

Wisconsin Idea Spotlight: The Fight for Free Speech

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MADISON — Free speech has grabbed headlines and divided a nation. From the U.S. Supreme Court to corporate America, free-speech rights are being questioned and reexamined. The Wisconsin Alumni Association will host a virtual event to discuss these issues, as part of the Wisconsin Idea Spotlight series.

This virtual event will feature UW alumnus, author, teacher, and assistant chief counsel for ABC News Ian Rosenberg and UW professor emeritus Donald Downs as they discuss how contemporary free speech questions facing our country and our campuses are impacted by a selection of key Supreme Court decisions featured in Rosenberg's book, [The Fight for Free Speech](#) (NYU Press, 2021). Livestream participants can gain a better understanding of where free speech protections originated and how they could develop in the future, as well as ask their own questions during a live Q & A session.

This livestream will be moderated by Kathleen Bartzen Culver, Associate Professor and James E. Burgess Chair in Journalism Ethics at UW-Madison.

When: Thursday, March 4, at 1 p.m. CST

Where: uwalumni.com/event/fight-for-free-speech

Cost: Free to attend; however, [registration is required](#) to receive the program link.

Presented in partnership with the Wisconsin Union.

About the speakers

Ian Rosenberg is author of [The Fight for Free Speech: Ten Cases That Define Our](#)

[*First Amendment Freedoms*](#), published in February 2021 and the assistant chief counsel for ABC, Inc. Since 2003, he has provided ABC News clients with pre-broadcast counsel on newsgathering, libel, intellectual property, and FCC regulatory issues. In addition, Rosenberg teaches media law at Brooklyn College. He started his legal career as a clerk in the Eastern District of New York and as a litigation associate at Cahill Gordon & Reindel. He is also an Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker. Rosenberg graduated with distinction from the UW and magna cum laude from Cornell Law School.

Donald Downs is the Alexander Meiklejohn Professor of Political Science Emeritus, Glenn B. and Cleone Orr Hawkins Professor of Political Science Emeritus and affiliate professor emeritus of law and journalism at UW-Madison. He is also the director and cofounder of the UW's Wisconsin Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy, which is dedicated to instilling critical knowledge and understanding of liberal democracies' core principles, institutions, and processes, and to the advancement of intellectual diversity on campus. Downs also served as the director of the UW's Legal Studies Program and its Center for the Study of Law, Society, and Justice. He was the president, and former secretary, of the Committee for Academic Freedom and Rights, a leading independent, nonpartisan faculty group. Since retiring, Downs has been the lead faculty adviser to the Free Speech and Open Inquiry Project of the Institute for Humane Studies in Washington, DC. His latest book is [*Free Speech and Liberal Education* \(Cato Institute, 2020\)](#).