



THE
**NATIONAL BAR
ASSOCIATION**
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100 YEARS



35TH ANNUAL

Wiley A. Branton

Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium

Program Book

October 17 - 19, 2024

Washington, DC

Washington Marriott Georgetown

1221 22nd St NW, Washington, DC 20037



Wiley S. Adams

October 17, 2024

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Greetings!

Welcome to the 35th Annual Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium (the "Symposium") being held in our nation's capital. We are gathering in Washington D.C. for the Symposium for many reasons, including D.C.'s historical importance to our bar association, our deep roots in D.C. and the presence of our national headquarters here. It is the perfect place to have our first signature event of our Centennial bar year!

As the 82nd President of the National Bar Association ("NBA") it is my pleasure to both welcome you and thank you for attending the Symposium. The theme for this year's Symposium is "Advancing and Securing a Perfect Democracy—Past, Present and Future." Our program will be filled with experts dissecting the issues and hot topics of the day including Project 2025, artificial intelligence, economic equality, medical racism, diversity and the corporate board, the power of dissent, criminal justice internationally, in conflict zones and in the context of official presidential acts, and the quest to perfect human and civil rights under the law.

Wiley A. Branton was a civil rights leader in Arkansas who helped desegregate the University of Arkansas School of Law. He later filed suit against the Little Rock School Board (Cooper v. Aaron) for failing to properly integrate the public schools after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Cooper v. Aaron sent a clear message to segregated school districts nationwide that it would not tolerate attempts to evade or obstruct integration. His work to end legal segregation and inequality in Arkansas and across the nation was well known in his time. The Symposium is a testament to Wiley A. Branton's legacy of public service.

Many special thanks all our panelists, our sponsors (including LexisNexis, our Legal Technology and Rule of Law Partner), Symposium Chair, Past President Alfreda Robinson, and her team for planning an outstanding Symposium and returning the Symposium to its academic and educational roots. Special thanks as well to Past President Paulette Brown for planning a spectacular program at Howard University School of Law to open the Symposium Thursday evening.

Enjoy the Symposium!

Wiley S. Adams

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Antonio Lee
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Alfreda Robinson

Greetings From The Chair!

This year the National Bar Association proudly celebrates its Centennial Year!

I am extraordinarily honored to serve as the Chair of the 35th Annual Wiley A. Branton Symposium in Washington, D.C. on October 17-19, 2024, at the Washington Marriott Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

Our theme is “Advancing and Securing A Perfect Democracy: Past, Present, and Future.”

The Nation’s top leaders, lawyers, legal scholars, thought-leaders, civil rights advocates, and community activists will gather to discuss solutions to our Nation’s seemingly intractable problems. Speakers will address Project 2025 unflinchingly.

Given the NBA’s and collaborative partners’ efforts towards advancing democracy, we are honored that you join us for powerful and thoughtful presentations, engagements, insights, and discussions. Such will focus particularly on challenges designed to withdraw civil rights, reverse social progress, claw back economic improvement, abridge human rights, and stymie political advancement.

Speakers and panels will address:

**Artificial Intelligence, Diversity and Democracy,
International Criminal Justice,
Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Zones,
Criminal and Presidential Immunity Under the Color of Official Acts,
Genetic Justice: Henrietta Lacks Litigation Case Study,
Diversity and Corporate Boards: The Way Forward,
The Power of Dissent, The Future of Economic Equality,
U.S. Census and Project 2025 Potential Impact,
Project 2025 and Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education and
Anti-Discrimination Standards,
and Election Protection Training.**

Each speaker will bring their measured and excellent thoughts to the panel discussion. Moreover, we eagerly look forward to your participation, to augment our knowledge and collaborative efforts. History teaches us that there is a grave imperative to convene, speak truth to power, and act now. Ultimately, we hope to bury our papers in a Time Capsule.

In sum, we are delighted that you join us. If you have any questions or needs, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Alfreda Robinson

Chair

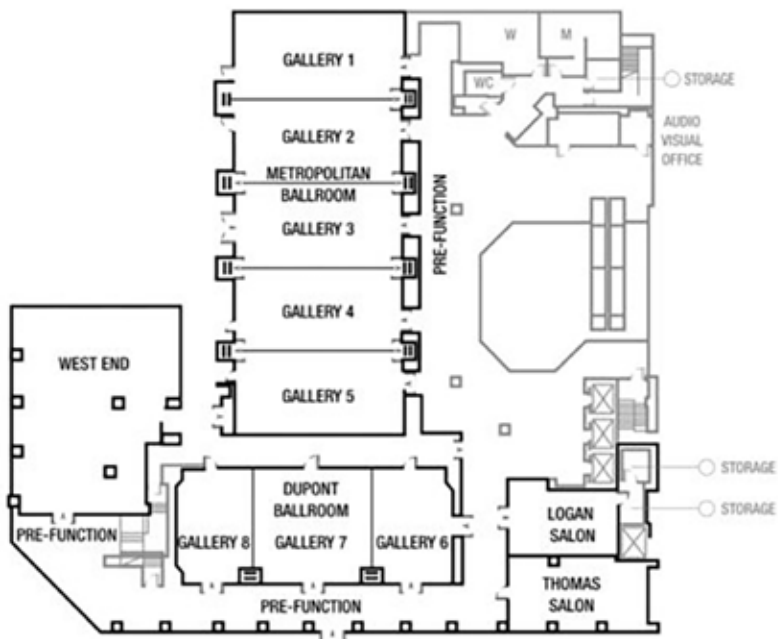
Past President National Bar Association (2019-2020)

WASHINGTON MARRIOTT GEORGETOWN HOTEL FLOOR PLAN

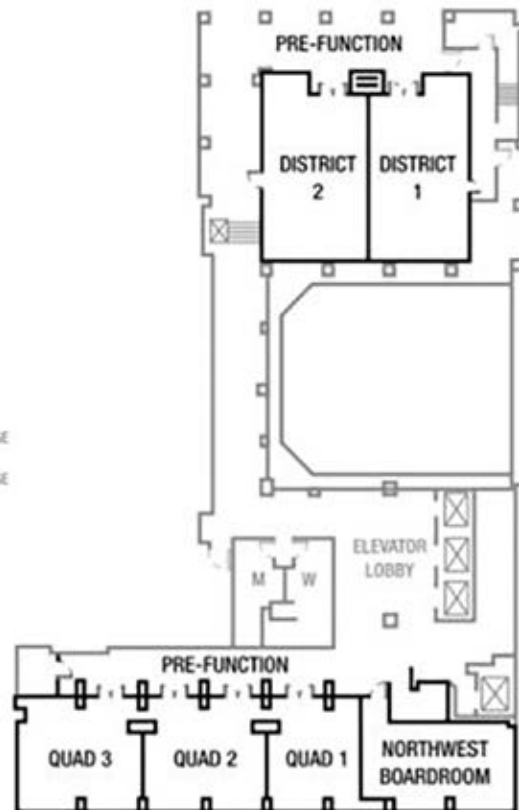
FLOOR 1



FLOOR 2



FLOOR 3



Conference Agenda

Thursday, October 17th

- 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Speaker's Room, **Northwest Boardroom, 3rd Floor**
- 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM** NBA Board of Governors Meeting, **Metropolitan Ballrooms 1-3, 2nd Floor**
- 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium Registration, **Metropolitan Ballroom Foyer, 2nd Floor**
- 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM** Nominations Committee Meeting, **District I, 3rd Floor**
- 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM** Women Lawyers Division Panel, **Howard University School of Law Classroom HH3, Houston Hall (SB-Level)**
- The Power of Her Voice: The Intersection of Voting Rights and Black Women's Empowerment**
- Rebekah Caruthers
 - Antoinette Barksdale
 - Tanya Clay House, CEO Clay House Consulting Inc., Chair, National Bar Association Civil Rights Section
- 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM** Centennial Commission: Honoring the Legacies of Wiley A. Branton & the National Bar Association
Hosted at Howard University School of Law Damon J. Keith Moot Courtroom

Friday, October 18th

- 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Speaker's Room, **Metropolitan Ballroom 3, 2nd Floor**
- 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Green Room, **Logan Salon, 2nd Floor**
- 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM** Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium Continental Breakfast, **West End, 2nd Floor**
- 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium Registration, **Metropolitan Ballroom Foyer, 2nd Floor**
- 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM** Opening Plenary, **Metropolitan Ballrooms 1 and 2, 2nd Floor**
"The Charge" – The Honorable Judge Arnette R. Hubbard
NBA President (1981-1982)

Conference Agenda

Friday, October 18th (cont.)

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

CLE #1 – “Genetic Justice: Henrietta Lacks Litigation Case Study Establishing Modern Precedent to Address Medical Racism”

- Ben Crump, Founder, Ben Crump Law PLLC, NBA President (2015-2016)
- Deleso A. Alford, Convenor, and Moderator, Rachel Emanuel Endowed Professor of Law Southern University Law Center
- Kim Parker, Founder, The Law Offices of Kim Parker, PA
- Yusuf N. Henriques, Founder & CEO of IndyGeneUS AI & IndyGeneUS

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

CLE #2 – “Diversity and Corporate Board: The Way Forward”

- Benjamin Wilson, Former Chairman, Beveridge & Diamond, P.C.
- Dean Alfreda Robinson, Associate Dean, The George Washington University School of Law, Chair of the 35th Annual Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium, NBA President (2019-2020)
- Belinda Coleman, Phd. CEO, The Coleman Inc. Group
- Heidi Thomas Revels, Moderator, Corporate Counsel, IP, Amazon Corporation

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

CLE #3 – “The Power of Dissent”

- Rev. William H. Lamar IV, Pastor, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church
- William W. Bennett, Esq., JD & M. Div., Convenor, President and CEO of Harika Consulting LLC
- Sheila S. Boston, Partner, Arnold & Porter PC
- Dionna Maria Lewis, Esq., LLM, D.C. Office of Employee Appeals, Trial Lawyer and Managing Attorney, District Legal Group, PLLC

11:30 AM - 12:15 PM

CLE #4 – “The Future of Economic Equality”

- Vanita M. Banks, Moderator, NBA President (2006-2007)
- Mitchell Crusto, Loyola University, New Orleans College of Law
- Michael Rand, Assistant Dean, Business and Finance Law, The George Washington University School of Law

Conference Agenda

Friday, October 18th (cont.)

