Madoff attorney Ira Sorkin visits Freeman

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Attorney Ira Sorkin (A&S ’65), best known for representing notorious Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff, took some time from his busy schedule to speak to Prof. Mike Hogg’s undergraduate business law class on Tuesday, Oct. 16.

Attorney Ira Sorkin (A&S ’65), left, best known for representing Bernie Madoff, spoke about his career and representing Madoff as a special guest lecturer in Prof. Mike Hogg’s business law class.

Sorkin attended Tulane on a track and field scholarship and majored in English, but it was a Newcomb College political science course on the Supreme Court that inspired him to pursue a legal career. After serving as a summer intern with U.S. Attorney’s office in Manhattan, Sorkin spent three years as a trial attorney with the Securities & Exchange Commission in New York and five years with the U.S. Attorney’s office in New York, serving as Assistant U.S. Attorney and Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, where he prosecuted federal violations from organized crime to securities fraud. Today, Sorkin is a member of Lowenstein Sandler, a New Jersey-based law firm, where he specializes in white collar defense.

As for representing clients such as Madoff, Sorkin told students that his role as a defense attorney isn’t to pass judgement, prove his client’s innocence or even to determine the truth. Rather, he said, it’s to uphold the Constitution by forcing the

U.S. government to prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Sorkin was on campus to speak as part of the John J. Witmeyer III Dean’s Colloquium series, which invites distinguished alumni of Newcomb-Tulane College back to campus to discuss their careers and professions. Sorkin's presentation took place on Tuesday, Oct. 16, in the Woldenberg Art Center’s Freeman Auditorium.