

United States District Court
District of Rhode Island

2022 District Conference

Racial and Social Justice in the Federal Courts

Providence Marriott Downtown
1 Orms Street, Providence, Rhode Island



2022 District Conference Committee

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Individuals with disabilities are welcomed and encouraged to attend the Conference. If you require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this event, please contact Rana Smith at rana_smith@rid.uscourts.gov or 401-752-7210.

Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 to 9:15 am - Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor

Welcome

9:15 to 9:30 am - Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor

Morning Breakout Sessions

Choose one session - **1.5 CLE, .5 Ethics CLE**

9:45 to 11:30 am

Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor:

Critical Race Theory: What It Is and What It Is Not

This session explores how the political, legislative, economic, and cultural system that has historically given white people significantly greater power and material resources has fundamentally shaped our courts and legal system. These renowned scholars will help participants understand what Critical Race Theory (CRT) is and is not and will challenge us to explore how the analytical framework described as Critical Race Theory can be a resource to help us understand and transform the relationship between race and power through our work as attorneys and judges.

Panel:

Professor Devon W. Carbado, Esq.

Professor Osamudia James

Dean Angela Onwuachi-Willig

Moderator:

Saikon Gbehan, Esq.

Morning Breakout Sessions

Marquis Ballroom, 1st Floor:

Diversity in the Workplace Including Law Firms

Many panels and presentations have been conducted on the all-important topic of workplace diversity usually focused on the legal pitfalls businesses may encounter. This panel is about shifting the narrative from reducing liability to positive business growth and social implications. The distinguished panelists will approach the topic from a more practical perspective, including a deep dive into the importance of workplace diversity not solely from a business growth perspective, but from a social and moral perspective exploring the implications of workplace diversity, or the lack thereof, on social justice issues on a macro and micro level. Among the topics that may be discussed are how workplace diversity, or the lack thereof, impacts minority employees, non-minority employees, clients, and business as a whole; how law firms can have a positive impact on society as a whole by implementing diversity initiatives and actively recruiting diverse candidates; and practical strategies for engaging and retaining diverse talent in workplaces, including law firms.

Panel:

Honorable William J. Trezvant
Tobey M. Daluz, Esq.
Dr. Stefanie K. Johnson

Moderator:

Honorable Melissa A. Long

Luncheon

11:45 am to 1:45 pm - Grand Ballroom

Olin Thompson Award Presentation

Olin Woodrow Thompson, III, August 13, 1971-July 18, 2022
From 1996-2022, Olin was an advocate for justice, practicing both at the Rhode Island Public Defender and Federal Defender Offices. He served the courts and his clients, with extraordinary integrity, decency, and humanity. He took a special interest in criminal justice reform, serving on the Governor's Working Group on Criminal Justice Reinvestment, helping establish Rhode Island's first federal re-entry court and managing numerous federal sentence reduction projects. He was a devoted partner to Christa and adoring father to three boys, Olin IV, Atticus and Nat.

Fred D. Gray, Esq.

Keynote Presentation and Q & A

12:15 to 1:45 pm - Grand Ballroom 1.5 CLE

Moderator: Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Choose one session - 1.5 CLE, .5 Ethics CLE

2:00 to 3:45 pm

Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor: Angel/Benevolent

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know (And Some Things You Didn't) About Qualified Immunity

This session will delve into the origins and purposes of the doctrine of qualified immunity flowing from civil actions brought against members of law enforcement pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 (Section 1983). Panel members will discuss the application of qualified immunity issues, how federal courts nationwide have been interpreting the standards, and growing criticism of the doctrine. The panel will also address the future of qualified immunity, including pros and cons for reforming the doctrine and experiences in states where qualified immunity has been eliminated in cases against law enforcement.

Panel:

Representative Leslie Herod

Professor Karen Blum

Jay Schweikert, Esq.

Moderator:

Marc DeSisto, Esq.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor: Sessions/College/Canal

The (Court) Room Where it Happens: Role of the Federal Judiciary as an Arena for Civil Rights and Racial Justice

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” The federal judiciary has played an integral role in bending the moral arc of our nation toward justice. It is the forum where battles for change to the oldest and deepest-rooted prejudices in our country’s history are waged. It is the forum where those continuing to deal with the prejudices and biases of our time enter to seek justice. Although “all” men and women are created equal—when they are treated disparately, the federal courts are the venues where individuals seek justice.

