boalt Hall he was an Ayer fellow and a Regents Scholar. Although he was nominated to the California Law Review on the basis of his grades, he chose instead to devote his energies to working in the community at La Raza Centro Legal and to recruiting students of color to Boalt.

Upon graduation from Boalt, Mario became an attorney for California Rural Legal Services in Madera, where he provided legal assistance to farmworkers and others unable to afford needed services. Thereafter he worked at a rural economic development organization in Fresno, engaged in the private practice of law, and became a justice court judge in Parlier and Selma, small rural communities in Fresno County. In December 1982, he was appointed to the Fresno County Superior Court, to which he was elected presiding judge for three consecutive years. He also served with distinction on the California Judicial Council.

During the 1980s, Judge Olmos became known as a leader who sought to bridge the gap between cultures and races, helping to educate the community about the needs of the disadvantaged. In 1990 he died at the age of 43 in a tragic automobile accident. After his death, Judge Olmos’ widow, Mary Louise Frampton, worked with family members, friends, and professional associates to establish a trust fund to support a permanent lecture series at Boalt Hall to perpetuate the Judge’s abiding interest and faith in the development of law promoting equality and justice for all people. Past Olmos lecturers include the Honorable Cruz Reynoso,

† Lecturer in Residence and Director of the Center for Social Justice at the University of California, Berkeley (Boalt Hall).
Professor Derrick Bell, the Honorable Thelton Henderson, Angela Oh, the Honorable Richard Paez, Joaquin Avila, the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor, and Professor Frank Valdez.