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon, **West End, 2nd Floor**

HONOREES:

- Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, Chief Judge - District of Columbia Court of Appeals
- Honorable Demetrius Shelton, Administrative Law Judge - California Department of Social Services, 68th President of the National Bar Association
- Dayna Bowen Matthew, JD, PhD, Dean and Harold H. Greene Professor of Law - George Washington University Law School
- Honorable Robert C. White, Jr., At-Large Councilmember - Council of the District of Columbia
- Honorable Michael A. Blake, CEO, Atlas Strategy Group, Former New York State Assemblyman

2:00 PM - 2:45 PM

CLE #5 – “Artificial Intelligence, Diversity, and Democracy”

- Robin M. Earnest, Moderator, (Founder) The Earnest Law Firm
- Spencer A. Overton, Patricia Roberts Harris Research Professor of Law, The George Washington University Law School
- Shannon McNeal, Partner, Davis, Wright, Tremaine, LLP

2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

CLE #6 – “U.S. Census and Project 2025 Potential Impact”

- Honorable Demetrius Shelton, Convener/Moderator, NBA Liaison to the United States Census, NBA President (2010-2011)
- Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- Meeta Anand, Senior Director, Census & Data Equity, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Tanya Clay House, CEO Clay House Consulting Inc., Chair, National Bar Association Civil Rights Section
- Barbara R. Arnwine, President & Founder, Transformative Justice Coalition

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

CLE #7 – “Legal Advocacy Strategies to Promote Health Policies”

- Kinika Young, Moderator and Panelist, Director of Legal Advocacy, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Office of Public Policy, Washington, D.C
- Caroline Wolverton, Senior Counsel, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Conference Agenda

Friday, October 18th (cont.)

4:45 PM - 5:30 PM

CLE #8 – Project 2025 Attacks on Gender Equity: “Are They Radical New Concepts, or Focused Versions of Smaller Attacks Courts Have Been Incrementally Upholding Even Before Dobbs?”

- Bayliss Fiddiman, Moderator, Senior Director of Educational Equity, National Women’s Law Center
- Joi Chaney, Founder, J.O.I. Strategies
- Jasmine Banks, Executive Director, Generation Common Good
- Denise Smith, Senior Fellow, Deputy Director of Higher Education Policy, The Century Foundation

Saturday, October 19th

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium
Continental Breakfast, **West End, 2nd Floor**

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Speaker’s Room, Metropolitan Ballroom 3, 2nd Floor

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Green Room, Logan Salon, 2nd Floor

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

CLE #9 – “Project 2025 and Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education and Anti-Discrimination Standards”

- William W. Bennett, Esq., JD & M. Div., Covenor and Moderator, President and CEO of Harika Consulting LLC
- Dr. Frank Smith, Executive Director, African American Civil War Museum, D.C.
- Dean Tamara Lawson, Toni Rembe Dean and Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law in Seattle
- Marcilynn A. Burke, Dean, Tulane University Law School

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

CLE #10 – “International Criminal Justice Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Zones: Criminal and Presidential Immunity Under the Color of Official Acts”

- Theori Henry, Moderator, JD Candidate May 2025, The George Washington University Law School
- Dean Tamara Lawson, Toni Rembe Dean and Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law in Seattle
- Mario Barnes, Chancellor’s Professor of Law, University of California, Irvine School of Law
- James Carter, Vice President of Finance, National Bar Association, Managing Partner Trials & Mass Torts, The Cochran Firm, New Orleans

Conference Agenda

Saturday, October 19th (cont.)

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

CLE #11 – “Perfecting Civil and Human Rights Law: The Role and Re-Envisioning of Legal Experts”

- D. Wendy Greene, Convenor/Moderator Professor of Law, Director, Center on Law, Policy & Social Action, Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law
- Deleso A. Alford, Rachel Emanuel Endowed Professor of Law, Southern University Law Center
- Victor Jones, Senior Counsel, The Legal Defense Fund
- Rachel Lopez, James E. Beasley Professor of Law, Temple University Beasley School of Law

12:00 PM - 1:20 PM

**Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium
Closing Lunch,
West End, 2nd Floor
“Responding to the Charge” – Dr. Walter L. Sutton, Jr.
NBA President (1987-1988)**

CLE #12 – Election Protection Seminar – Part 1,

“The Dark Side of Democracy: What History Teaches Us About Upcoming Elections, Anticipated Election Shenanigans and Their Impact”

- V. Lynn Whitfield, Moderator, NBA Chair, Election Protection Task Force
- Barbara R. Arnwine, President & Founder, Transformative Justice Coalition
- Daryl Jones, Board Chair of the Transformative Justice Coalition
- Nile Blass, DMV Regional Organizer, League of Women Voters of the United States

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

CLE #13 – Voting Rights Training Workshop – Part 2

- V. Lynn Whitfield, NBA Chair, Election Protection Task Force

2:30 PM

Departure



CONGRATULATES OUR
35TH ANNUAL
Wiley A. Branton
 Awards Luncheon & Issues Symposium

2024 Award Honorees

**Extraordinary
Jurist Award**



Honorable
Anna Blackburne-Rigsby
CHIEF JUDGE, DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS

**Champion of
Justice Award**



Honorable
Demetrius Shelton
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE,
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
68TH PRESIDENT, NBA

**Outstanding
Scholar's Award**



Dayna Bowen Matthew, JD, PhD
DEAN AND HAROLD H. GREENE PROFESSOR OF LAW
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

**Outstanding Public
Service Award**



Honorable
Robert C. White, Jr.
AT-LARGE COUNCILMEMBER
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Outstanding Young
Visionary Award**



Honorable
Rev. Michael A. Blake
FOUNDER & CEO, ATLAS STRATEGY GROUP, INC.
FOUNDER & CEO, KAIROS DEMOCRACY PROJECT
PRESIDENT, NEXT LEVEL SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Please join the National Bar Association on
Friday, October 18, 2024 at the Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon
 as we honor these incredible individuals.

Conference registration is required to attend the Awards Luncheon.

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SCHOOL OF LAW
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

125 YEARS
SINCE 1889

2024 AWARD HONOREES



Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby Chief Judge - District of Columbia Court of Appeals

The Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby has served as a judge for more than 28 years on the trial and appellate levels of the D.C. Courts. She was appointed Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the District's highest local court, in March 2017. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby chairs the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration for the District of Columbia court system. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby served as President of the National Conference of Chief Justices for the 2023-2024 term, and served as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts. She Chairs the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators Committee on Public Trust and Confidence in State Courts. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby serves as a member of the National Center for State Courts and Thompson Reuters Institute National Policy Group examining AI in the courts and the legal profession.

Prior to being designated Chief Judge, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was nominated by President George W. Bush in August 2006 to serve as an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Before that, she was nominated by President William Jefferson Clinton to serve as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia from 2000-2006, and she previously served as a Magistrate Judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia from 1995-2000.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, and received the Duke University Presidential Leadership Award. Following graduation from Duke University, she was selected to be one of twelve Public Affairs Fellows of the Coro Foundation in San Francisco, California. She earned her law degree from Howard University School of Law, graduating in the top five percent of her class. While in law school, she served as the Lead Articles Editor of the Howard Law Journal and served as the Co-Captain for the Charles Hamilton Houston Moot Court Team.

Following law school, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was an associate at the law firm of Hogan Lovells US LLP (formerly Hogan and Hartson) in Washington, D.C., where she litigated commercial, real estate, employment discrimination, and education matters before state and federal courts and administrative agencies. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby later joined the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General (formerly the Office of the Corporation Counsel), where she served as Special Counsel, working as part of the senior management team. She then served as the Deputy of the Family Services Division, where she managed the Division's 65 attorneys and support staff, responsible for handling child abuse and neglect, child support enforcement, and domestic violence cases.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has taught Trial Advocacy at Harvard Law School and Professional Responsibility as an Adjunct Professor at the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia. She has also taught Continuing Legal Education courses for the District of Columbia Bar.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has trained judges from other countries in conjunction with the National Center for State Courts and the United States Department of State. She has lectured and trained judges around the world in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Europe on topics including: rule of law, access to justice, effective case management, appellate advocacy, effective judicial writing, judicial leadership and artificial intelligence in courts and the legal profession. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was selected by the American Board of Trial Advocates to lecture in Milan, Italy and Frankfurt, Germany.

2024 AWARD HONOREES

Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby (cont.)

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has held offices in several judicial organizations. As an Associate Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals, she chaired the District of Columbia Courts' Standing Committee on Fairness and Access, and she served on the District of Columbia's Access to Justice Commission. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby serves on the Board of Directors for the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and also formerly served as the Consortium's President and Moderator. She is a former Chair of the Washington Bar Association's Judicial Council. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby is a Past President of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). In addition to her work with the National Association of Women Judges, she also serves on the Board of Managerial Trustees for the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) and served as Chair from 2010-2014. In March of 2006, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby represented the IAWJ at a Judicial Conference in Turin, Italy, where she delivered a speech on Racial Equality in the Workplace at the Lavoro dei Migranti e Discriminazione Convegno. In 2003, she traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa to participate in a conference of the African Judicial Network. In 2014, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby led the delegation of women judges from the United States at the Biennial Conference of the International Association of Women Judges in Tanzania. In 2017, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby presented a paper at the Summit of Women Judges and Prosecutors on Human Trafficking and Organized Crime hosted by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences at the Vatican. Through her work with these organizations, Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has sought to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby has received awards for her legal, judicial and community service, most notably including the 2023 Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award from the President of the United States, for a lifelong commitment to building a stronger nation through volunteer service. Additionally, she had received the American Bar Association's 2020 Margaret Brent Award honoring women in the legal profession and the National Association of Women Judges 2020 Lady Justice Award. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was named the Washington Bar Association's 2020 Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit recipient. She also received the Business and Professional Women's League's Sojourner Truth Award, the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia's 2014 Star of the Bar Award, the National Bar Association's Heman Sweatt Champion of Justice Award, the Greater Washington Area Women Lawyers Division's (GWAC) Charlotte E. Ray Award, and the National Association of Women Judges' Justice Vaino Spencer Leadership Award. In 2017, she was inducted into the Washington Bar Association Hall of Fame. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was named 2018 Woman Lawyer of the Year by the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby is proud of her Jamaican heritage, and the culture, values and history passed down by her grandfather, who immigrated to the United States, and instilled these values and traditions in his children and grandchildren. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby was born in the District of Columbia. She is married to Judge Robert R. Rigsby, Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, former Corporation Counsel for the District of Columbia, Retired Military Judge, and Retired Colonel of the United States Army. They are the proud parents of an adult son.