The panelists in this session are made up of people that have shown courage and a passion for protecting the civil rights of citizens throughout our country and ensuring racial equality for all. The panelists will discuss the role of the federal judiciary in the advancement of racial justice both in the past and currently in the United States. The panel brings together active federal practitioners, educators, and a federal judge to discuss the ways in which the federal courts have fulfilled this role.

The topics to be discussed will include the reconstruction era amendments to the constitution, historical federal court decisions on civil rights and racial justice, current issues before the federal courts involving civil rights and racial equality and the ways in which the federal courts and practicing lawyers can promote these ideals in the future.

Panel:

Professor Cara McClellan
Honorable Leslie Abrams Gardner
Professor Suzette Malveaux
Ezra D. Rosenberg, Esq.

Moderator:

Professor Cara McClellan

Afternoon Plenary - 1 CLE

4:00 to 5:00 pm - Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor

Conversation with the Judges

The Judges of this District will engage in conversations and discussions about court-related topics to be raised by the members of the bar in attendance.

Panel:

Honorable John J. McConnell, Jr.

Honorable William E. Smith

Honorable Mary S. McElroy

Honorable Lincoln D. Almond

Honorable Patricia A. Sullivan

Panel & Moderator Biographies



**Honorable
Lincoln D. Almond**

Lincoln D. Almond graduated “with distinction” from the University of Rhode Island in 1985 and with “high honors” from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1988. He was admitted to the Connecticut Bar in 1988 and the Rhode Island Bar in 1990. Judge Almond clerked for United States District Judge Peter C. Dorsey in the District of Connecticut from 1988 to 1990. He worked in private practice from 1990 to 2004 concentrating primarily in litigation/labor and employment law. Judge Almond was appointed Magistrate Judge in the District of Rhode Island on September 10, 2004.



**Professor
Karen Blum**

Karen Blum is a Professor Emerita and Research Professor of Law at Suffolk University Law School where she has taught for over forty years in the areas of Federal Courts, Police Misconduct Litigation, and Civil Procedure. She received her B.A. from Wells College, a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School, and an LL. M. from Harvard Law School. Professor Blum has been a regular faculty participant in Section 1983 Civil Rights Programs and Institutes throughout the United States. Since 1990, she has served as a faculty member for workshops sponsored by the Federal Judicial Center for Federal District Court and Federal Magistrate Judges. She has authored numerous articles in the Section 1983 area, including a piece entitled *Qualified Immunity: Time to Change the Message*, 93 Notre Dame L. Rev. 1887 (2018). She is co-author, along with Michael Avery, David Rudovsky, and Jennifer Laurin of the treatise *POLICE MISCONDUCT: LAW AND LITIGATION*.



**Professor
Devon W. Carbado, Esq.**

Professor Carbado is the Honorable Harry Pregerson Professor of Law at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law and the former inaugural Associate Vice Chancellor of BruinX, a multidisciplinary research unit, in the UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. He teaches *Constitutional Criminal Procedure*, *Constitutional Law*, *Critical Race Theory*, and *Criminal Adjudication*. He has won numerous teaching awards and in 2005 was named an inaugural recipient of the Fletcher Foundation Fellowship. Modeled on the Guggenheim fellowships, it is awarded to scholars whose work furthers the goals of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 2018, he was named an inaugural recipient of the Atlantic Philanthropies Fellowship for Racial Equity.

Professor Carbado writes in the areas of employment discrimination, criminal procedure, implicit bias, constitutional law, and critical race theory. He is the co-author of *Acting White? Rethinking Race in "Post-Racial" America* (Oxford University Press) (with Mitu Gulati) and author of *Unreasonable: Black Lives, Police Power, and the Fourth Amendment* (The New Press). A board member of the African American Policy Forum, Professor Carbado was the Shikes Fellow in Civil Liberties and Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard Law School in 2012. Professor Carbado graduated from Harvard Law School in 1994. At Harvard, he was editor-in-chief of the *Harvard Black Letter Law Journal*, a member of the Board of Student Advisors, and winner of the Northeast Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition.



