

**Trump-Appointed Judge Demands Stanford's Apology Over Speech Disruption Controversy**



Stanford Law School in California has come under fire after dozens of student protesters disrupted a speech by U.S. Circuit Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan on Thursday. The Stanford chapter of the conservative Federalist Society hosted the event. It was titled "The Fifth Circuit in Conversation with the Supreme Court: Covid, Guns, and Twitter," referencing some of Duncan's court's most significant cases. However, Duncan claims that he did not get far into his planned remarks before he was mocked by some of the estimated 100 protesters who shouted at him and carried "vulgar" signs, in some cases critical of him.

Duncan, a member of the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and a Trump appointee, compared the protest to incidents at other law schools, including Yale and Georgetown, where student-led protests of conservative speakers prompted discussion about whether law schools are living up to their ideals as bastions of open debate and free speech.

A coalition of students spearheaded by OutLaw, a campus LGBTQ group, was upset that Duncan was invited to speak, saying he has taken positions that threatened the rights of LGBTQ people, immigrants, Black voters, women, and others, according to a campus-wide email from a Stanford official that Reuters has reviewed.

During the event, a law school administrator, Tirien Steinbach, the law school's associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, addressed Duncan and the crowd before the judge spoke. In a video of the event posted online by the conservative publication National Review, Steinbach told Duncan: "For many people at the law school who work here, who study here, and who live here, your advocacy—your opinions from the bench—land as absolute disenfranchisement of their rights." Duncan said he felt attacked by Steinbach's comments and accused her of working with students on the protest.

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In response to the incident, Stanford Law dean Jenny Martinez told students that preventing a speaker from presenting through heckling or other means violates the school's policies. "However well-intentioned, attempts at managing the room in this instance went awry," she wrote. "The way this event unfolded was not aligned with our institutional commitment to freedom of speech."

Duncan, in an interview, said he was "offended" and "disturbed" by the "deeply uncivil behavior" of the students who derailed the speech he was set to deliver, as well as that of a law school administrator who he says "attacked" him in her introductory remarks. He added that he would appreciate an apology from Stanford. "It would be nice if they reached out to me and said, 'Gee, we're sorry,'" he said of Stanford.

Duncan also criticized the behavior of the student protesters, calling them "idiots" and "hypocrites and bullies." He warned that their behavior would not work in a courtroom and compared their actions to cancel culture. "Maybe that's where we are going as a society, but that doesn't work in my courtroom," he said.

This incident has once again raised the issue of free speech on college campuses, particularly regarding conservative speakers. Many conservatives have argued that universities are not living up to their ideals as bastions of open debate and free speech and are increasingly censoring conservative voices. However, others argue that inviting speakers with controversial views can be harmful and create a hostile environment for marginalized groups.

Overall, the incident at Stanford Law School has sparked a larger conversation about free speech, cancel culture and the role of universities in fostering open debate and intellectual diversity. While many believe that universities should be spaces where all views are welcome and debated openly, others argue that universities have a responsibility to protect marginalized groups and ensure