2024 AWARD HONOREES



Honorable Demetrius Shelton **Administrative Law Judge - California Department of Social Services, 68th President of the National Bar Association**

The Honorable Demetrius Shelton is an Administrative Law Judge for the California Department of Social Services and has been since 2013, and prior to this served as Deputy City Attorney for the City of Oakland for over a decade. Judge Shelton, the 68th President of the National Bar Association (“NBA”), is also Past National General Counsel of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a Past President of the Charles Houston

Bar Association and the California Association of Black Lawyers. Judge Shelton currently serves on the American Bar Association’s National Conference of the Administrative Law Judiciary (“NCALJ”) Board of Trustees.

Judge Shelton also serves on the American Bar Association (“ABA”) Legal Opportunity Scholarship Committee which administers the ABA Legal Opportunity Scholarship Fund created to encourage racial and ethnic minorities to go to law school and to provide financial assistance. Additionally, Judge Shelton serves as Chair of the NBA’s Census Task Force and has served as the California Association of Black Lawyers Chair of the Committee on the Courts with a focus of promoting judicial diversity on all levels of the bench.

In 2005/2006, Shelton served as Vice President of the State Bar of California, the largest mandatory bar association in the country and the governing body that regulates the practice of law throughout the state of California. He has the distinction of having been elected to the Board of Governors in 2003 and in his victory became the first African American in the history of the State Bar of California to be elected to represent the 3rd District. During this time Shelton was also instrumental in establishing the State Bar’s historic “Pipeline Task Force” and first ever Judicial Summit on Diversity.

Judge Shelton has a long history of leadership and service. In addition to those mentioned above, he has served on a number of boards and committees, including the Alameda County Bar Association, the Bar Association of San Francisco, the Allen E. Broussard Scholarship Foundation, the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (now “Bay Area Legal Aid”), and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

Judge Shelton is frequently called upon by local, legal and national media and organizations to provide commentary. Shelton provided testimony as a featured panelist at the American Bar Association’s “Stand Your Ground Hearings” as shown on C-Span, and provides commentary on youth interactions with law enforcement officials and cases involving allegations of police officers use of excessive force.

Shelton is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions and by many local and national leaders, including May 6, 2006 being declared “Demetrius Shelton Day” in the cities of Oakland by Mayor Jerry Brown and San Francisco by Mayor Gavin Newsom, and eight years prior the City of Oakland proclaiming November 5, 1998, “Demetrius D. Shelton Day in the City of Oakland” and the City of San Francisco and then Mayor Willie Brown passing a resolution honoring him “for his courage, and outstanding leadership.” Shelton has also been recognized by the NBA with its “Presidential Award” on multiple occasions, the Charles Houston Bar Association with its “President’s Award”, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, the Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, United States Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Don Perata – President pro Tempore of the Senate of the State of California, California Assembly Member Sandre Swanson, the Hon. John Chiang – Chair of the California State Board of Equalization, and the Offices of the San Francisco City Attorney and the Oakland City Attorney for his continuous efforts.

2024 AWARD HONOREES

Honorable Demetrius Shelton (cont.)

As President of the NBA, Shelton worked to build a “pipeline to the legal profession” and to dismantle what has become known as the “school-to-prison pipeline.” Toward this end, he published, “How the Law Treats You Differently When You Turn 18” aimed at educating the youth of America as to their rights and responsibilities under the law upon reaching the age of majority. The publication continues to be presented nationwide via “Youth Empowerment Symposiums” which have a dual purpose of introducing the youth participants to the practice of law as a possible career choice.

Shelton has also spearheaded efforts: 1) to safeguard the vote during the historic 2008 United States presidential election; 2) opposing the split of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; and 3) calling for a thorough investigation into Hurricane Katrina and other disaster relief efforts, and mobilizing attorneys throughout the nation to assist in these endeavors and in the recovery. Shelton of Bernice, Louisiana and Berkeley, California is a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles and UC Davis School of Law.



Dayna Bowen Matthew JD, PhD, Dean and Harold H. Greene Professor of Law - George Washington University Law School

Dayna Bowen Matthew, JD, PhD, is the Dean and Harold H. Greene Professor of Law at the George Washington University Law School. A leader in public health and civil rights law who focuses on disparities in health, health care, and the social determinants of health, Dean Matthew joined GW Law in 2020. She is the author of the bestselling book *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care* and the newly released *Just Health: Treating Structural Racism to Heal America*.

Dean Matthew previously served on the faculty of the University of Virginia School of Law, where she was Co-Founder and Inaugural Director of The Equity Center, a transdisciplinary research center that seeks to build better relationships between UVA and the Charlottesville community through community engaged scholarship that tangibly redresses racial and socioeconomic inequality.

Earlier in her career, Dean Matthew served on the University of Colorado law faculty as a Professor, Vice Dean, and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. She was a member of the Center for Bioethics and Humanities on the Anschutz Medical Campus. Dean Matthew held a joint appointment at the Colorado School of Public Health. Dean Matthew also has taken on many public policy roles. In 2013, she co-founded the Colorado Health Equity Project, a medical-legal partnership incubator aimed at removing barriers to good health for low-income clients by providing legal representation, research, and policy advocacy. In 2015, she served as the Senior Adviser to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights for the US Environmental Protection Agency, where she expedited cases on behalf of historically vulnerable communities besieged by pollution. She then became a member of the health policy team for US Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan and worked on public health issues.

2024 AWARD HONOREES

Dayna Bowen Matthew (cont.)

During 2015-16, she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellow in Residence in Washington, DC, and pivoted her work toward population-level clients. She forged relationships with influential policy groups such as the Brookings Institution, where she is currently a Non-resident Senior Fellow, and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

She also is a member of the American Law Institute and currently serves on several public health boards including the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' COVID-19 Vaccine Working Group, the American Society of Law, Medicine, and Ethics, and the Scientific Advisory Council of the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts.

Before entering academia, Dean Matthew practiced as a civil litigator both in Kentucky, at the law firm of Greenbaum, Doll & McDonald, and in Virginia, at McGuireWoods, where her work primarily focused on the defense of medical care providers and corporate manufacturers in state courts, federal courts, and before administrative and licensing tribunals.

Dean Matthew graduated with an AB in economics from Harvard-Radcliffe and, after a brief stint as a commercial real estate banker, obtained a JD from the University of Virginia. While studying at Virginia, Dean Matthew served as an Editor of the Virginia Law Review, won the law school's William Minor Lile Moot Court Competition, and taught as a Hardy Dillard Writing Fellow. Following graduation, she clerked for Justice John Charles Thomas, the first African American justice to sit on the Virginia Supreme Court. She taught at Virginia as an assistant professor from 1991 to 1994. In 2018, she received a PhD in health and behavioral sciences from the University of Colorado at Denver.



Honorable Robert C. White, Jr. At-Large Councilmember - Council of the District of Columbia

A proud fifth generation Washingtonian, Robert C. White, Jr. is in his second term as At-Large Member of the Council of the District of Columbia. He chairs the Council's Committee on Housing.

Robert began his career in public service as a law clerk in the Maryland District Court for Montgomery County. For five years, he worked in the United States Congress, serving as Legislative Counsel to the District's Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. In 2014, he was tapped by Attorney General Karl A. Racine to serve as the first Director of Community Outreach for the DC Office of the Attorney General. In 2016, Robert was elected as an at-large Councilmember with the highest number of votes in the history of DC's elected Council. He was re-elected in 2020 and has served as chair of the Council's Committee on Housing Since 2023. Robert is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center.

Robert and his wife, Christy, an attorney with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, reside in Ward 4 with their daughters, Madison and Monroe. They attend St. Martin's Catholic Church. Robert loves spending time with his family, reading, and walking in Rock Creek Park.

2024 AWARD HONOREES



Honorable Michael A. Blake

CEO, Atlas Strategy Group, Former New York State Assemblyman

Rev. Michael A. Blake is a proud son of Jamaican Immigrants, native of The Bronx, NY and child of God. Michael's mother Hilary is a retired 40 year Manufacturer who raised four sons and his late Father Headly was a maintenance supervisor and proud member of 1199SEIU.

Michael is Founder & CEO of Atlas Strategy Group, Inc. which focuses on Bringing Consciousness to Capitalism by implementing Equity and Justice at Scale through Policy, Political, Economic and Social partnerships.

Michael is also the Founder & CEO of the KAIROS DEMOCRACY PROJECT, a nonpartisan 501c4 social welfare organization committed to mobilize Communities of Color and Young Americans on the practical daily benefits of a strong Democracy.

Michael is also the President of Next Level Sports and Entertainment - the only Black owned national TV Sports network. Michael served as a three term Assembly Member in the New York State Assembly representing the 79th District in The Bronx, New York from 2014 to 2020.

Michael Blake served as a Vice Chair at Large of the Democratic National Committee from 2017 to 2021, being the first Black man elected to DNC leadership since Ron Brown, helping lead efforts to mobilize millennials, communities of color, local elected candidates and training.

Michael Blake served in the Obama-Biden administration as the White House Associate Director of Public Engagement and Deputy Associate Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs coordinating outreach to the African American, Minority and Women Business Enterprises and state and county elected official communities. Michael created and executed the Urban Entrepreneurship Summit series, a seven-city tour coordinating Public, Private and Not for Profit Partnerships across the country. Moreover, Blake along with Bibi Hidalgo coordinated the Interagency Federal Procurement working group dedicated to increasing procurement spend to Minority and Women Business Enterprises, leading the highest percentage and dollars spent across agencies for MWBEs on record.

Michael Blake's public and political service began in 2006 as one of the first ten participants in the "Yes We Can" training program led by Senator Barack Obama.

In his 20-month, eight state campaign tenure throughout the 2008 Obama-Biden campaign, Blake concluded as the Michigan Deputy State Director and Political Director for the general election. Blake departed the White House to serve as the national deputy director of Operation Vote for the Obama-Biden 2012 re-election and helped expand the diverse electorate that later re-elected President Obama and Vice President Biden, leading to historic turnout among constituencies nationwide.

Michael Blake graduated from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University with Honors, currently serves as the inaugural Democracy Scholar at the DuBois Freedom Center after previously teaching at Harvard University's Institute of Politics, NYU as an Urban Policy Scholar and Monroe College. Blake is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the 100 Black Men, serves as an Ordained Reverend within the United Missionary Baptist Association at Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church in The Bronx.