Tobey M. Daluz, Esq.

Tobey M. Daluz is a litigation partner and Practice Co-Leader of Ballard Spahr's Bankruptcy and Restructuring Group. She focuses on corporate restructuring, workouts, and general bankruptcy litigation. Tobey represents debtors, secured and unsecured creditors, insurers, indenture trustees, and official committees in chapter 11 bankruptcy cases. She also represents buyers of assets in the context of sales under section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code. Tobey is a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute and she is the founding Chair (now member) of the Delaware Network of the International 7 Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation (IWIRC). She is a member of the Bankruptcy Law Section and Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section of the Delaware State Bar Association. Tobey was appointed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit to serve a three-year term on its Lawyers Advisory Committee, which comments on proposed rules of the Circuit and serves as a liaison between the court and legal community. Over the past two decades, she has served on the Third Circuit's Merit Selection Panel and participated in the review and recommendation of candidates for five Eastern District of Pennsylvania bankruptcy judge positions. More recently, she was appointed to chair the Third Circuit's Merit Selection Panel, which led to the appointment of two bankruptcy judges for the District of Delaware.

Tobey is the founding partner of the firm's office in Wilmington, Delaware, and served as Office Managing Partner from 2003 to 2011. From 2011 to 2016, Tobey served on the firm's Executive Management Committee as the Partner-in-Charge of Attorney Career Advancement was responsible for the recruitment, training, professional development, compensation, evaluation, and promotion of nearly 300 non-partner lawyers. Effective July 1, 2016, she was elected by her partners to serve a three-year term on the firm's Board and was reelected for a second three-year term that concluded on June 30, 2022. For nearly twenty years, Tobey has been a contributing member of the firm's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. Tobey lectures both locally and nationally on the topics of bankruptcy and diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession.



Marc DeSisto, Esq.

Marc DeSisto has been practicing law in Rhode Island for 40 years. Mr. DeSisto started his career in the Criminal Division of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Department where he served as the prosecutor in numerous criminal trials from 1982-1985. Mr. DeSisto then switched to the civil side and from 1985 to the present has represented most of the cities and towns in the State of Rhode Island in civil trials including defending police departments and officers in lawsuits alleging constitutional violations. He is a fellow of both the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Association of Trial Lawyers.



**Honorable Leslie
Abrams Gardner**

The Honorable Leslie Abrams Gardner is a United States District Court Judge for the Middle District of Georgia. On March 11, 2014, President Obama nominated her to the bench; and, on November 18, 2014, the Senate confirmed her by a vote of 100-0. On November 21, 2014, Judge Gardner took the oath of office and became the first female federal judge in the Middle District of Georgia and the first African American woman to become an Article III judge in the State of Georgia.

Judge Gardner received her bachelor's degree from Brown University in 1997 and received her J.D. from Yale Law School in 2002. Gardner clerked for the Honorable Marvin J. Garbis in the District of Maryland and then joined the DC office of Skadden, Arps. In 2010, Judge Gardner became an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia where she prosecuted major crimes, white collar crimes, and worked as the Community Outreach Coordinator until being elevated to the bench.



Fred D. Gray, Esquire

Fred David Gray, a native of Montgomery, Alabama, is a landmark-setting civil rights lawyer. Educated at the Nashville Christian Institute, Alabama State University and Case Western Reserve University, Gray's legal career spans a time period of over 60 years.

Enthusiastic, energetic and out of law school less than a year, he began a dynamic civil rights career in 1954. His first civil rights case was representation of Claudette Colvin, a 15-year old African American high school student who refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1955. In December 1955 he represented Mrs. Rosa Parks who was arrested because she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, igniting the Montgomery Bus Boycott, *City of Montgomery v. Rosa Parks*. He was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s first civil rights attorney.

As an author, Gray wrote *Bus Ride to Justice* first released in 1995, Revised Edition released in 2013, was previewed at the Jimmy Carter Center and broadcast on C-Span Book TV. Upon receipt of a copy, President Barack Obama wrote in a letter to Gray, *"Today, we stand on the shoulders of giants who helped move us toward a more perfect Union, and I appreciate your sharing your story."* The Tuskegee Syphilis Study was released in May 1998. He also wrote *The Sullivan Case: A Direct Product of the Civil Rights Movement*, a review for Case Western Reserve Law Review.

