

The Role of Law Schools in Creating Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Within the Ranks of the Legal Profession

Thursday, October 20, 2022
3:30 – 4:45 PM



Law schools draw from a variety of various genders, cultures, and ethnicities, yet the world of legal academia remains largely monolithic. Educational research has established that the gender, culture and/or ethnicity of the teacher/instructor/professor has a great impact upon students ability to connect, learn and thrive in the classroom. In order to create greater student success among our diverse populations of law students, law schools must become more intentional in training and encouraging students of diverse backgrounds to consider a career in legal academia. While DEI representation has improved in private practice, government practice, in-house representation, and the judiciary, diversity in the field of legal education continues to be limited. In this session Law School Deans will explore and explain the role of law schools in preparing more students to enter the field of legal academia.

Attendees will learn about the future of law school education in preparing more legal educators. Deans will describe efforts to procure student teaching fellowships, develop law education clinics, create student publication forums and competitions, invite or form student organizations to foster interest in legal education, implement seminars or symposiums to prepare and educate students for tenure-track opportunities and help to uncover the blue-print for pursuing a career as a law Professor.

Speakers:

Richard A. Bierschbach, Dean and Professor of Law, Wayne State University Law School



Richard A. Bierschbach is Dean and Professor of Law at Wayne State University Law School. He previously taught at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York, where he also served as Vice Dean.

Dean Bierschbach is an award-winning teacher and a leading scholar of criminal law and procedure. His research explores how the criminal justice system's institutional and procedural structure intersects with its substantive and regulatory aims. His work has appeared in numerous top law journals, including the *Yale Law Journal*, the *Michigan Law Review*, the *Virginia Law Review*, the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, the *Northwestern University Law Review*, and the *Georgetown Law Journal*, among others. While at Cardozo, he twice received the Best Professor Award from the law school's graduating class.

Before entering academia, Dean Bierschbach clerked for Judge A. Raymond Randolph of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (1997-98) and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor of the U.S. Supreme Court (2000-01). Between those clerkships, he served as a Bristow Fellow in the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of the Solicitor General and an Attorney-Advisor in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. He has also worked in the New York offices of three international law firms—Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering (now WilmerHale), Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe—as a member of their Supreme Court and appellate litigation practices.

Dean Bierschbach received his bachelor's degree in history (summa cum laude) from the University of Michigan (1994) and his law degree from the University of Michigan Law School (1997), where he won the Daniel H. Grady Prize for graduating first in his class and the Henry M. Bates Award, the law school's highest honor. He has held various leadership positions within the American Bar Association and is an elected member of the American Law Institute and a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

Jelani Jefferson Exum, Dean and Philip J. McElroy Professor of Law, University of Detroit Mercy Law School



Jelani Jefferson Exum, Dean and Philip J. McElroy Professor of Law at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, is a nationally recognized expert in sentencing law and procedure. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Federal Sentencing Reporter*. Dean Jefferson Exum is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Harvard College. Prior to joining the Detroit Mercy Law faculty, she was an Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and professor of law at the University of Toledo College of Law, an associate professor at the University of Kansas School of Law, and a visiting associate professor at the University of Michigan Law School. Dean Jefferson Exum

has also been a Forrester Fellow and Instructor in Legal Writing at Tulane Law School. She has taught Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Sentencing, and Race and American Law, and Comparative Criminal Procedure. Dean Jefferson Exum writes mainly in the areas of federal sentencing and policing, with a focus on racial justice.

Linda Greene, Dean and MSU Foundation Professor of Law, Michigan State University Law School



Linda Sheryl Greene is Dean and MSU Foundation Professor of Law at Michigan State University College of Law and an elected life member of The American Law Institute. Prior to her June 1st, 2021, start date, she was the Evjue Bascom Professor of Law at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she had also served as Associate Vice Chancellor. In 2013, she was also the Inaugural Vice Chancellor for Equity/Diversity/Inclusion at the University of California San Diego.

A graduate of Berkeley Law, she was a civil rights and constitutional law attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and a Los Angeles Deputy City Attorney who specialized in civil rights and constitutional law and a Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary

Committee. She was the Chair of the 1990 Wisconsin Conference on Critical Race Theory, President of the Society of American Law Teachers, the founder of the People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference movement, and Vice Chair of the Counsel on Legal Educational Opportunity. She co-founded the Black Women in Sports Foundation, served the U.S. Olympic Committee as Chair of its Legislation Committee and Vice Chair of its Audit Committee, and was a member of the UW Madison Athletic Board.

From 2013 to 2019, she was a member of the National Institutes of Health National Advisory Committee on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Her recent scholarship reflects the breadth of her experience: "The Battle for Brown v. Board" (2015); "African American Women on the World Stage: The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing China, 1995" (2015); "Before and After Michael Brown: Towards an End to Structural and Actual Violence"(2015); "Mirror Mirror on the Wall: Gender, Olympic Competition, and the Persistence of the Feminine Ideal," (2016); and "A Tale of Two Justices: Brandeis, Marshall, and Federal Court Diversity" (2017); "Talking About Black Lives Matter and #MeToo" (with Inniss, and B. Crawford on the origins, evolution, trajectory, and pedagogical, and transformative potential of those movements); "Up Against the Wall: Congressional Retention of the Spending Power in Times of "Emergency"?(2019) (on democracy, the separation of powers, and the scope of presidential emergency powers), and *Critical Race Theory: Origins, Permutations, and Current Queries*, 2021 Wis. L. Rev. 259-268 (2021), on the origins of Critical Race Theory and its contemporary iterations.

Her works in progress include Thurgood Marshall, Dissenting: Towards an Inclusive Constitutional Democracy (2023 Carolina Press with Wendy Scott); Race, the Roberts Court, and Majoritarian Hegemony"; and a play about a Black Supreme Court justice reckoning with his legacy.