SPEAKERS



Deleso A. Alford

Deleso A. Alford, the Rachel Emanuel Endowed Professor at Southern University Law Center is doing ground-breaking work bridging legal and medical education by telling stories— what she refers to as “HER stories” the unique and particularized lived experiences of black women and women of color intersecting with health care and research. Her scholarship has moved from classrooms to court room, benefiting legal, healthcare professions and society with her racially inflected lessons.

Professor Alford’s seminal law review article written in 2012, entitled HeLa Cells and Unjust Enrichment in the Human Body serves as a catalyst and theory of the case for the current historical Henrietta Lacks litigation. She continues to tell the HERstory of Mrs. Henrietta Lacks to inform history and restore her humanity as a modality to address existing healthcare and research disparities in a medical education setting.

Her almost two decades of research and scholarly focus effectively telling the HERstory of Experiments on Enslaved Women (Anarcha, Betsey and Lucy) which led to the development of the medical specialty of gynecology in the United States and the HERstory of The Women of Tuskegee who were and continue to be marginalized as to their direct impact during the notorious U.S. Public Health Services Syphilis Study at Tuskegee remain critical to advancing equity in health and justice.

Professor Alford recently received the prestigious National Leadership Award for Education from the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) on September 12 in Washington, D.C., held during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference. Alford was recognized for her groundbreaking work bridging legal and medical education. She shared the stage with fellow awardees, such as Senator Raphael Warnock, Senator Laphonza Butler, Alan Powell, and Tony Waller.

She is a nationally sought after interdisciplinary speaker who has been referred to as “a prolific and impactful “HERstory” teller changing the legal landscape of bodily autonomy and medical ethics.”



Meeta Anand

Meeta Anand has an extensive background in program management, finance, business development, and strategic planning across various sectors. Currently seeking a leadership role in nonprofit and foundation organizations, Meeta has held positions in advocacy, strategic planning, relationship building, and community engagement. With experience at organizations like The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, The New York Immigration Coalition, and White & Case, Meeta brings a wealth of expertise in creating opportunities for social change and promoting equity. Meeta holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a Master’s Degree from The Fletcher School at Tufts University, with concentrations in Economic Development, International Trade and Finance, and Human Rights.

SPEAKERS



Barbara Arnwine

Barbara R. Arnwine, esq, president & founder of the Transformative Justice Coalition, is internationally renowned for contributions on critical justice issues including the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1991 and the 2006 reauthorization of provisions of the Voting Rights Act. Currently, she also serves as Co-Chair and Facilitator of the National Commission for Voter Justice, the Millennial Votes Matters Convenings and the Voting Rights Alliance. She was the head of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law from February 1989 until June, 2015 and holds the honorific title of President Emeritus. She has served as the Charles Hamilton Chair for the North Carolina Central University School of Law from 2016-2017 and has also taught at Columbia University School of Law. She also created the legendary Voting Rights "Map of Shame" in 2011, which exposed the new modern wave of voter suppression in the states. Her groundbreaking civil rights and human rights advocacy has been honored with many prestigious awards. She is the radio host of Igniting Change and is a regular presence in the national media, and is often quoted in the press. A graduate of Scripps College and Duke University School of Law, she continues to champion civil rights and racial justice issues nationally and internationally in the areas of housing and lending, women's rights, especially issues affecting intersectionality and African American women and girls, community development, employment, voting, education, policing restructuring, and environmental justice. On May 2nd 2021 Duke University conferred the Honorary Doctorate Of Law upon Barbara Arnwine esq.



Jasmine Banks

Jasmine Banks is the founder and Executive Director of Generation Common Good, an organization dedicated to building a formation of everyday leaders ready to take action on justice issues reclaiming education for democracy, climate, and common good. She has more than 10 years of progressive advocacy, movement building, and organizing experience. She spent the last five years dedicated to leading an intervention campaign, UnKoch My Campus, addressing the impact of far-right billionaires leveraging their philanthropic donations in higher education to erode democracy. During the campaigns she organized multiple campuses, coalitions, and provided movement support to hundreds of students, educators, and community activists. She has traveled to several higher ed institutions to speak with students and faculty about donor transparency and academic freedom. She was most recently honored to give a keynote for the Higher Education division of the American Federation of Teachers. She is also a former licensed therapist, Chief Marketing Officer, and small business owner.



Vanita Banks

Vanita Banks is an accomplished senior executive privacy and cybersecurity attorney with extensive experience in the financial services, insurance and pharmaceutical industry sectors. In her role as Global Privacy Counsel, she advises enterprise clients on privacy risk assessment, data governance, security controls, gap analysis, incident reporting, and negotiates complex commercial and data processing agreements. A trusted adviser to C-Suite executives, Vanita has extensive experience counseling business operations regarding disruptive technologies including drones, autonomous cars, mobile and medical devices, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and predictive analysis. She also specializes in complex insurance, employment and class action law and litigation, technology and commercial transactions.

Vanita led the law department information technology team that established Allstate Insurance Company's data protection and cybersecurity program. She received the highest employee award, the Allstate Chairman's Award for her team leadership and superior performance. Vanita is Past President of the National Bar Association, the oldest and largest national association of African American lawyers, judges and law students. She is a member of the American Law Institute and Adviser to the ALI Restatement of the Law of Liability Insurance. Vanita earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana; Juris Doctor from Valparaiso University Law School in Valparaiso, Indiana; and L.L.M. in Taxation from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, Illinois. Vanita is a Fellow of the Life Management Institute, (FLMI). She holds an Executive Privacy and Cybersecurity Law Certificate from Mitchell Hamline School of Law where she serves as an Adjunct Professor.



Mario L. Barnes

Mario L. Barnes is a Chancellor's Professor of Law at the UC Irvine School of Law, where he returned in spring 2022 after serving as the Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Washington School of Law from 2018 to 2021.

Prof. Barnes is a nationally recognized scholar for his research on the legal and social implications of race and gender, primarily in the areas of employment, education, criminal and military law. He is one of the leaders within the school of academics seeking to build stronger connections between empirical studies and Critical Race Theory. He writes and teaches in the areas of criminal law, constitutional law, national security law, and race and the law. His work has appeared in leading law reviews and sociolegal journals.

At UCI Law, Prof. Barnes previously served as Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and as the first Dean for Research and Faculty Development. He is currently Co-Director of the Center on Law, Equality and Race (CLEAR). Before joining UCI Law, he was a faculty member at the University of Miami School of Law.

Prior to his academic career, Prof. Barnes spent 12 years on active duty in the U.S. Navy, including service as a prosecutor, defense counsel, special assistant U.S. attorney, and on the commission that investigated the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen. His reserve assignments included the Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command in San Diego, the Navy Inspector General's Office in Washington, D.C. and U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, FL. He retired from the Navy in 2013, after 23 years of combined active and reserve service. Prof. Barnes earned his bachelor's degree (1990) and a J.D. from UC Berkeley (1995), where he was Managing Editor and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the African-American Law & Policy Report (now Berkeley Journal of African-American Law and Policy). He earned an LL.M. from the University of Wisconsin (2004), where he was a William H. Hastie Teaching Fellow.

Prof. Barnes is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, an elected member of the American Law Institute, and a Distinguished Fellow of the National Institute of Military Justice. He received the AALS Clyde Ferguson Award in 2015 and was honored with the AALS Derrick A. Bell Jr. Award in 2008. In February of 2023, at the American Bar Association Mid-Year Meeting, he was awarded the American Bar Foundation Fellows Outstanding Scholar Award.

SPEAKERS



William W. Bennett

Mr. William W. Bennett is a retired energy lawyer who formerly worked as a senior executive with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington, D.C. That agency's mission included oil and gas pipeline, hydroelectric licensing and electric transmission matters. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Chicago Law School and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

He is an ordained Ruling Elder with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and holds a Master of Divinity Degree from Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. He was the inaugural chair of the Law and Religion Section of the National Bar Association (NBA), and served on the NBA Board.



Nile Blass

Nile Blass serves as the DMV regional organizer of the League of Women Voters of the United States. She is responsible for organizing strategies and capacity building at the DMV and national level.

Prior to joining the League, Nile worked to advance social equity through political advocacy, both institutionally and through grassroots organizing. As an organizer with Hoyas for Slavery Accountability (HASA), she helped coordinate restorative and restitution efforts at Georgetown University for the descendants of its enslaved population. During the pandemic that greatly impacted vulnerable student communities, Nile became the first Black woman in history to be elected Georgetown University's Student Body President. During her time in office, her administration provided students with financial stipends, career development programs, secure housing, and the necessary resources to build an online and engaged student community. In addition, she brings experience working at the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill and with the Maryland General Assembly, among much more.

Nile is a native of the Washington, DC area and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Government from Georgetown University.



Sheila S. Boston

Sheila S. Boston is a litigation partner at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. She is a trial lawyer and litigation strategist who defends clients from initiation of the case through trial and/or settlement. A member of her law firm's Product Liability Group and Complex Commercial Litigation Department, Sheila has successfully litigated before both state and federal courts, with significant MDL experience in mass tort actions. She has also represented companies in complex commercial matters such as breach of contract and consumer product litigation.

An active participant in her firm, she serves on both the Policy and Pro Bono Committees, and is an elected Ombudsperson at the firm.

Sheila has been recognized by Who's Who Legal in Product Liability Defence (2012-2018) and as a "Global Thought Leader" in Life Sciences – Product Liability (USA) in 2023 and 2024. In 2018, she was recognized as a "legal lion" trial attorney by Law 360 as a result of a successful product liability defense verdict in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. Adept in "battle of the experts" litigation, Sheila has served as national coordinating counsel of experts, involving the retention, development and preparation of experts for depositions, Daubert/Frye hearings and trials, and she has worked with numerous experts in various fields of medicine and science.

Sheila received her A.B. in the School of Public and International Affairs from Princeton University in 1990, and her J.D. from Columbia Law School in 1993. She is admitted to practice law in the New York State Courts, the SDNY, the EDNY, the NDNY, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States.



Marcilynn A. Burke

Marcilynn A. Burke is Tulane Law School's Dean and Mitchell Franklin Professor of Law.

Burke joined Tulane Law in 2024, and was formerly the Dean at the University of Oregon School of Law and a former acting assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of the Interior. Burke specializes in property, land use and environmental and natural resources law. She has published extensively in leading law reviews. Burke earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She earned her juris doctor from Yale Law School, where she was an editor of both the Yale Journal of International Law and the Yale Journal of Law and Feminism.