In 1997 Gray encouraged the President of the United States to make an official apology to the participants of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. The participants also requested a memorial in their honor. The apology was made at the White House in May of that year. Gray was the moving force in the establishment of the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center, Tuskegee, Alabama. A 501(c)3

Corporation, it serves as a memorial to the Study participants, and educates the public on contributions in the field of human and civil rights by Native Americans, Americans of African and European descent. It also strives to educate on the role Tuskegee-Macon County played in the Civil Rights Movement.

Gray filed suits that integrated all state institutions of higher learning in the State of Alabama, and 104 of the then 121 elementary and secondary school systems in the state, *Lee v. Macon*. He was counsel in preserving and protecting the rights of persons involved in the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study in 1972, the case of *Pollard v. United States of America*. In July of 1993, he argued on behalf of Alabama State University, the higher education case, *John F. Knight, Jr. v. State of Alabama, et. al.*, U.S. District Court for the Eleventh Circuit. The court held in that case that there are still vestiges of racial discrimination in higher education in Alabama.

The list of civil rights cases that Mr. Gray won can be found in most constitutional law textbooks. Among them are included:

- Browder v. Gayle*, which integrated the buses in the City of Montgomery in 1956.

- Gomillion v. Lightfoot* decided in 1960, returned African-Americans to the city limits of the City of Tuskegee. A landmark case, it opened the door for redistricting and reapportioning various legislative bodies across the nation laying the foundation for the concept, "one man one vote".

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People v. State of Alabama, ex rel. John Patterson, Attorney General*, was brought by the State of Alabama in which it outlawed the NAACP from doing business in the State of Alabama. This case was taken to the Supreme Court, three times through the state court system, and twice through the federal court system. The ultimate result was the NAACP was able to resume its business operations in the State of Alabama.

- Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education*, decided in 1961, reinstated students who were expelled from Alabama State College and held that the students were

unconstitutionally expelled, and students attending a state supported institution are entitled to a hearing before expulsion. The legal principle announced in this case has been extended to many other areas.

-*Williams v. Wallace*, decided in 1965, was a class action suit brought by African Americans against Governor Wallace and the State of Alabama and resulted in the court ordering Governor Wallace and the State of Alabama to protect marchers as they walked from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to present grievances as a result of being unable to vote. The publicity of these actions led to the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

-*Mitchell v. Johnson*, decided in 1966, was one of the first civil actions brought to remedy systematic exclusion of blacks from jury service.

Gray has received numerous awards and honors. Currently Gray is the senior managing shareholder in the law firm of Gray, Langford, Sapp, McGowan, Gray, Gray & Nathanson P.C., with offices in Alabama. The firm is nationally recognized and has received extensive press coverage in such publications as USA Today, Ebony Magazine, Jet Magazine, NBA Magazine, The Washington Times, Case Western Reserve University Magazine, New York Times, and ABC's Prime Time Live.

An Alabama State University (ASU) graduate, Class of 1951, Gray has made substantial contributions to his alma mater. He was the first President of the National Alumni Association of ASU when it was reorganized in approximately 1964 and the first person of color to serve as General Counsel for Alabama State University. He was inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame in 2003.

Under the ASU Trust for Excellence he has established an endowment trust in the name of his late wife, Bernice H. Gray, a 1956 graduate of ASU. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. An elder of the Tuskegee Church of Christ, Gray is married to Carol Porter of Cleveland, Ohio. He is the father of four, grandfather of six and stepfather of three.



Representative Leslie Herod

Leslie Herod was elected in 2016 as the first LGBTQ African American in the Colorado General Assembly. Since then, she has passed 150 bills, addressing criminal justice reform, mental health, addiction, youth homelessness, and civil rights protections. Some of her more significant contributions include: ending cash bail for minor offenses; de-felonizing drug possession; passing a comprehensive police accountability bill following the highly public murder of George Floyd and the nationwide movement that followed. In addition to winning reelection in 2018, Rep. Herod championed a ballot initiative - Caring for Denver - that raises \$35 million annually for mental health and substance abuse treatment and services for children and adults. Rep. Herod serves as Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and is a member of the powerful Joint Budget Committee.