She has lectured and advised on constitutional and civil rights issues around the world including Austria, France, Germany, Japan, Mozambique, Norway, South Africa, Thailand and Zimbabwe. This past March she was a Fulbright Specialist who lectured and advised on the new Chilean constitution.

She has been a media, political, and legal analyst for twenty-five years for Wisconsin Public Television and Radio, National Public Radio, and *The New York Times* which has published her opinion pieces since 1992.

In her spare time, she enjoys multiple pursuits. She reads autobiographies of visual artists, politicians, and writers. She visits museums and artists' studios around the world, listens to jazz, and enjoys hiking, biking, cooking, and her grandchildren.

Reem Bahdi, Dean and Associate Professor, University of Windsor School of Law



Professor Bahdi joined the Faculty of Law in 2002. Her current research focuses on two areas. The first concentrates on the human rights dimensions of national security laws and policies in Canada. The second focuses on access to justice in the Palestinian context.

Professor Bahdi is Co-Director of [KARAMAH, The Project on Judicial Independence and Human Dignity](#), a multi-million dollar initiative which aims to support access to justice in Palestine through research, continuing judicial

education and directed civil society engagement. She has served as the Editor in chief of the Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice.

Professor Bahdi teaches Access to Justice and Torts. She was awarded the Student Law Society Faculty Award for exemplary teaching and dedication to Windsor Law in 2008 and the University of Windsor Faculty Recognition Award in 2005.

Professor Bahdi served as Associate Dean of Windsor Law from 2012 - September 2015.

Professor Bahdi is the current Dean of Windsor Law.

Hon. Debra Nance, Judge, 46th District Court, Michigan – Moderator



Judge Debra Nance was elected to the bench on November 6, 2012. She began a six-year term as Judge of the 46th District Court on January 1, 2013. She was re-elected, by a land-slide, to her second term on November 6, 2018 and began her second six-year term on January 1, 2019. Judge Nance received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Detroit. She began her career as an Assistant Personnel Superintendent at the Hudson's Northland Store before serving as Personnel Superintendent for several other Hudson's Stores throughout Michigan. She also worked in various Human Resource Management capacities in the automotive

industry prior to launching her legal career.

Judge Nance began her career as an attorney after obtaining a law degree from Wayne State University Law School. She gained invaluable experience while working in the Oakland County Prosecutor's Domestic Violence Unit and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Child & Family Abuse Bureau. After graduating, she worked on assignment to the Office of the General Counsel at Ford Motor Company. In 2001, she went into private practice at a mid-sized law firm where she developed a successful litigation practice in the areas of Civil Litigation, Probate Litigation, Juvenile & Family Litigation and Adoption Law.

In service to the community, Judge Nance volunteered in numerous projects prior to taking the bench. She volunteered at free legal aid clinics. She worked to educate our youth by participating in the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Project in Southfield Public Schools. She has supported organizations such as the Women's Survival Center of Oakland County and Alternatives for Girls coming out of foster care. She worked as an "Election Protection Attorney" in a number of elections to ensure the fairness and integrity of the election process. Judge Nance also worked as a Volunteer Attorney Mediator for small claims, consumer and commercial disputes, and landlord/tenant matters in District Court. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Nance served on the Michigan State Bar Character & Fitness Committee which reviews the suitability of law graduates seeking to obtain a license to practice in Michigan.

Since taking the bench, Judge Nance developed and presented *Careers in the Courtroom* to encourage elementary and high school students to pursue careers as defense attorneys, prosecutors, civil attorneys and judges. The program also introduces students to the importance of jury service. In addition, for adults, Judge Nance has designed and presented *How to Prepare for Your Day in Court* and *Tips for*

Landlords and Tenants which she shares with neighborhood/condo associations, church groups and veteran's groups. Judge Nance visits churches, synagogues, schools, neighborhood/condo associations, scholarship programs, graduations, etc. In community forums and townhalls, she has spoken on topics such as *Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration* and *Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence*. Judge Nance conceived and presented the City of Southfield's first *Opioid Crisis Townhall* in cooperation with fire, police, and other elected officials. In addition, Judge Nance was instrumental in developing *From Expungement to Entrepreneurship: The Pipeline to Possibilities* to help 'returning citizens' start small community-based businesses. Judge Nance has been featured, proudly, as Alumni of the Month by the Wayne State University Law School. In 2018 Judge Nance was invited to Host a weekly radio show, *Your Best Chance with Judge Nance*, designed to provide the listener with access to justice by increasing the public's understanding of the criminal justice system, the court process and the people who serve there. The show broadcast throughout the State of Michigan.

In service to the legal community, Judge Nance has lectured to lawyers at the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, and new lawyers at the Oakland County Bar Association. She has also lectured to students at Cooley Law and the University of Michigan Law School. She served as a Board Member for the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, served on the Oakland County Bar Association Judicial Candidates Committee, and was a long-serving member of the Adoption subcommittee of the Family Law Division of the Michigan State Bar Association. Judge Nance was elected by her peers to serve as President of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan for 2016-2017. In 2020, Judge Nance was appointed to serve as *the first* Chair-Elect of the newly formed Wayne State University Black Law Alumni Council.(BLAC). In 2021, Judge Nance was elected to serve as a member of the Executive Board of the National Bar Association (NBA) Judicial Council. In addition, the Women's Bar Association, Oakland County Division of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan (WLAM), awarded Judge Nance the 2021 *Joan Young Award of Judicial Excellence*. In 2022 Judge Nance was asked to serve as Co-Chair of the Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA) Bench Bar Conference. and presently serves as the Chair of the Programs & Education Committee for the Detroit Conference of the National Association of Women Judges.