



DISABILITY AND ETHICS

**31st Annual Thomas A. Pitts
Memorial Lectureship in Medical Ethics**

April 11, 2025



31st Annual Thomas A. Pitts Memorial Lectureship in Medical Ethics

Presented by the: Medical University of South Carolina Institute of Human Values in Health Care,
Office of Humanities, Office of Continuing Education, College of Medicine
Supported by the MUSC Foundation

The Thomas A. Pitts Memorial Lectureship is an annual lectureship in medical ethics. This year's topic is Disability and Ethics. We are bringing together a diverse group of scholars from multiple disciplines to address some of the most important ethical issues related to disability.

Thomas Antley Pitts, II, M.D. (1893-1991) served as a member of the Board of the Medical University of South Carolina for thirty-six years and served as its chairman for twenty-five of those years. He left a substantial bequest to the Medical University of South Carolina to endow "a series of lectures on medical ethics." The series has become known as the Pitts Memorial Lectureship, and has been held annually since 1993.



Thomas A. Pitts

PROGRAM VENUE:

In-person session will take place at Shawn Jacobs Children's Hospital, Room 7010, Charleston SC 29425 and is limited to 70 people. The Entire lectureship will also be available on-line.

PARKING:

Attendees may park in the **McClennan Banks Garage**
(21 McClennan Banks Drive, Charleston, SC, 29425)

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Registration: 10:00

Welcome: 10:15 Dr. Saj Joy, M.D., MBA, M.S., FAAPL,
CEO of MUSC Health, Charleston

SESSION I: PATIENT EXPERIENCE

MODERATOR: Caroline Delongchamps

10:20 Kristen Barner, M.Div; John Melville, M.D.

11:20 Q&A

11:35-12:30 Lunch

SESSION II: AUTONOMY, DEPENDENCE, AND DISABILITY

MODERATOR: Grant Goodrich, PhD

12:30 Laura Specker Sullivan, Ph.D. "Relational Autonomy and Disability"

1:00 Leigh Vaughan, M.D. "End of Life Conversations: Is Depression a Disability"

1:30 Q&A

SESSION III: PERSONHOOD AND DISORDERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

MODERATOR: Shelly Ozark, MD

1:45 Joseph Fins, M.D., D. Hum. Litt. (hc), M.A.C.P., F.R.C.P., "The Rights of
Individuals with Severe Brain Injury"

2:15 Eva Kittay, Ph.D. "Moral Personhood"

2:45 Q&A

3:00-3:15 Coffee Break

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SESSION IV: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND DISABILITY

MODERATOR: Ryan Boselowitz, MSW

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| 3:15 | Kevin Mintz, Ph.D. “Ethical Dilemmas in Emerging Research on Cerebral Palsy. Old wine in new bottles?” |
| 3:45 | Joseph Stramondo, Ph.D. “Disability, Identity, and Emerging Assistive Technology” |
| 4:15 | Q&A |
| 4:30 | Q&A for all speakers |
| 5:00 | Adjourn |

SPEAKERS

Kristen Barner, MDiv, is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. On January 9, 2017, she suffered a spinal stroke, leaving her partially paralyzed from chest to toes. She serves as a member of both the Adult Patient Family Advisory Council and the Family Faculty. One of her great joys is sharing her stories with members of the MUSC community. She was the keynote speaker at the White Coat Ceremony for MUSC's Dr. of Physical Therapy Class of 2026. Kristen is also a speaker at the College of Health Sciences at her alma mater, Mary Baldwin University. She contributes her writings to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, focusing on theodicy.

Joseph Fins, M.D., D. Hum. Litt. (hc), M.A.C.P., F.R.C.P. is *The E. William Davis, Jr. M.D. Professor of Medical Ethics* at Weill Cornell Medicine and the Solomon Center Distinguished Scholar in Medicine, Bioethics, and the Law and a Visiting Professor of Law at Yale Law School. The author of *Rights Come to Mind* (Cambridge University Press), he is a Member of the National Academy of Medicine, Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an *Academico de Honor* of the Spanish Royal National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Fins is currently writing a biography of the physician-humanist, Dr. Lewis Thomas and chairs the Hastings Center Board of Trustees.