Dr. Stefanie K. Johnson

Dr. Stefanie K. Johnson is an acclaimed author, professor, and keynote speaker who studies the intersection of leadership and diversity, focusing on (1) how unconscious bias affects the evaluation of leaders and (2) strategies that leaders can use to mitigate bias. Her 2020 Wall Street Journal bestselling book, “Inclusify: The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging to Build Innovative Teams,” shares the surprising ways leaders can undermine inclusion and provides actionable ways they can pivot to build more inclusive teams.

Dr. Johnson is a member of the MG 100 Coaches and was selected for the 2020 Thinkers50 Radar List, comprising 30 international management scholars whose work will shape the future of how organizations are managed and led. Dr. Johnson is a frequent contributor to the Harvard Business Review and an in-demand keynote speaker. She presented her work at the White House in 2016 during a National Equal Pay Day summit on diversity in corporate America and to top organizations at over 200 global speaking engagements. Dr. Johnson has served on expert committees and shared her thought leadership with NASA, the NFL and the World Economic Forum.

She currently serves as director of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders and as a professor in the department of psychological sciences at Rice University. Most recently, Dr. Johnson held the rank of associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder’s Leeds School of Business, where she taught students focused on leadership and inclusion.



Honorable Melissa A. Long

Melissa A. Long was sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court on January 11, 2021. Before her elevation to the Supreme Court, Justice Long served for over three years as an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, where she was assigned to be in charge of, or to assist on, various calendars in Providence County. Immediately prior to joining the bench, she was Deputy Secretary of State at the Rhode Island Department of State from 2015-2017.

Justice Long currently chairs the Rhode Island Committee on Racial & Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and is an advisory board member of the National Consortium on Racial & Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. Justice Long received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia and earned her law degree at the George Mason University School of Law. She served as a law clerk to the Honorable Marcus D. Williams of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia and thereafter devoted her legal career to public service and public interest law.

A Washington, D.C., native, Justice Long is the daughter of two U.S. Army veterans who married six months before the Supreme Court decided *Loving v. Virginia*. Justice Long grew up on and near military bases in El Paso, Texas; Alexandria, Virginia; Schweinfurt, Germany; and Seoul, South Korea. She and her family have resided in Providence since 1999.



Professor Suzette Malveaux

Suzette Malveaux is Moses Lasky Professor of Law and Director of the Byron R. White Center for the Study of American Constitutional Law at the University of Colorado Law School. She is a member of the American Law Institute and Chair of the American Association of Law Schools Civil Procedure Section. She has taught in the areas of Civil Procedure, Complex Litigation, Employment Discrimination, Civil Rights, and Constitutional Law for almost two decades.

Her scholarship explores the intersection of civil rights and civil procedure, and access to justice issues. She is co-editor of *A Guide to Civil Procedure; Integrating Critical Legal Perspectives* (NYU Press, forthcoming 2022) and co-author of *Class Actions and Other Multi-Party Litigation; Cases and Materials* (West, 2006, 2012). Malveaux was a class action specialist and civil rights attorney prior to becoming a professor. For six years, Malveaux served as pro bono counsel for the plaintiffs in *Alexander v. State of Oklahoma*, a constitutional lawsuit filed against Tulsa by victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. As co-counsel, she represented the victims before the U.S. federal courts, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Organization of American States) and the U.S. House of Representatives. Malveaux also represented over 1.5 million women alleging gender discrimination against Wal-Mart, the largest employment discrimination case to date.

Professor Malveaux graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University. She earned her J.D. from NYU School of Law, where she was a Root-Tilden Scholar, Associate Editor of the Law Review and Center for International Law Fellow.