After law school, Burke clerked for the Honorable Raymond A. Jackson of the Eastern District of Virginia and later joined the law firm of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, where her practice focused on environmental law, antitrust and civil and criminal litigation. She also served as a visiting professor at Rutgers School of Law in 2001. In 2002, Burke joined the law faculty at the University of Houston. From 2009 to 2013, she served in the U.S. Department of the Interior. Initially she was deputy director for programs and policy for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and then was appointed acting assistant secretary for land and minerals management for the Department by President Barack Obama. Following her term at the Department of the Interior, Burke returned to the University of Houston Law Center as an associate professor of law and later served as associate dean. Known for her engaging personality and rapport with students and colleagues alike, she was named professor of the year by the Law Center's Black Law Students Association. In 2017 she was appointed dean of the University of Oregon's law school, where she has been hailed as an ambitious, focused and strategic leader. She also currently serves as the chair of the board of trustees for the Law School Admission Council.



James Carter

James Carter is a nationally accomplished attorney, statesman, educator, and author. He is the Managing Partner of The Cochran Firm Trials & Mass Torts, LLC and serves on the The Cochran Firm's national board of directors. Mr. Carter is the Vice President of Finance of the National Bar Association. He has dedicated his life to uplifting others and often states that he could never thank God enough for his Parents who gave him a solid foundation. Mr. Carter is admitted to practice in all Louisiana state courts, all Louisiana United States

District Courts, the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals as well as the United States Supreme Court. He is the recipient of the prestigious 2024 A. P. Tureaud Award from The Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Society. Mr. Carter received the 2022 Gertrude Rush, Power 50 and Presidential Awards from the National Bar Association. He is a Civil Trial Litigation Adjunct Professor at Howard University School of Law and served as an Adjunct Trial Advocacy Professor at Tulane University School of Law. Mr. Carter obtained his undergraduate degree in Philosophy from Howard University. He then graduated from Howard University School of Law, where he serves on the Board of Visitors. He is a formidable trial attorney who is responsible for recovering millions of dollars on behalf of clients, both personal and corporate, throughout the United States. His skillfully aggressive

approach to the civil jury trial world gained him an elite membership into the Multi-Million Dollar Advocates Forum. He received a prized certification in Mass Tort Multi-District Litigation from the Bolch Judicial Institute at Duke University School of Law and in 2021 earned a certificate in Governing for Nonprofit Excellence from Harvard Business School. He is one of seven Commissioners of the globally significant Port of New Orleans, where he serves as Vice-Chairman. For his accomplishments as an attorney and public servant, Grambling State University awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Laws, and he received a second Honorary Doctorate from the University of New Orleans.



Joi Chaney

Joi Chaney is the founder of J.O.I. Strategies, which develops strategies for organizations and companies seeking to achieve Justice, Opportunity, and Inclusion for America's underserved communities. In 2022, Joi was named by the Washingtonian Magazine as one of its 500 most influential in policy and was honored with a cover feature. She has served as Executive Director of the Washington Bureau and Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at the National Urban League, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to United

States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, and Director of Government Relations at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. During the Obama Administration, Joi was a senior advisor to the Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). She is a graduate of Howard University and Harvard Law School. She recently co-launched the Women's Tech & Telecom Partnership, a social entrepreneurship project that brings together women's advocacy organizations with corporations and philanthropy to work at the intersection of gender and technology policy. She also serves as an adjunct professor at Loyola University – Chicago School of Law.



Tanya Clay House

Tanya Clay House is the Executive Vice President for Campaigns and Advocacy. She also serves as CEO and Co-Founder of ClayHouse Consulting Inc. Her clients have included the NAACP and the National Coalition for School Diversity, the Network for Public Education, African American Policy Forum and more. Clay House most recently was the Senior Program Officer for Voting Rights at the State Infrastructure Fund, where she managed the voting rights portfolio, including all national voting rights litigation funding.

There, Clay House worked directly with major foundations and funders and supported the fundraising goals of the State Infrastructure Fund.

As an Obama Administration appointee, Clay House formerly served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for P-12 Education in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) at the U.S. Department of Education. In 2021, Clay House was recognized by Women Engaged for her work in philanthropy with the "She Who Rises to the Challenge and Builds Power as a Leader in Philanthropy Award. She was also awarded with two of the highest honors from the National Bar Association (NBA). In April of 2021, She received the Gertrude Rush Distinguished Service Award – named after the first Black female attorney in Iowa and one of the founders of the NBA, Gertrude Rush. Clay House earned her BA, cum laude, in Political Science from the University of Michigan, where she excelled as a varsity track athlete. She earned her JD from the University of Texas, School of Law, where she was executive editor of the Texas Journal of Women and the Law, and attorney general for the Rocky Mountain Black Law Students Association.

SPEAKERS



Ben Crump

Listed amongst the Most Influential People of 2021 by TIME100, Ebony Magazine's Power 100 Most Influential African Americans, The National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Lawyers, and the 2014 NNPA Newsmaker of the Year, civil rights and personal injury Attorney Ben Crump is referred to as "Black America's Attorney General." Benjamin Crump has established himself as one of the nation's foremost lawyers and advocates for social justice, winning a number of record settlements and verdicts for victims and families that have faced injustice. He has worked on some of the most high-profile cases in the U.S., representing the families of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tyre Nichols, and Henrietta Lacks in a landmark reparations case. Crump also represented the residents of Flint, Michigan, who were affected by the poisoned water of the Flint River, achieving a landmark settlement of \$626 million. In 2022, Crump was retained by Randy Cox whose police brutality case reached a record-breaking settlement of \$45 million a year later. In the historic case of Tamara Lanier versus Harvard, Crump's passionate advocacy before the Massachusetts Supreme Court led to them ruling in favor of a Black woman who sued Harvard for the possession of photographs of her enslaved ancestors, which are estimated to be valued at \$100 million. Crump currently represents the family of Malcolm X who filed a landmark lawsuit against the federal government and the NYPD for the conspiracy surrounding Malcolm X's assassination. Crump's tireless advocacy has led to legislation preventing excessive force and developing implicit bias training and policies. His book, published in October 2019, *Open Season: Legalized Genocide of Colored People*, reflects on the landmark cases he has battled, and how discrimination in the courthouse devastates real families and communities. During the consequential year after George Floyd was murdered, Netflix documentary film crews chronicled Crump's work in the award-winning documentary, "Civil." Attorney Crump became the first practicing Black attorney to have a law school named after him when St. Thomas University renamed their law school the Benjamin L. Crump College of Law in 2023. He is the founder and principal owner of Ben Crump Law.



Bayliss Fiddiman

Bayliss Fiddiman is the Senior Director of Educational Equity and Senior Counsel at the National Women's Law Center. She advocates for policies to support girls of color, for pregnant and parenting students, and for equal access to education for women and girls. She has held positions with the Center for American Progress, the Education Law Center in Newark, NJ, the Educational Testing Service, and the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, where she began her career. Her commentary has been featured in many publications, including Politico, The Hill, Washington Post, The Chronicle for Higher Education, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, and PBS NewsHour. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in legal studies from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with Commonwealth Honors College distinction and her Juris Doctor from Northeastern University School of Law. She is a Past President of the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division, National Bar Association (GWAC), and serves on the Women's Bar Association of DC Foundation Board. She also serves on the Advisory Board for CRRJ and is the Regional XII Secretary for the National Bar Association.

SPEAKERS



Mitch Crusto

Professor Mitch Crusto is the Henry F. Bonura, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Law at Loyola University New Orleans. He has a J.D. from the Yale Law School; a M.A. in Jurisprudence from Oxford University, England (Marshall Scholar); and a B.A., Scholar of the House (History), magna cum laude from Yale College.

Crusto's legal scholarship focuses on the intersections between law, society, and equality, particularly initiating the concept of Blackness as Property to explain the wealth disparity between Black America and White America. His Essay, entitled "A Plea for Affirmative Action," was published in the Harvard Law Review Forum. He appeared on CBS Sunday Morning, as a commentator on the Supreme Court's Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard/U of North Carolina, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199_hgdj.pdf, anti-affirmative action decision, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/affirmative-action-supreme-court-deciding-cases-on-college-university-admissions/>. Further, Crusto has recently published four seminal law articles on the media rights of college athletes.

Crusto came to the academy after serving as the Associate Deputy Administrator for Finance, Investment, and Procurement at the U.S. Small Business Administration. There, he oversaw policy for the Minority Procurement (8A) Program, among other programs.



Robin Earnest

After serving as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, and then the U.S. Attorneys' Office in the D.C., Robin founded The Earnest Law Firm--an appellate practice representing largely minority, and indigent, clients appointed by area courts of appeal. Accordingly, Robin serves on the Criminal Justice Act panels for the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Fourth and the D.C. Circuits, as well as the D.C. Court of Appeals. While appellate victories are often rare and challenging, Robin has achieved some successes including: conviction reversals, vacated convictions, remands, and government dismissals. Robin is proud to have been the first woman of color to chair the Steering Committee for the D.C. Bar's Criminal Law and Individual Rights Community, and received the D.C. Bar Community's 2024 Lawyer of the Year Award for her service. In her 2023 Washington Lawyer article she explores efforts to reduce the gender-minority gap in appellate practice. Robin's Bar work further includes serving as editor for the Criminal Law chapter of the District of Columbia Practice Manual (pub. pending).

In addition to her law practice, Robin serves as an adjunct professor at The George Washington School of Law where she teaches Litigation with the Federal Government. Robin also serves on several Boards including: the Lawyers of Distinction's National Advisory Board for Appellate Law, is on the Board of Directors for the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (NBA's), and the D.C. Court of Appeals' Committee on Admissions. She is a member of the ABA Litigation Section's Appellate Subcommittee, and an enthusiastic member of Alpha Kappa Sorority, Inc. Robin received an LLM in environmental law from The George Washington School of Law, and her J.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



D. Wendy Greene

D. Wendy Greene is a Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Law, Policy & Social Action at Drexel University Kline School of Law. Legal architect of the federal CROWN Act and founder of the #FreeTheHair movement, Professor Greene's internationally recognized scholarly-activism that combats myriad forms of inequity is foundational to contemporary civil and human rights theory, jurisprudence, litigation, legislation, and movements in the U.S. and abroad. Her scholarship and public advocacy— informed by her comparative analysis of history, law, policy and lived experience— have shaped groundbreaking legal and policy reforms affording countless individuals protection against discrimination and inequality in workplaces and beyond.