Eva Kittay, Ph.D. is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Stony Brook University/SUNY; a Senior Fellow of the Stony Brook Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care and Bioethics, and an Affiliate of the Women's Studies Program. She was president of the Eastern American Philosophical Association from (2016-2017), is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEH Fellowship, and the APA and Phi Beta Kappa Lebowitz Prize. She was named Women Philosopher of the Year (2003-2004) by the Society for Women in Philosophy. Her published books include *Learning from My Daughter: Caring for Disabled Minds* (winner of the 2020 Prose Award in Philosophy); *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*; *Cognitive Disability and the Challenge to Moral Philosophy*; *Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*; *Theoretical Perspectives on Dependency and Women*; *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*; an edited collection *Frames, Fields and Contrasts*; and *Women and Moral Theory*. She has published over 85 articles and book chapters. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2024.

SPEAKERS

John Melville, M.D., is a child abuse pediatrician, and currently serves as the director of the South Carolina Child Advocacy Medical Response System. Dr. Melville attended medical school at the University of California at San Diego, a med/peds residency at the Akron General Medical Center and Akron Children's Hospital, and child abuse fellowship at the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio. Dr. Melville's research interests focus on the informatics applications in forensic medicine. A prolapsed umbilical cord and subsequent birth hypoxia 50 years ago inaugurated Dr. Melville's lifelong experience with cerebral palsy. Dr. Melville transitioned from exclusively disabled to "mainstream" education in the second grade and at a time when integrating disabled children into community schools was still quite new. Later Dr. Melville negotiated the somewhat nebulous technical standards process required to be admitted to medical school as a disabled applicant. Today, Dr. Melville is blessed to have found a niche in medicine, tailored to his interests and abilities – and he couldn't be happier.

Kevin Mintz, Ph.D., received his Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science at Stanford University in 2019 under the supervision of Debra Satz. He also holds an AB in Government from Harvard College, an MSc in Political Theory from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Doctorate of Human Sexuality from the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. Prior to returning to Stanford, Kevin was a Postdoctoral Fellow in The Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health. His research focuses on disability bioethics, research ethics, business ethics, and the degree to which genetics should be used to construct social or political identities. His work has appeared in a variety of academic journals and newspapers, including Pediatrics, The Hastings Center Report, and the Los Angeles Times.

Laura Specker Sullivan, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Fordham University and bioethics consultant at Montefiore Medical Center. Her research interests include autonomy, trust, and consent, the ethics of digital technology and neurotechnology, Buddhist and Japanese philosophy, and the ethicist's role in medicine, science, and technology. She has been funded by the NEH for her work on trust and the NSF for her work on ethics and neurotechnology. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii focusing on informed consent in Japan.

SPEAKERS

Joseph Stramondo, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Humanities, the Director of the Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs, and Chair of the Department of Classics and Humanities at San Diego State University. He was also the 2022-2023 Hubert Mader Visiting Professor in Bioethics at the Albert Gnaegi Center for Healthcare Ethics at Saint Louis University. His research is concerned with how bioethics can be reframed by centering the lived experiences of disability as a crucial source of moral knowledge that should guide clinical practice, biomedical research, and health policy. He has published on topics ranging from informed consent to reproductive ethics to pandemic triage protocols to assistive neurotechnology. His work appears in venues such as *The Hastings Center Report*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Ergo*, *Clinical Ethics*, *Utilitas*, *Social Theory and Practice*, *the Kennedy Institute for Ethics Journal*, *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, *the International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, *Social Philosophy Today*, and several scholarly book collections.

Leigh Vaughan, M.D., is an Internal Medicine physician who specializes in Palliative and Hospital Medicine. She has been in academic medicine and clinical practice for 25 years, first at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Institute and now as faculty at the Medical University in South Carolina, where she now works in the inpatient hospital setting. Her professional time is spent in the care of hospitalized patients and teaching medical students, residents and fellows. She has served as the Associate Program Director and Program Director for the Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship since 2015. Her research interests include the intersection between palliative care and ethics and health disparities at the end of life.

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CREDIT DESIGNATION:

The Medical University of South Carolina designates this live activity for a maximum of 6.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses: Most states accept CMEs that apply to a specific nursing specialty as nursing continuing education. Please check with your respective State Board of Nursing to ascertain the equivalent number of contact hours offered for 6.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™].

ACCREDITATION:

The Medical University of South Carolina is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for Physicians.

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