Professor Cara McClellan

Cara McClellan is Director and Associate Practice Professor of the Advocacy for Racial and Civil (ARC) Justice Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law. The ARC Clinic provides students with hands-on experience working in civil rights litigation and policy advocacy around systemic racism. She previously served as Assistant Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc., where her work focused on education equity and ending the criminalization of Black people. McClellan has represented students and families in school desegregation cases, such as *Sheff v. O'Neill*, and students and alumni as amici in *SFFA v. Harvard*, defending Harvard's affirmative action admissions policy.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Yale College, an MS.Ed from Penn's Graduate School of Education, and a JD from Yale Law School. Following law school, she clerked for the Honorable Gregory M. Sleet, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court and the Honorable Andre M. Davis, Senior Judge for the Fourth Circuit.



Professor Osamudia James

Professor James is a Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina School of Law, where her writing and teaching interests include education law, race and the law, administrative law, and torts. Professor James is an expert in areas of race, education, and civil rights and discrimination, and the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and popular press commentary exploring the interaction of law and identity in the context of public education. Her work has appeared in the *NYU Law Review*, the *Michigan Law Review*, and the *Minnesota Law Review*, among others, with forthcoming publications including *Superior Status: Relational Obstacles in Law to Racial Justice & LGBTQ Equality*, 63 B.C. L. Rev. (forthcoming 2022), and *White Injury and Innocence: On the Legal Future of Antiracism Education*, 108 VA. L. REV. (forthcoming 2022). Her work has also appeared in the pages of publications including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Ms. Magazine*.

Professor James graduated with honors from the Georgetown University Law Center, and also earned an LL.M. from the University of Wisconsin where she was a William H. Hastie Fellow. She practiced law at King & Spalding in Washington, DC before joining the faculty at the University of Miami, where she taught for 13 years prior to joining Carolina Law. Professor James was a 2014 co-recipient of the Derrick A. Bell, Jr. Award, a national award presented to a junior faculty member who makes an extraordinary contribution to legal education, the legal system, or social justice through activism, mentoring, teaching and scholarship. She was awarded the Hausler Golden Apple Teaching Award from Miami Law in 2017, and was also selected as a University of Miami Public Voices Fellow in 2020.



Honorable John J. McConnell, Jr.

Chief Judge John J. McConnell, Jr. is the Chief Judge of the United State District Court for the District of Rhode Island. President Barack Obama nominated him to the bench and the U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination in May 2011. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. appointed him to serve as a member of the Committee on Codes of Conduct of the Judicial Conference of the United States. He is also a past member of the First Circuit Judicial Council and the First Circuit Jury Plan Committee and is currently the Co-Chair of the First Circuit Post-Pandemic Operations Committee, and a member of the Workplace Conduct Committee and the First Circuit Conference Planning Committee.

Before becoming a judge, Chief Judge McConnell was a trial attorney for 25 years. He clerked for Associate Justice of the R.I. Supreme Court Donald F. Shea. Chief Judge McConnell, born in Providence, R.I., received his A.B. from Brown University in 1980 with a concentration in Urban Studies and his J.D. from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in 1983, where he received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award. He is married to Sara Shea McConnell, and they have three children.



**Honorable
Mary S. McElroy**

Mary S. McElroy is a District Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island. She was nominated by President Donald J. Trump and confirmed on September 30, 2019. Judge McElroy clerked for the Honorable Donald F. Shea of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island from 1992-1993 and was in private practice until 1994. She served as an assistant public defender for the Rhode Island Public Defender from 1994-2006, as an assistant federal defender with the Federal Defender for the Districts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island from 2006-2012, and as the Rhode Island Public Defender from 2012-2019.

Judge McElroy was born in Providence, Rhode Island and received her B.A. from Providence College in 1987 and her J.D. from Suffolk University Law School in 1992.



**Dean Angela
Onwuachi-Willig**

Angela Onwuachi-Willig is the Dean and Ryan Roth Gallo & Ernest J. Gallo Professor of Law at Boston University School of Law. She is an expert in critical race theory, employment discrimination, and family law who joined the law school as Dean in 2018. Dean Onwuachi-Willig previously taught at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, the University of Iowa College of Law, and at the University of California - Davis, School of Law. Dean Onwuachi-Willig is a co-editor of the book Critical Race Judgments: Rewritten U.S. Court Opinions on Race and Law (Cambridge University Press 2022) and author of the book According to Our Hearts: Rhinelander v. Rhinelander and the Law of the Multiracial Family (Yale 2013). Her articles have appeared

in the *Yale Law Journal*, *Virginia Law Review*, *Northwestern University Law Review*, *California Law Review*, *Michigan Law Review*, *Georgetown Law Journal*, *Texas Law Review*, *UCLA Law Review*, and *Vanderbilt Law Review*.

