

Critical Race Theory (Race in America): What Is It and Why the Controversy?

Friday, October 21, 2022
8:45 – 10:00 AM



This panel explores issues related to the current critical race theory (CRT) controversy in law, politics, and public policy in the United States. The following topics are among those that the panelists will discuss: (1) the history of CRT; (2) the ideological roots of CRT; (3) the role of CRT in education; and (4) the current CRT backlash.

At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. demonstrate competence in identifying the history and ideological roots of critical race theory;
2. draw connections between this history and ideology and the modern American legal landscape; and
3. understand the development of the current backlash against critical race theory.

Speakers:

Mark Fancher, Racial Justice Project Staff Attorney, ACLU of Michigan



Mark P. Fancher is the staff attorney for the Racial Justice Project of the ACLU of Michigan. Through his work, he addresses: racially disproportionate rates of incarceration; racial discrimination against public school students of color, racial profiling, attacks on the democratic rights of communities of color and abusive police practices.

Fancher was formerly the Senior Staff Attorney for the Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice where he specialized in workers' rights. He served on the staff of the State Bar of Michigan from 1998 to 2000 where he coordinated projects to encourage greater pro bono participation by Michigan's lawyers. He was a visiting assistant clinical professor at the University of Michigan Law School from 1996 through 1998.

Before moving to Michigan, Fancher was the Director of Litigation for Camden Regional Legal Services in New Jersey. He has also been in private practice where he specialized in employment discrimination and community economic development. Fancher is a graduate of Rutgers University School of Law - Camden. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Tennessee.

Fancher has played leadership roles in the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) for numerous years. He has also lectured across the country and written extensively on issues that include: the U.S. military presence in Africa, political repression in the U.S., and the land and resource rights of traditional indigenous communities.

Jamila Jefferson-Jones, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, University of Kansas School of Law



Professor Jamila Jefferson-Jones writes about the property rights of communities and groups on the margins of society. In line with her interest in property rights on the margins of society, she uses critical race methodologies to interrogate the ways in which members of favored racialized groups seek to exclude racial and ethnic minorities from public and private spaces, including through the use of or threat of police action to enforce both the racial segregation of space and racist notions of supremacy. Her recent article on this subject, [#LivingWhileBlack: Blackness As Nuisance](#), was published in the *American University Law Review* and featured in the *New York Times*. In addition to this work, Professor Jefferson-Jones has written a number of law review articles and book chapters on the sharing economy and is a recognized expert on the housing segment of the sharing economy, particularly on discrimination in that sector. She has also studied the property rights of those with ex-offender status to reveal the intersection of property and criminal justice theory.

Professor Jefferson-Jones will be joining the faculty of the University of Kansas School of Law in July 2022 as Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. She currently serves on the faculty of the Wayne State University School of Law Professor of Law and Associate Director for Property, Equity and Justice at the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights.

Jamila Jefferson-Jones is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Harvard College.

Robyn McCoy, Partner, McCoy & Associates, PLLC



Ms. McCoy graduated with Honors in Anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1996 and obtained her J. D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 2000. Ms. McCoy has served as a Congressional Page for the US House of Representatives for the Honorable Congressman William D. Ford in Washington D.C., interned in the office of US Senator Carol Moseley Braun in Chicago, Illinois and was Legislative Assistant for the Honorable State Representative Ronnie Peterson. While attending the University of Chicago, she co-founded an academic support network for Black Women called *Sistafriends* and *she was the Umoja* (Cultural Chair) for the Organization of Black Students. Ms. McCoy also participated in a study abroad program in France in 1995.

She tutored elementary students in the Chicago Public School System and was mentored by former *First Lady Michelle Obama* during her senior year at the University of Chicago.

While attending the University of Michigan Law School, Ms. McCoy was the Political Action Chair for the Native American and the Black Law Students Alliance, handling community, civic and political meetings, debates and protests in support of

Affirmative Action. She also tutored elementary school students at Patengill Elementary School and participated in an externship in South Africa in 1999, where she worked with Willie Hofmeyr, Head of the Asset Forfeiture Unit and Former Anti-Apartheid Activist.

Ms. McCoy has been the recipient of the 1999 University of Michigan's Black Law Student Alliance's Distinguished Service Award, the 2017 Vanzetti M. Hamilton Bar Association's Frederick Douglass Racial Justice & Harmony Award, the 2017 Black Alumni Association of the University of Michigan's Making a Difference Award, the 2017 Black Slate's Cynthia Diane Stephens Outstanding Jurist Award, the 2017 National Summit of Black Women Lawyers Exceptional Service Award, which is given to recognize lawyers for their consistent and tireless service diversity efforts with the legal profession and underserved communities, the 2018 Recipient of the Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem of the Year Award from the Michigan Foster Care Review Board and the 2019 Recipient of the Reverend Thomas H. Smith Humanitarian Award at the 66th Annual Brown AME Brotherhood Banquet.