In addition to serving as a legal expert for seminal civil rights cases in the U.S. as well as over 20 pieces of civil rights legislation in the U.S. and France, Professor Greene teaches numerous courses in the law school curriculum examining civil rights law and policy including a one-of-a kind Appearance & Grooming Codes Discrimination Seminar and Legislative Practicum, Employment Law, Employment Discrimination, Race and Law, Critical Race Theory, and Constitutional Law. She frequently provides legal commentary on these issues to media outlets such as The Washington Post, PBS News, BBC News, NBC News, ABC News and the New York Times. Professor Greene is a graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana (B.A.), Tulane University (J.D.), and The George Washington University School of Law (LL.M.).



Yusuf N. Henriques

Yusuf N. Henriques is the Founder & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of IndyGeneUS AI & IndyGeneUS Institute (pronounced indigenus) a precision genomics company aiming to create the world's largest blockchain-encrypted digital health platform of indigenous and diasporic African clinical and genomic data. Their genomics laboratory is located at the Center for Genetic Medicine Research (CGMR) in Washington, DC, on the historic grounds of the old Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where Henriques once walked the halls as a U.S. Army Combat Medic. Henriques is a sought after thought leader where he frequently speaks on the importance of precision health equity and the power of Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS), with an emphasis on BIPOC communities. Prior to Henriques' start-up ventures he was a sought after regulatory affairs expert.

He launched his career in the regulatory space as the acting Branch Chief for the Ob/Gyn, Gastroenterology, and Urology Divisions in the Center for Device and Radiological Health at the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). He served as Director of Regulatory Affairs for SAIC, where he oversaw regulatory compliance strategies for multi-site clinical trials. He was a lead regulatory scientist for the Strategic Innovation Group (SIG) at Booz Allen Hamilton and Senior Research Health Scientist for Outpatient Psychiatry at the James J. Peters Veteran Affairs Medical Center in The Bronx, NY. Henriques managed a \$45M scientific portfolio for a large multi-center clinical trial research project in PTSD and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injuries) for the VA Cooperative Study Research Program and the Department of Defense, where he studied alongside Rachel Yehuda, the Vice-chair of Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS) Psychiatry Department. The Howard University graduate earned his Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry (Magna Cum Laude) and his entire c-suite are also Howard Alum. He is a proud father of four girls, an avid LinkedIn contributor, and a lover of soccer.



Damon T. Hewitt

Damon T. Hewitt is the President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Hewitt has more than 20 years of civil rights litigation and policy experience, including prior leadership roles in the nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sectors. Formerly, as executive vice president at the national Lawyers' Committee, he coordinated the organization's strategic, programmatic, and operational efforts to advance the fight for racial justice.

Prior to joining the national Lawyers' Committee, Hewitt was the inaugural executive director of the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color—a philanthropic network of more than three dozen national and local foundation presidents focused on shifting policies, structures, and the false narratives that negatively impact our nation's sons and brothers. Through his leadership, the Alliance helped incubate, coordinate, and launch more than \$200 million in collaborative grantmaking efforts on issues ranging from police accountability to college completion. He was also the chief liaison from the philanthropic community to the White House on policy issues impacting young men of color.

Hewitt previously worked as a Senior Advisor at the Open Society Foundations, where he coordinated special projects, including philanthropic responses to the uprisings following police killings of unarmed Black people in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland.

He worked for more than a decade as an attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where he was lead counsel on a variety of litigation and policy matters and supervised teams of lawyers and policy experts. He started his career as a Skadden Fellow, eventually leading the organization's Education Practice Group and pioneering its efforts to address the School to Prison Pipeline. He also coordinated organization-wide litigation and advocacy efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina, establishing a satellite office in his hometown of New Orleans. In this capacity, he developed advocacy efforts on education, policing, and fair housing. One of his most important cases, Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center v. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, catalyzed nearly \$500M in new relief for Louisiana homeowners.

Hewitt also served as executive director of the New York Task Force on Police-on-Police Shootings, an entity created to analyze police practices after off-duty African American and Latino police officers were killed by fellow officers after being mistaken for "criminal" suspects.

Hewitt appears frequently in broadcast media and is quoted in print publications. He is co-author of a book, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform*, and has published numerous articles in law journals and popular media on issues ranging from affirmative action, school discipline, and progressive education reform to voting rights, police accountability, and juvenile justice policy. Hewitt holds a B.A. in Political Science from Louisiana State University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Following law school, he clerked for the Honorable Eric L. Clay on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He currently resides in suburban Maryland where he and his partner are raising their three young children to take on the next generation's racial justice work.



Daryl Jones

Attorney Daryl Jones is the Board Chair of the Transformative Justice Coalition. He attended the University of Maryland at College Park, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in History, focusing on Latin American Studies. Daryl worked on Capitol Hill on the staff of former Congressman C. Thomas McMillen prior to attending law school at the University of Baltimore School of Law, earning his Juris Doctor.

Following graduation from law school, Daryl became an Assistant State's Attorney in Anne Arundel County, Maryland becoming the only African-American prosecutor in that county. Daryl, an Eagle Scout, dedicated much of his life working to create a level playing field for everyone to succeed. After starting his solo practice, Daryl was elected, and re-elected, the first African-American male to the Anne Arundel County Council, despite being a minority in an overwhelmingly non-minority majority district.

Daryl, a member of the Maryland, Washington, DC, Maryland Federal District Court and U.S. Supreme Court Bars, had the opportunity to meet and befriend the late Congressman Parren J. Mitchell, who was Maryland's first African American member of Congress. It was the late Congressman Mitchell that introduced a philosophical concept that Daryl would live by, "If you see a good political fight, jump in it!" In 2015 Daryl began "Maryland's Parren J. Mitchell Dinner and Salute," as a tribute to the late Congressman and to provide college scholarships for African American students. It was this philosophy that Daryl would implement as Chair of the Transformative Justice Coalition, an organization dedicated to fighting for voting rights, civil rights and equality for all Americans.

Daryl became the Board Chair of the Transformative Justice Coalition (TJC) in January 2019. Through TJC, he implemented the concept of the John Lewis 'Good Trouble' VoterCade and March GOTV Series nationally, encouraging voters of color to participate in the 2020 electoral process. The John Lewis 'Good Trouble' March Series was held in many states across America and was widely acclaimed for its success in increasing voter participation from communities of color. The John Lewis 'Good Trouble' Marches and GOTV were re-ignited for the 2021 Georgia U.S. Senate Runoff Election and were an extremely significant contributing factor to record breaking voter turnout from communities of color and young voters in the runoffs Election. In 2020, Daryl was awarded the Heman Sweatt Award by the National Bar Association for his activism in fighting for Voting Rights.

In 2022, Daryl and TJC led a Black and Brown Midwest Tour through communities in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania to encourage Black and Brown communities to vote. They just completed a 15 city Rolling Protest throughout Florida to call attention to the need to vote and the consequences of not voting.

Daryl is a regular guest on "Santita Jackson and Friends" on Chicago's WCPT, "On Point: Law and Legal," WAOK radio in Atlanta, Georgia with CK Hoffler and he co-hosts, "Igniting Change" on WOL in the Washington, DC metropolitan region with Barbara Arnwine.



Victor Jones

Victor Jones serves as Senior Counsel at the Legal Defense Fund Defense (LDF), where he litigates school desegregation and other education cases in federal courts. Through his efforts as a school desegregation attorney, Victor has helped thousands of schoolchildren in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama obtain the equal educational opportunities they are constitutionally entitled to receive as recognized by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Prior to joining LDF, Victor served as Executive Counsel for the Louisiana Board of Regents, where he developed statewide legislative and administrative policies to ensure the continuation of postsecondary education in Louisiana at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also was a Senior Supervising Attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center, where he led the Louisiana Children Right's Practice Group.

Between 2012 and 2018, Victor was a litigation associate at multi-disciplinary law firms in New Orleans. During his time as a corporate attorney, Victor was awarded the Pro Bono Century Award by the Louisiana State Bar Association for his representation of children in child welfare proceedings in the Greater New Orleans Area. Victor received his J.D. from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. While in law school, Victor was a judicial extern for the Honorable Ivan L.R. Lemelle of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. He also holds a Master's Degree in Education from Harvard University and a B.A. in Literature from Xavier University of Louisiana. He is also a graduate and avid supporter of the national Head Start program.

Victor is a former public school kindergarten teacher. He is a member of the 2022 Class of the Presidential Leadership Scholars Program. He is a native of Mississippi and member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.



William H. Lamar IV

William H. Lamar IV is pastor of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, DC, where he has served since 2014. As pastor at Metropolitan, Rev. Lamar has extended the church's historic legacy into the contemporary moment. Under his leadership, the congregation has grown, and its ministries' have achieved significant impact in the local communities it serves. Most recently, Rev. Lamar helped to design Metropolitan's

Sankofa Christian Parenting project, an initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment, to promote parenting practices that are rooted in Black faith and cultural traditions.

A native of Macon, Georgia, Lamar earned the bachelor of science degree in public management with a minor in philosophy and religion and a certificate in human resource management (magna cum laude) from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1996. In 1999, he earned the master of divinity degree from Duke University Divinity School. Lamar is currently a doctoral candidate at in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric at Christian Theological Seminary, one of the oldest seminaries in the country.

Prior to his tenure at Metropolitan, Lamar served congregations in Florida and Maryland; and from 2008 to 2011, he was the managing director of Leadership Education at Duke University Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, where he convened and resourced executive pastors of large churches, denominational finance executives, young denominational leaders, Methodist bishops, and the constituency of the Lilly Endowment's Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program.

Lamar has been long been actively involved in community organizing and currently serves the founding board

SPEAKERS

chair of the Just Power Alliance, a collective of organizations from the Midwest to the east coast that focuses on building multi-racial, multi-class, multi-generational, and multi-faith world that is joyful and just for all. Rev. Lamar has also collaborated with Repairers of the Breach, Poor People's Campaign – A National Call for Moral Revival, Center for Community Change (CCC), and People Improving Communities through Organization (PICO) to enact social and economic justice and to exhibit a real embrace of the beloved community.