Dean Onwuachi-Willig was one of five black women deans to receive the inaugural AALS Impact Award in recognition of their work in collating the Law Deans Antiracist Clearinghouse Project in 2021. She has also won numerous teaching awards and other national awards. Dean Onwuachi-Willig serves on numerous boards and national committees. She served as the chair for the AALS Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Law Teachers and Students. She also is the founder of the Lutie A. Lytle Black Women Law Faculty Workshop, which has resulted in the production of many books and hundreds of articles and essays by its participants and has assisted dozens of women on the path to tenure.

Dean Onwuachi-Willig graduated from Grinnell College, Phi Beta Kappa, and received her JD from the University of Michigan, where she was a Clarence Darrow Scholar, a *Michigan Law Review* note editor, and an associate editor for the founding issue of the *Michigan Journal of Race and Law*. After law school, she clerked for US District Court Judge Solomon Oliver of the Northern District of Ohio and for US Sixth Circuit Judge Karen Nelson Moore. She received her PhD in sociology and African American studies from Yale University. Prior to teaching, she practiced law as a labor and employment associate at Jones Day in Cleveland, Ohio and Foley Hoag in Boston, Massachusetts.



Ezra D. Rosenberg, Esq.

Ezra Rosenberg is Co-Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law's Voting Rights Project, overseeing its voting rights litigation, a robust portfolio of over 110 cases in which the Lawyers' Committee has participated over the last 7 years. Mr. Rosenberg has tried several of these cases, including successful challenges to Texas's voter ID law, and to the Trump Administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. He is currently litigating challenges to Georgia and Texas's redistricting plans and those same states' laws altering certain voting requirements enacted in 2021.

Mr. Rosenberg joined the Lawyers' Committee in November 2014, continuing a 40-year career in the public and private sectors. Prior to joining the Lawyers' Committee staff, he was a partner at Dechert LLP, where he served several terms on the firm's Policy Committee and as a Deputy Chair of the firm and co-chair of Dechert's Product Liability and Mass Torts Group. Mr. Rosenberg was consistently ranked among the top litigators both in New Jersey and nationwide by numerous publications, including *Chambers*, *The Legal 500 United States*, *Benchmark Litigation*, and, in 2014, was named as one of the top 500 lawyers in the nation by *Lawdragon*. At Dechert, he was actively involved in *pro bono* representations and, in 2014, was named to *The National Law Journal's* "Pro Bono Hot List" for his role in significant public interest cases of national importance, and in 2015 received the ACLU of NJ's "Legal Leadership Award," and a Joint Resolution of the New Jersey Legislature honoring his *pro bono* service.

Mr. Rosenberg began his career with the New Jersey Department of the Public Advocate, focusing on "special project" criminal appeals, arguing several times before the New Jersey Supreme Court, including a landmark case that set the standard for judicial review of prosecutorial denials of pretrial diversion. He joined the Lands & Natural Resources Division of the United States Department of Justice where, from 1979 to 1982, he handled a variety of cases relating to the nation's lands. Mr. Rosenberg graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, B.A., *Cum laude*, in 1971 and from New York University School of Law, J.D., 1974, *Cum laude*, where he received the Founders Day Award and was admitted to the Order of the Coif.



Jay Schweikert, Esq.

Jay Schweikert is a research fellow with the Cato Institute's Project on Criminal Justice. His research and advocacy focuses on accountability for prosecutors and law enforcement, plea bargaining, Sixth Amendment trial rights, and the provision and structuring of indigent defense. Before joining Cato, Mr. Schweikert spent four years doing civil and criminal litigation at Williams & Connolly LLP. He holds a JD from Harvard Law School, where he was an articles editor for the *Harvard Law Review* and chaired the Harvard Federalist Society's student colloquium program. Following law school, Mr. Schweikert clerked for Judge Diane Sykes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and Judge Laurence Silberman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. He holds a BA in political science and economics from Yale University.



