Justice Albie Sachs
Constitutional Court of South Africa

Justice Albie Sachs is the first Richard & Ann Silver Pozen Visiting Professor in Human Rights. He will be on the University of Chicago’s campus for a two-day residency on January 26 and 27, 2009, as a preview of his return to teach in the College in Winter 2010. Justice Albie Sachs’ career in human rights activism started at the age of seventeen, when as a second year law student at the University of Cape Town, he took part in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. The bulk of his work at the Cape Bar involved defending people charged under racist statutes and repressive security laws. After going into exile in 1966, he spent eleven years in England and eleven years in Mozambique as law professor and legal researcher. In 1988 he was blown up by a bomb placed in his car in Maputo by South African security agents, losing an arm and the sight of an eye. During the 1980s working closely with Oliver Tambo, leader of the ANC in exile, he helped draft the organization’s Code of Conduct, as well as its statutes. In 1990 he returned home and as a member of the Constitutional Committee and the National Executive of the ANC took an active part in the negotiations which led to South Africa becoming a constitutional democracy. After the first democratic election in 1994 he was appointed by President Nelson Mandela to serve on the newly established Constitutional Court. In addition to his work on the Court, he has travelled to many countries sharing South African experience in healing divided societies. He has also been engaged in the sphere of art and architecture, and played an active role in the development of the Constitutional Court building and its art collection on the site of the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg.

4 pm on Monday, January 26, 2009
Swift Lecture Hall
1025 E. 58th Street