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About Lee J. Alston

Lee Alston served as Director of the Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University from 2014-2019. Prior to coming to IU, Alston was Professor of economics and environmental studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder (2002-2015); Associate and Full Professor of Economics and Political Science, University of Illinois (1988-2003); and Assistant and Associate Professor of Economics Williams College (1978-1989).

Alston's research interests over the years have focused on the important roles of institutions, beliefs and contracts in shaping economic and political outcomes in multiple domains. Issues examined include the governance and use of natural resources historically and today, including the impact of land titles in the Amazon; the growth of the U.S. welfare system in the U.S. from the late 19th century to the 1960s; the historical trajectory of Brazil from 1964 to 2016; a framework for understanding economic and political outcomes; and the logic of leadership and organizational hierarchies. The author or co-author of eight books and more than 80 scholarly articles. Alston has been a research associate at the National Bureau for Economic Research since 1995 and is a former president of the International Society for the New Institutional Economics (now SIOE), and the Economic History Association. He has held visiting positions at the Australia National University; University of California, Davis, Stockholm School of Economics; University of Sorbonne (Paris I), and Princeton University.