Honorable William E. Smith

William E. Smith is a United States District Judge for the District of Rhode Island. He was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed in 2002. Judge Smith became Chief Judge of the District of Rhode Island in 2013 and served as chief until 2019. Judge Smith is active in federal judicial administration, having served on several U.S. Judicial Conference committees, and in federal judicial education, serving on the Federal Judiciary Center's Committee on District Judge education, and as a mentor for newly appointed judges. He serves on numerous community boards and is the chair of the board of the Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol, Rhode Island, where he is also an Adjunct Professor teaching several courses.

Prior to assuming the bench, Judge Smith was a partner at Edwards & Angell in Providence, Rhode Island, the firm he had joined after graduating from law school. His private law practice years were interrupted by his service as Staff Director of the Rhode Island Office of United States Senator Lincoln Chafee. Judge Smith was born in Boise, Idaho and received his B.A. and J.D. (cum laude) degrees from Georgetown University.



**Honorable
Patricia A. Sullivan**

Patricia A. Sullivan has served as United States Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court, District of Rhode Island since 2012. Prior to serving in this capacity she practiced law at Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP (formerly Edwards & Angell, LLP and Edwards Angell Palmer Dodge, LLP), Providence, Rhode Island from 1978 until 2012. She has served on the Adjunct Faculty at Roger Williams University School of Law and as the Chair and Co-Chair of numerous court, community and Bar Association Committees including serving as President (2000 – 2003) and Member, Board of Directors, Federal Bar Association, 2000 – 2019; Member, Board of Trustees, Rhode Island Bar Foundation, 2005 – 2020; and Member, Board of Trustees, Roger Williams University School of Law, 2013 – present.

She graduated from Wellesley College, B.A. with honors, 1973; and Georgetown University Law Center, J.D., magna cum laude, 1978 where she served as Articles Editor on the Georgetown Law Review.



Honorable O. Rogerie Thompson

Judge O. Rogerie Thompson joined the First Circuit Court of Appeals in April 2010, making her the first African-American and the second woman on the Court. She assumed senior status in September 2022. Previously, she served as an Associate Justice for the Rhode Island Superior Court (1997-2010) and an Associate Judge with the Rhode Island District Court (1988-1997). Prior to this, she was a senior partner with Thompson & Thompson, an associate at the law firm of McKinnon and Fortunato, an assistant city solicitor for Providence, and a senior staff attorney for Rhode Island Legal Services. She graduated from Brown University, earned her J.D. degree from Boston University School of Law, and holds honorary degrees from the University of Rhode Island, Bryant University, Roger Williams University School of Law, Johnson and Wales University, and Providence College. She currently is a member of the College Unbound Board of Trustees and the Roger Williams University School of Law Board of Directors.



**Honorable
William J. Trezvant**

William Trezvant was sworn in as an Associate Judge of the Rhode Island District Court on January 10, 2022. Prior to his appointment, Judge Trezvant was senior counsel for Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O'Gara and previously held various positions as Special Assistant in the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General, where he worked for nearly two decades as a criminal prosecutor on cases ranging from misdemeanors to high profile felonies. His prior experience includes managing the Trezvant Law Group LLC and working as a Budget Analyst for the Rhode Island Department of Administration and for the Governor's Rhode Island Commission on Police and Community Relations, where he wrote an advisor opinion for the Commission on the use of deadly force by police. Earlier in his career, Judge Trezvant was the Assistant Counsel for Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Connecticut, where, among other duties, he was the Casino's liaison to various federal, state and local government law enforcement and administrative agencies.

In addition to his legal practice, Judge Trezvant is an active community volunteer and served on various state and nonprofit boards, including previously as a member of the Board of Directors of Rhode Island Legal Services Inc., as a member of the Board of Directors of Boy Scouts of America/Narragansett Council, as President of the Thurgood Marshall Law Society, and as a member of the NAACP and National Eagle Scout Association. Judge Trezvant earned his law degree from the College of William & Mary, Marshall-Wythe School of Law and Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rhode Island.

2022

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