**COLLOQUIUM**

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

University of South Carolina

**"Sophisticated Robots": Balancing Liability, Regulation, and Innovation**

**Patrick Hubbard**

Date: **April 8, 2016**

Time: **1450-1605 (2:50-4:05pm)**

Place: **Swearingen 2A27**

# Abstract

Abstract: Our lives are being transformed by large, mobile, "sophisticated robots" with increasingly higher levels of autonomy, intelligence, and interconnectivity among themselves. For example, driverless automobiles are likely to become commercially available within a decade. Many people who suffer physical injuries from these robots will seek legal redress for their injury, and regulatory schemes are likely to impose requirements on the field to reduce the number and severity of injuries.

This talk addresses the issue of whether the current liability and regulatory systems provide a fair, efficient method for balancing the concern for physical safety against the need to incentivize the innovation that is necessary to develop the robots. The talk provides context for analysis by reviewing innovation and robots' increasing size, mobility, autonomy, intelligence, and interconnections in terms of safety - particularly in terms of physical interaction with humans - and by summarizing the current legal framework for addressing personal injuries in terms of doctrine, application, and underlying policies. This talk argues that the legal system's method of addressing physical injury from robotic machines that interact closely with humans provides an appropriate balance of innovation and liability for personal injury. It critiques claims that the system is flawed and needs fundamental change and concludes that the legal system will continue to fairly and efficiently foster the innovation of reasonably safe sophisticated robots.

Bio: Professor Hubbard has been a member of the University of South Carolina School of Law since 1973. He retired from full time teaching in 2015. He currently teaches Legal Theory and Land Use Planning. In recent years, he also taught Torts, Products Liability, Evidence, and Criminal Law. Before joining the faculty, Professor Hubbard was an associate at Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, and Alexander (New York City) and was a staff attorney with Community Legal Services Program (Austin, TX). He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Davidson College. He received a JD from New York University School of Law and a LLM from Yale Law School.

Professor Hubbard has written books on tort law and criminal law and has published dozens of articles and book chapters on criminal law, legal theory, torts, and land use planning. As a legal realist, he actively related his scholarship to the world outside the law school. For example, his interest in land use planning includes working on a drafting committee for recent amendments to the South Carolina zoning enabling act, serving as chair of the Columbia Planning Commission in the 1990s and as vice-chair of the Board of Zoning Appeals currently, and working with a taskforce revising the Columbia Zoning Code, and assisting neighborhood organizations in zoning matters.

Professor Hubbard has been a visiting professor of law at University of Southampton U.K., at University of Birmingham, U.K., and at Florida Coastal School of Law.

Professor Hubbard and his wife have been happily married since 1968. They have two sons, both of whom are married, and have five grandchildren.