Ms. McCoy is admitted to practice law in the State of Michigan and the Eastern District of Michigan. Ms. McCoy has been a licensed practicing Attorney for twenty years, starting as an Associate with the firm of McCoy & Associates, PLLC, then an Attorney with the Legal Aid Defender's Association, representing indigent adults on felony cases and working with the Michigan Children's Law Center as a Lawyer Guardian Ad Litem for children on neglect cases and a Defense Attorney for children on delinquency cases for the past ten years. She worked with the Educational Advocacy Unit of the Michigan Children's Law Center from March of 2017 until December 2019 and is presently a Partner with the firm of McCoy & Associates, PLLC, handling criminal defense, educational advocacy, family law, estate planning, wrongful death and personal injury cases.

Ms. McCoy is the President of Black Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, Vice Chair for the Michigan Democratic Women's Caucus, Past President and Board Member at Large of the Vanzetti Hamilton Bar Association (the African American Association for Washtenaw County), a past Board Member for the Ann Arbor Ypsilanti Chapter of the Michigan Black Chamber of Commerce and a Member of the Women's Lawyers Association of Michigan, the Wolverine Bar Association, the Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar, the Oakland County Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the State Bar of Michigan, and the Washtenaw County Bar Association.

Ms. McCoy is a Part-Time Lecturer at Eastern Michigan University teaching a class on the Law and the African American Experience and has planned, facilitated and organized numerous programs on ***"What To Do When Stopped by the Police"***, ***"Knowing Your Rights When Encountering the Police, Immigration or You Are the Victim of Ethnic Intimidation"***, ***the "Expungement and Federal Pardon Process"*** ***"Pathways to Law School"*** and ***"How to Successfully Navigate the Public Education System"***.

Ms. McCoy has appeared as a Legal Expert on Reverend Myron Jenkins' Biblical Faith Ministries Radio Show, the late Steve Hood's Radio Show on 910AM, Minister

Troy Muhammad's Radio Show on 910AM, Attorney Tracey Martin's Show "Politics and Power" Radio Show on 910AM, Attorney Sharon McPhail's Radio Show on 910AM,

Dr. John Telford Radio Show, FOX 2 News Morning Show Channel 4 and Channel 7. Ms. McCoy has volunteered with the Gore Lieberman Campaign in 2000, the Kerry

Edwards Campaign in 2004, the Non-Partisan Election Protection Coalition & the Obama Campaign in 2008, the Obama Campaign in 2012, the Hillary Clinton Campaign in 2016 and the Biden Harris Campaign in 2020.

Ms. McCoy was baptized at the Bethel AME Church in Ann Arbor, MI, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Ann Arbor, MI and the McCoy Memorial Church of God in Christ No 2 in Benton Harbor, Michigan. She was an active member of

Christian Love Fellowship in Ypsilanti, Michigan for ten years and has been an active member of Unity of Ann Arbor in Ypsilanti, Michigan since 2010.

Hon. Demetria Brue, Judge, 36th District Court, Michigan (Moderator)



Judge Brue attended St. Ladislaus High School in Hamtramck, Michigan. She became the first African American to graduate valedictorian from St. Ladislaus. She received a full academic scholarship to the University of Michigan-Dearborn and graduated with honors.

Judge Brue received her Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School and was admitted to the Michigan State Bar in 1988. While in law school, she received scholarships from the prestigious law firm of Lewis, White & Clay, P.C., and from Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc.

Immediately upon graduation from law school, Judge Brue accepted a position with the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office. In 1989 she accepted a position with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

During her tenure as an Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor, Judge Brue successfully prosecuted hundreds of felony cases. She was assigned to specialized units, including Homicide and Juvenile, where she litigated high-profile televised cases. While assigned to the Appellate Division, she wrote appeals which were favorably decided by the Michigan Court of Appeals.

On August 22nd, 2012, Judge Brue was appointed to the bench of 36th District Court. In November of 2014 and 2020 Judge Brue was elected to retain her seat at 36th District Court. Judge Brue has presided over criminal, civil, real estate and traffic dockets.

Judge Brue has been active in various organizations and bar associations including the Association of Black Judges of Michigan-Immediate Past President and Board Member (2016-2018); Association of Black Judges of Michigan-President (2015-2016); Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association-Board Member(2016 to present); Michigan District Judges Association-Member (2015-present); Michigan District Judges Association- Region I Director and Board Member (2016-present), State Bar of Michigan-Member (1988-present), Wolverine Bar Association- Member; Women Lawyers of Michigan-Board of Directors (2019-present); Women Lawyers of Michigan-Member(2018-present), Black Women Lawyers

Association of Michigan (2012-present); National Association of Women Judges (2018-present), NAWJ 2022 Conference Committee Member and Producer; National High School Mock Trial (2022)-Judge; I.M.A.G.I.N.E. Mentoring Program-Guest Speaker (2013, 2014); Thomara Latimore Cancer Foundation Scholarship Gala-Mistress of Ceremonies (2014-2019, 2021- 2022); NAACP-Member, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History-Member, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,-Member; Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major For Justice Essay and Oral Advocacy Competition -Judge and Speaker, Judicial Community Outreach Moderator and Panelist (2015-2019).

Judge Brue is a member of Solomon's Temple Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in Detroit, Michigan, where she serves as the Chairperson of the Education Committee and vice-president of the Welcome Committee.