

PANELISTS & PRESENTERS:

The Death Penalty in Orleans Parish



Professor Andrea Armstrong

Professor Armstrong joined the Loyola University New Orleans, College of Law faculty in 2010. Her research focuses on the constitutional dimensions of prisons and jails, specifically prison labor practices, the intersection of race and conditions of incarceration, and public oversight of detention facilities. She teaches in the related fields of constitutional law, criminal law, race and the law, and constitutional criminal procedure. Andrea Armstrong also serves on the board of the Capital Appeals Project and is a founding board member of the Promise of Justice Initiative, a non-profit dedicated to abolishing the death penalty and advocating for prisoners' rights. Professor Armstrong is a graduate of Yale Law School, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, where she completed her M.P.A. in International Relations, and New York University. Prior to law school, Professor Armstrong's research focused on international human rights and regional conflict dynamics. She has worked with the Center on International Cooperation at NYU, the International Center for Transitional Justice, as well as the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the U.N. Commission on Human Security. She also taught policy modules on democratization at the Junior Summer Institute at Princeton University. After graduating from law school, Professor Armstrong served as a clerk for the Honorable Helen G. Berrigan of the United States Eastern District of Louisiana. She also litigated prisoners' rights issues, among others, as a Thomas Emerson fellow with David Rosen and Associates in New Haven, CT. She is admitted to practice in Connecticut (ret), New York (ret) and Louisiana state courts, as well as the U.S. District Court of Connecticut and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.



Richard Bourke

Richard Bourke is the director of the LCAC. He graduated from the Melbourne University School of Law in Australia where he also gained a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Psychology and Criminology. Richard came to New Orleans to volunteer and then worked at the LCAC after pursuing a successful career as a criminal barrister in Australia. Richard is certified as capital trial lead counsel in Louisiana and also represents defendants in state and federal capital post-conviction proceedings in Texas and Mississippi. In 2007 Richard was awarded the Sam Dalton Capital Defense Award by the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Richard is licensed in Louisiana, Texas, federal court and the United States Supreme Court.



Judge Calvin Johnson (ret)

The Honorable Calvin Johnson, retired Chief Judge of the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court established the first Mental Health Treatment Court in the State of Louisiana in 2002. By 2005, this Special Court was selected as one of four demonstration courts in the Country. Prior to establishing the first Mental Health Treatment Court, Judge Johnson served as Drug Court Judge from 1994 until 2002. Judge Johnson received his undergraduate degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge in 1969, served four years in the United States Air Force, and then received his Juris doctorate from Loyola Law School in 1978. He was Professor of Law at Loyola Law School for nine years and Judge of the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court for seventeen years. He has received many awards in recognition of his commitment to working with individuals involved in the criminal justice system through every aspect of their recovery, including job readiness, housing stability, and community service projects. He is the recipient of the La. Supreme Court Justice Albert Tate Award for Judicial Excellence, the Louis A. Martinet Award for Judicial Excellence, the ACLU Ben Smith Award for Community Service, the Loyola Law School Alumni of the year award, the Children's Bureau of New Orleans Hero award, the Juvenile Justice for Youth Award, the Louisiana Bar Association Presidents Award and the Crime Stoppers Award. Judge Johnson is a Board Member of The Youth Empowerment Project, Liberty's Kitchen and Children's Bureau.

Chris Murell

Chris Murell graduated summa cum laude from Emory University (B.A. Philosophy) and obtained his J.D. at New York University School of Law. Chris was awarded an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Fellowship while at N.Y.U and also worked with the Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama. Immediately prior to joining the Promise of Justice Initiative, Chris worked at the Orleans Public Defenders for seven years, including co-founding their capital trial division in 2012. Before that, Chris completed a two-and-a-half-year fellowship attorney position at the Georgia Capital Defender, representing capital trial defendants across the state. During law school, Chris worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, on federal capital trials in Alabama, and served as a research assistant for Professor Anthony G. Amsterdam.