An avid reader and writer, Lamar has published essays and chapters in outlets from peer-reviewed journals and books to articles and essays in the public sphere. His Washington Post op-ed from December 15, 2020, published after the Proud Boys desecrated Metropolitan by vandalizing church property, was a clarion call that culminated in a \$1 million judgment for punitive damages against the white supremacist group for their criminality. His efforts to embody justice in community have been featured in The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, US News and World Report, and the Afro-American and on WNYC's "The Takeaway," NPR's "1A," NPR's "All Things Considered," MSNBC's "The Reid Out," and PBS's "News Hour." Lamar has preached, lectured, and facilitated peer learning groups for denominations, judicatories, universities, seminaries, colleges, and local churches. He is the former cohost of the Can These Bones podcast; and his book, Ancestors: The Names That Bless Us, Curse Us, and Hold Us, will be published by Broadleaf Books in June 2025.

Lamar is honored to serve Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, where he seeks daily to extend Metropolitan's nearly two centuries-long legacy of bearing witness to and ushering into this world the reign of the living God. Under his leadership, Metropolitan remains committed to worship, liberation, and service. He is married to Dr. Dana A. Williams, Dean of the Graduate School at Howard University.



Tamara F. Lawson

Tamara F. Lawson is the Toni Rembe Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Washington School of Law in Seattle. Dean Lawson previously served in the roles of Dean, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and Professor of Law, at St. Thomas University College of Law in Miami. She was the founding dean of the Benjamin L. Crump Center for Social Justice. Dean Lawson holds several leadership appointments in the legal community: Association of American Law

Schools Deans' Steering Committee, Law School Admissions Council Board of Trustee, Society of American Law Teachers' Board of Governors, National Bar Association's Board of Governors and Chair of the NBA's Law Professors' Division. Dean Lawson has previously served as the Chair of three different AALS Sections: Women-in-Legal Education, Evidence Law, and Law and Humanities. She currently serves as the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee for LSAC's Board, and the Chair of the Committee on the Regulation of Legal Education for SALT's Board. Dean Lawson is regularly invited to speak on issues of criminal justice and race, educating student and practitioner audiences, both domestically and internationally.

Prior to joining the legal academy, Dean Lawson served as a Deputy District Attorney at the Clark County District Attorney's Office in Las Vegas, Nevada. Among other prosecutorial duties, she worked on the Special Victims Unit for Domestic Violence, as well as successfully argued multiple cases before the Nevada Supreme Court, including death penalty appeals.

As a faculty member, Dean Lawson was twice awarded Professor of the Year. As a scholar, her publications include a lead article in the American Journal of Criminal Law, entitled, Can Fingerprints Lie?, two co-authored casebooks, and an invited book chapter in CONTEMPORARY CONTROVERSIES: FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY. Dean Lawson's research has appeared in prestigious law journals. Her article A Fresh Cut in an Old Wound – A Critical Analysis of the Trayvon Martin Killing: The Public Outcry, the Prosecutors' Discretion, and The Stand Your Ground

Law garnered Dean Lawson media appearances as a legal expert, and she was selected as the Reporter for the American Bar Association's National Task Force on Stand Your Ground Laws. Her timely research on excessive force cases is published in *Powerless Against Police Brutality: A Felon's Story* and in *Awakening the American Jury: Did the Killing of George Floyd Alter Juror Deliberations Forever?*

Education

LL.M. 2003, Georgetown University Law Center J.D. 1995, University of San Francisco School of Law B.A. 1992, Claremont McKenna College



Dionna Maria Lewis

Dionna Maria Lewis, Esq., is a dynamic force in Washington, D.C., a third-generation native who has risen from the DC Public School system to establish herself as a prominent civil rights and employment attorney. As the Founder of District Legal Group, PLLC, Dionna spearheads a thriving litigation practice, representing clients in complex matters ranging from civil rights and labor disputes to business, contract, and appellate law. Her work spans state and federal courts, administrative agencies, and national equal employment opportunity (EEO) matters, where her fierce advocacy continues to make a tangible impact.

Appointed by Mayor Bowser and confirmed by the DC Council in 2016, Dionna made history as the youngest person ever to serve as a Commissioner on the DC Board of Elections, ensuring election integrity and legal compliance in the nation's capital. Her influence expanded when she was later nominated and confirmed as a Board Member for the DC Office of Employee Appeals, where she adjudicates cases concerning public employees' rights.

Dionna's leadership extends beyond the courtroom. She has earned national recognition as an award-winning attorney and dedicated public servant. Her voice has become noted in media outlets like NBC, ABC-7, Fox 5 DC, The Washington Post, the Baltimore Sun, The Afro, Black Enterprise, and the Maryland Daily Record where her casework and expertise have reached broad audiences. As a passionate advocate for social justice, equity, and voting rights, Dionna's work shapes local and national discourse.

Her extensive service record includes roles such as Past President of the Washington Bar Association, Second Vice President and General Counsel of the DC Democratic Black Caucus, and as a city wide elected At-Large Committeewoman to the DC Democratic Party. In each of these positions, Dionna has broken new ground, amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities and advancing critical legal reforms. Dionna is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

A rising star in the legal field, Dionna has been recognized by Super Lawyers as a Rising Star (2019-2024), as a "Top 40 Lawyer" by The National Black Lawyers (2019-2024), a "Top 40 Under 40 Trailblazer" by the National Bar Association; the 2020 "Young Lawyer of the Year" by the Bar Association of the District of Columbia; "Young Lawyer of the Year" by the Washington Bar Association Young Lawyers Division; received the Rhonda F. Williams Professionalism Award from the National Bar Association Young Lawyers Division; received the President's Award from the Washington Bar Association; received the Presidential Service Award from the National Bar Association; received the "Outstanding Service to the Board" award from the DC Board of Elections; and was featured in an edition of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division's editorial, "The Affiliate: Spotlight on Leadership: Professional Involvement at the National and Local Levels."

Dionna was named "Mother of the Year" for the District of Columbia in 2020 by American Mothers, Inc., and continues to inspire as both a legal titan and devoted mother to her two young daughters.

Dionna's academic foundation includes an L.L.M. in Litigation from George Washington University Law School, a Juris Doctor from Drake University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and History from the University of Virginia. Her career is a testament to the power of perseverance, passion, and purpose, making her a beacon of leadership and a role model for the next generation.



Rachel López

Rachel López is the James E. Beasley Professor of Law at Temple Law. She has also held visiting fellowships at research institutions around the world, including at the Harvard Kennedy School, Yale Law School, University of Cambridge, Princeton University, and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, and been a Fulbright Scholar in Guatemala and Spain. Her award-winning scholarship has appeared or is forthcoming in leading law journals, such as the Columbia Law Review, Northwestern University Law Review, and Minnesota Law Review.

She is a recognized expert in criminal law, human rights law, and public international law. She is a Special Advisor of the Latin American and Caribbean Law Council for the American Bar Association. From 2015 to 2019, she served as a Commissioner on the Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission, as an appointee of then Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. Professor López recently joined leading human rights experts as a co-author of the first law school textbook focused on domestic human rights in the United States. She received her B.A. from Northwestern University and J.D. from the University of Texas, School of Law. She also has an LL.M. in French and European Law from Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne.



Shannon McNeal

Shannon McNeal focuses her practice on technology, privacy, and security, specializing in contracts relating to marketing, advertising, entertainment, and consumer matters. She regularly assists clients by drafting and negotiating agreements of various kinds for the technology industry. Shannon also provides product counseling relating to technology and technology commercialization, including related regulatory matters. In addition, Shannon provides advertising, marketing, and promotions counseling on a wide-range

of consumer protection issues for various content streams including social media, digital media campaigns, websites, TV commercials, print media, contests, sweepstakes, employee incentive programs, and more. Prior to joining the technology practice, Shannon represented banks, licensed lenders, fintech companies, auto lenders, consumer reporting agencies, and other companies regarding a host of consumer compliance obligations in matters initiated by federal and state government regulators, as well as in litigation and internal investigations. Shannon also has had substantial experience handling complex civil litigation brought by private parties and government agencies on a wide range of issues from federal securities laws to labor and employment.



Spencer Overton

Spencer Overton is the Patricia Roberts Harris Research Professor and the founder and faculty director of the Multiracial Democracy Project at GW Law School. He is the author of the book "Stealing Democracy: The New Politics of Voter Suppression" and several law review articles on the law of democracy, including "Overcoming Racial Harms to Democracy from Artificial Intelligence," "State Power to Regulate Social Media Companies to Prevent Voter Suppression," and "The Implications of Section 230 for Black Communities." Professor Overton served as president of and rebuilt the Joint Center

for Political and Economic Studies—America’s Black think tank. He also held various senior policy leadership positions on the Obama presidential campaign and transition and in the Obama administration. He practiced law at Debevoise & Plimpton, clerked for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Damon Keith, and graduated with honors from both Hampton University and Harvard Law School.



Kim D. Parker, Esq.

Raised in Brooklyn, New York, Kim is an experienced civil trial attorney who represents individuals in Maryland and the District of Columbia, in premises and product liability matters, catastrophic injuries, civil rights litigation and bankruptcy. She is a graduate of John Jay College and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Legal Studies. She earned her law degree from University of Baltimore School of Law, in Baltimore, Maryland. She was previously an Associate Attorney for Norris Ramsey, a champion for civil rights in Maryland.

Kim is licensed to practice in all Maryland and DC courts, including the Maryland Supreme Court, and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. She is also admitted to practice in the federal district courts in Maryland and DC.

In these uncertain times of economic and political unrest, the everyday citizen needs to have the backing of a strong legal representative at their hands. The Law Offices of Kim Parker, P.A. has been the attorney of the people. Giving many a voice when no one else would listen. Ms. Parker’s law firm is centrally located and is a pillar of hope in the community. Ms. Parker’s commitment to helping the public extends far beyond her profession. It’s her compassion for people and her determination to transform lives that sets her law practice apart.



Michael Rand

Michael Rand is a Business, Finance, and Entrepreneurship Law Fellow and Visiting Associate Professor with the George Washington University Law School. He researches areas pertaining to firm use of derivatives, including effects on firm financial constraints and asset pricing anomalies. Concurrent with these responsibilities, Dr. Rand serves as a research consultant in the Office of the Chief Economist at the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), where he conducts research pertaining to OTC swap markets

for cleared and uncleared financial products, including IRS, FX, CDS/CDX, Commodity Swaps, and Equity Swaps.

Prior to joining the George Washington University Law School, Dr. Rand worked at several institutions in finance and FinTech, including the CFTC, Benjamin, PNC Bank, Northwestern Mutual, and Oakhill Equity. He has experience across various roles in finance including compliance, credit modeling, and asset pricing.