Colin Reingold

Colin Reingold is the Litigation Director at the Orleans Public Defenders, where he supervises the Special Litigation Division and also handles direct representation trial cases. He oversees OPD's appellate and systemic litigation and has argued numerous times in front of the Louisiana Fourth

Circuit Court of Appeals and the Louisiana Supreme Court. Before becoming Litigation Director, Colin was a Special Litigation Staff Attorney at OPD. He clerked for the Hon. Ginger Berrigan of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana. He has a J.D. from the University of Michigan and a B.A. from Yale University.



Majeeda Snead

Professor Snead started her legal career as the 1985 recipient of the Reginald Hebert Smith Fellowship working at New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation in the Family Law Unit. During that fellowship she established an in house relationship with Catholic Charities representing displaced battered women. In 1987 she joined the law firm of Howell & Bayer and in 1990 became a partner in the law firm of Howell & Snead, specializing in civil rights, plaintiff civil litigation, criminal defense and family law. In 1999 she was invited to be a Visiting Clinical Professor in the Loyola Law Clinic teaching in the area of criminal defense. She was asked to join the faculty in 2001. In July, 2007 she became the Acting Director of the Loyola Law Clinic serving until August 1, 2008. In July, 2008 she was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve as Judge Pro Tem in Criminal District Court for the Parish of Orleans where she served until August 22, 2008. She is also one of the Governor's appointees to the Louisiana Public Defender Board. Prior to that appointment she was a member of the Louisiana Task Force on Criminal Defense.

Nicholas Trenticosta

Nicholas J. Trenticosta received a degree in Social Work from Southern University of New Orleans and a degree in sociology from the University of New Orleans in 1977. In 1987, he graduated from the Louisiana State University Law School, and has devoted his practice to representing persons facing the death penalty at trial, appeal and habeas corpus proceedings. He was the Director of the Loyola Death Penalty Resource Center from 1989 until 1999. Along with his law partner, Susan Herrero, he directed the El Salvador Capital Assistance Project from 2003 until 2011. He has been an Adjunct Professor at the Loyola University School of Law and Tulane University, and has lectured extensively at death penalty conferences and training programs throughout the country. He has represented three death-sentenced inmates in the United States Supreme Court.



John Thompson

John Thompson was sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit. Prosecutors concealed evidence from a previous carjacking charge that would have proved John was innocent; as such, John was unable to defend himself fully when on trial for murder. Years later, as John sat on death row approaching his seventh execution date, his lawyers uncovered

the prosecutors' actions. The courts gave John a new trial; once the jury heard all of the evidence pointing towards John's innocence and the guilt of one of the State's witnesses, they took thirty minutes to acquit him. John was released in May 2003 after spending 18 years in prison, 14 of them on death row. On returning home, John quickly became aware of the unmet needs of other exonerees in Louisiana and Mississippi. In response, John founded Resurrection After Exoneration (RAE), a non-profit dedicated to assisting exonerees in their difficult transition from prison to the outside world. Two short years since its founding, RAE offers transitional housing to exonerees, and partners with local businesses, nonprofits, professionals and volunteers to provide job training, health and mental health care, and life skills programs for exonerees and New Orleans' formerly incarcerated men. Perhaps most important, RAE enables the wrongly convicted to advocate for change in the criminal system, scheduling speaking engagements and adding their voices to the national movement for criminal justice reform.



Jason Rogers Williams

Jason Rogers Williams was elected Councilmember-At-Large in March 2014. A native of New Orleans, Williams has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life in his hometown and he continues that work as a member of the City Council. In his professional career, Williams started his own law firm, Jason Rogers Williams & Associates, which he manages to this day. In 2003, he was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve as Judge at Criminal District Court. Williams also serves on the conflict panel for the Orleans Parish Public Defenders Office and the "Criminal Justice Act" for the United States Court of the Eastern District of Louisiana. As a staunch advocate for community development programs, he has served as a Board Member of The Audubon Nature Institute, Partnership for Youth Development, and The Children's Bureau of New Orleans. He still serves as a Board Member of the Innocence Project of New Orleans.