Dr. Rand obtained a PhD in Finance from George Washington University. He also holds an MA in Applied Economics from George Washington University, and both a BS in Mathematics and a BSBA in Business Administration, with concentrations in Economics and Finance, from Duquesne University.



Heidi Thomas Revels

Heidi Thomas Revels is a dedicated Corporate Counsel specializing in AWS Route 53 DNS. With expertise in product counsel support, she effectively manages the implementation of cybersecurity and privacy regulations for Route 53, ensuring compliance and security. Heidi oversees commercial contracts and addresses DNS abuse issues, demonstrating her commitment to maintaining the integrity and reliability of AWS services and the global internet. Her role combines legal acumen with a passion for technology, making her a vital asset in the fast-paced world of cloud computing.

Prior to joining Amazon, she worked as Associate Corporate Counsel at Diebold Nixdorf, Incorporated in Atlanta, GA. With a strong background in corporate law, securities regulation, and mergers and acquisitions, Heidi advises on SEC periodic reporting, engages in global mergers and divestitures, and manages corporate governance in Latin America. Heidi also worked as an associate at Hogan Lovells US, LLP in Washington, DC, where she gained valuable experience in securities law, public offerings, and venture capital fund formation. Her legal career also includes internships with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, LLP. Heidi earned her Juris Doctor, Cum Laude, from Howard University School of Law, where she was recognized with multiple CALI Awards and served as Senior Notes and Comments Editor for the Howard Law Journal. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Memphis.

Dean Alfreda Robinson has led a remarkably distinguished legal career. On February 15, 2024, Dean received the esteemed Charlotte E. Ray Award, named after the first black woman lawyer in the U.S., from the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division, National Bar Association (“GWAC”) for her groundbreaking Gender Equity Work. She is Chair of the historic NBA 35th Annual Wiley A. Branton Symposium (October 2024) and a Member of the NBA Centennial Commission.



Alfreda Robinson

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She is the recipient of many other high marks of distinction. Dean Robinson served as the 77th President (13th woman) of the 100-year-old, preeminent National Bar Association. Robinson has received the prestigious National Bar Association’s highest honor, the C. Francis Stradford Award, an NBA founder. In June 2023, she was inducted into the Washington Bar Association Hall of Fame. In July 2023, Dean became the first woman recipient of the Trial Masters Award, National Bar Association, Civil Trial Advocacy Section. In July 2022, Dean Robinson was inducted into the distinguished National Bar Association Hall of Fame. Moreover, Alfreda is the recipient of the National Bar’s prestigious Heman Marion Sweatt Award, Sankofa Award, and many Presidential Outstanding Service awards. She has held over 50 leadership positions.

Alfreda Robinson is the Associate Dean for Trial Advocacy and Co-Director of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Program at George Washington University Law School. Alfreda is the visionary founder of the Power Reimagined Gender and Race Equity Project.

Alfreda Robinson earned B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Chicago, and a J.D. degree from GW Law School. After law school, Dean joined the U.S. Department of Justice, where she received numerous honors, including the U.S. Attorney General’s Special Commendation, Outstanding Performance, Special Achievement, and Exceptional Performance awards.

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SPEAKERS



Frank Smith, Jr.

Commentator, civil rights activist, politician, and speaker Frank Smith, Jr. was born on September 17, 1942, in Newnan, Georgia. His mother was a homemaker and his father was a farmer and truck driver. In 1959, Smith earned his high school diploma from Central High School, where he was a member of the New Farmers of America as well as the debate team, choir and drama club. From 1959 until 1962, Smith attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, where he was a founding member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Smith left Morehouse during his senior year to play a role in the Civil Rights Movement. From 1962 until 1968, Smith worked with SNCC organizing and registering African Americans voters in Mississippi and Alabama. He is noted for his involvement and leadership role in planning and executing protests and marches in Greenwood, Mississippi, during the Freedom Summer of 1964. In 1968, Smith moved to Washington, D.C., when he accepted a job as a researcher for the Institute for Policy Studies, focusing on education and planning issues. Smith became involved in local community issues and was elected to serve as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC). In 1978, Smith unsuccessfully ran for the District of Columbia City Council, but the following year he was elected to public office and served one term on the D.C. Board of Education. In 1980, Smith earned his Ph.D. degree from the Union Institute in Ohio. In 1982, Smith was elected to the District of Columbia City Council where he represented one of the most racially, ethnically and economically diverse wards in the city. Smith was subsequently elected to serve four terms on the Council, remaining there until 1998. During his tenure on the Council, Smith supported legislation creating subsidies for housing down payments, a lottery system for disposing of condemned and surplus housing and establishing tax incentives for new business development. In 1998, Smith became chairman of the board and chief executive officer for the organization which worked to establish the African American Civil War Memorial and an accompanying museum. It is the only national memorial to the colored troops who fought in the Civil War and one of the most unique memorials in Washington, D.C. Smith has received numerous awards for his civic, community and political leadership.



Denise A. Smith

Denise A. Smith is deputy director of higher education policy and a senior fellow at The Century Foundation (TCF). She has served as the director of student engagement and college activism at Truth Initiative, overseeing the student engagement programming. She has worked with more than 200 colleges and universities, including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), community colleges, and Women's Colleges, providing technical assistance and strategic direction to achieve policy change. She has worked with nonprofit partners to develop and implement grant programs for prevention, policy, and advocacy. She specializes in strategy development, policy solutions, partnerships, and stakeholder engagement. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in higher education leadership and policy studies at Howard University, and is also the author of several op-ed articles in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. She received her master of public health degree from Morehouse School of Medicine and her bachelor's degree from South Carolina University and was recently recognized as a member of their inaugural 40 under 40 class. Currently, she is writing a series, *Centering Black Women's Experiences Regarding College Choice*.



Benjamin F. Wilson

Benjamin F. Wilson is the retired Chairman of Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., a top-ranked law firm focused on environmental and natural resource law and litigation. He represented major corporations, developers, and municipalities in complex litigation matters involving Clean Water Act enforcement, wetlands development, Superfund and environmental justice matters. He served as the Court-Appointed Monitor for the Duke Energy coal ash

spill remediation project and serves as Deputy Monitor for Emissions & Environmental in the Volkswagen AG emissions proceedings.

A tireless advocate for diversity, Mr. Wilson was inducted into the Halls of Fame of the National Bar Association in 2024 and the Washington Bar Association in 2020. He has received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the American Bar Association in 2024 and The American Lawyer in 2022. He received the Cora T. Walker Award from the National Bar Association Commercial Law Section and featured in the National Law Journal's cover story "The Vanguard and the Vision." In 2019, he received the National Bar Association's Presidential Award, and in 2018 NAWL's Lead by Example Award and the UNCF's MASKED Award. He founded and leads the African American General Counsel and Managing Partner Networks and Diverse Partners Network.

Mr. Wilson graduated from Dartmouth College and from Harvard Law School. He has served as Chairman of the Environmental Law Institute since 2016. Mr. Wilson serves on the Board of Directors of APCO Corporation, PH&E Corporation, the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company and of PG&E Corporation. He previously served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Dartmouth College and the Board of Governors of the District of Columbia Bar. He is also an Adjunct Professor in Environmental Law at the Howard University School of Law.

A proud fifth generation Washingtonian, Robert C. White, Jr. is in his second term as At-Large Member of the Council of the District of Columbia. He chairs the Council's Committee on Housing.



Caroline L. Wolverton

Caroline focuses her practice on government-facing litigation, including administrative and regulatory matters under the Administrative Procedure Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and other records-access policies. Caroline also represents clients in complex civil matters, drawing on her extensive litigation experience including motions practice, discovery, settlement negotiations, and trial.

Caroline previously served as a senior trial counsel in the Federal Programs Branch of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Division where she litigated civil cases of national significance involving regulatory, statutory, constitutional and other challenges on behalf of a diversity of federal agencies, including the departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Treasury and Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), Transportation, Education, Defense and State. She also provided counsel to multiple federal agencies on rulemakings as well as litigation risk and strategy.

Prior to her years of service at the DOJ, Caroline was an associate at another Washington, D.C. law firm. She also served as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Edward W. Nottingham in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

SPEAKERS



V. Lynn Whitfield

V. Lynn Whitfield, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, attended Brandeis University where she developed an interest in criminology and a desire to practice criminal law. She then matriculated to the University of Miami School of Law to make her desire a reality.

A graduate of University of Miami School of Law, Attorney V. Lynn Whitfield has been practicing law in the South Florida area for over forty years. She started her legal career in the public sector as an Assistant State Attorney. When she relocated to Palm Beach County in 1985, she began working for the Public Defender's Office.

Later, she left that position to serve as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of West Palm Beach, handling their personal injury and civil rights defense litigation.

After seven years, Attorney Whitfield opened her own practice specializing in criminal defense and municipal law.

Attorney Whitfield has gone on to serve as the City Attorney for both the cities of North Miami and Hallandale Beach.

In addition to her job duties, she has appeared as a legal commentator for Channel 25- WPBF, the ABC affiliate, in West Palm Beach. She provided gavel to gavel coverage for the State v. Nathaniel Brazil case and appeared as a commentator on the Clinton Impeachment trial. She has lectured to national, state and local organizations. She has been honored by numerous national, state and local organizations for her community service and service in professional organizations.

She is a published author of - "The Party's Not Over Until God Says So" - her journey of driving through the storms of life.

She is the Senior Attorney, Director of Election Protection with the Transformative Justice Coalition, a national non-profit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, DC.



Kinika L. Young

Kinika is the Director of Legal Advocacy at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in the Office of Public Policy based in Washington, D.C. Her role is to advance LLS's policy agenda to find cures and treatments for blood cancers and improve the quality of life for patients and their families. Kinika directs efforts to ensure the patient perspective is presented in litigation related to access to care, cost of care, and good governance by filing amicus briefs in federal and state courts. She also engages with oversight agencies on implementation

issues concerning laws and regulations affecting patients and consumers.

Prior to joining LLS in 2022, Kinika worked as the Senior Director of Health Policy and Equity at the Tennessee Justice Center, where she led statewide initiatives to engage stakeholders and advocate for health policies to protect healthcare access and improve health outcomes for Medicaid-eligible groups.

Kinika began her legal career as a litigator at the law firm of Bass, Berry & Sims, where she practiced for over 10 years, primarily representing healthcare providers in disputes with managed care organizations. She became a partner at the firm in 2015, and in 2017, during a period of significant political and civil unrest, she made a major career shift to join the health justice movement.



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