

# THE PUBLIC DEFENDER NEWSPAPER

SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY  
LAW CENTER  
LIMITED EDITION  
HISTORICAL ISSUE

CONFIRM  
KBJ

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# Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

As a graduating 3L, I, along with several of my colleagues have endured and witnessed many historical events throughout the past three years of our law school experiences. During law school we have gone through a heated presidential election, a pandemic, several changes in society, changes in legislation, nominations for new Supreme Court Justices and now a war with rising inflation. Throughout the course of the past three years, many of us have felt concerned about all the uncertainty in today's world. The events that we have witnessed these last three years have highlighted the key issues facing our communities and society at large including-- healthcare, housing, jobs, and social justice. Addressing these issues have become imperative as we continue to witness major historical events in the making.

The Public Defender has decided to use our platform in a collaborative effort to share our voices and experiences about how the events in the last three years have affected us. This "*Historical Issue*" highlights the latest events by discussing the impact they've had, not only in our lives as students but, in the world around us. This issue highlights the recent Ketanji Brown Jackson confirmation hearings, qualified immunity, advancements in technology, major court cases and our experiences as law students during a pandemic.

The Public Defender wanted to create this issue as a parting gift to recap our experiences and historical events throughout the last three years. I hope you enjoy this edition, and that you continue to support The Public Defender Newspaper.

A special thank you is in order to our Advisor, Director Phebe Poydras, Director Jasmine Hunter, and Director Terry Steward who have assisted us throughout the process of assembling, publishing and printing this publication.

*Paola Estrada*

PAOLA A. ESTRADA  
Editor-in-Chief



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# IN MEMORIAM.

## HER DREAM.

The vivid hue of her royal blue jacket caught the eyes of Congress. While she symbolized progress women have made, her round, plastic-framed glasses graciously sat on the bridge of her nose, encapsulating the culture of 1993. Leaning into the microphone, Judge Ginsburg softly answered, *“In my lifetime, I expect to see three, four, perhaps even more women on the Highest Court Bench, women not shaped from the same mold, but of different complexions.”*



Photo Credit: Gary Hershorn

After serving 27 years on the bench, Associate Justice Joan Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away at the age of 87 on September 18, 2020. Less than two years later, on April 7, 2022; the Senate confirmed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first African American woman to serve on the bench. Although not in her lifetime, her expectations exceeded themselves. As of 2022, four of nine Justices sitting on the bench are women.



Photo Credit: Chip Somodevilla

## HIS LIGHT.

As a *“White Only”* sign dangled over his head, John Lewis walked into the waiting room of a Greyhound bus terminal in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Immediately, he was met by two white men who dragged him to the floor. Fists to his face and kicks into his ribs, he never wavered, believing no act of violence could deter him from his goals.

Throughout his career, Lewis organized various activist efforts including the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches, also referred to as *‘Bloody Sunday.’* In 1987, Lewis reached new heights by becoming a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. On July 17, 2020, Rep. John Robert Lewis passed away at the age of 80 after battling pancreatic cancer.

His impact continued to shine throughout the nation after his passing. On August 17, 2021, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act passed through the House, but lacked the necessary support in the Senate. It’s inability to pass does not extinguish the need to continue the fight towards change and equality. Rep. John Lewis’ legacy is engraved in the history of this nation. Anytime one feels self-doubt in themselves, remember the words of the late-Rep. Lewis, *“You are a light. You are the light. Never let anyone—any person or any force—dampen, dim or diminish your light.”*

## HER STANCE.

After various radio jobs, Betty White became the first woman to ever produce a sitcom in the country. In 1952, White then hosted and produced her own talk show. Unbeknownst to White, her variety show became the first in the nation to feature an African American performer. Unheard of during the era of Jim Crow, White had brought in Arthur Duncan, an African-American tap dancer, as a regular cast member.

When the show became a national sensation, NBC faced extreme backlash by Southern television stations, who refused to broadcast the show. White, who had creative control over her show, was pressed by NBC to remove Duncan from the show.



Photo credit: People Magazine

Instead, she gave him additional airtime, responding to her critics with, *“I’m sorry. Live with it.”* The memory of Betty White will echo through the culture of America. Not only a pioneer of television, White also was a vocal advocate LGBT rights, women’s rights, and opposition of racial injustice. On December 31, 2021, America’s last *Golden Girl*, Betty White, passed away at the age of 99. In her final moments, she called the name of her late-husband, Allen Ludden, who passed away in 1981.

# HER CONFIRMATION.

## High In History, Low in Politics By: Paola Estrada



Photo Credit: Anna Moneymaker

On April 7th, 2022, the Senate voted 53-47 in favor of Ketanji Brown Jackson making history as the first Black woman to become a Supreme Court Justice. This U.S. Supreme Court has marked a moment in American history that several have waited over decades for – and some thought they would never see happen in their lifetime. She will replace retiring Justice Stephen G. Breyer at the end of the court's current term. As we witnessed this historic event, we also witnessed many "lows" in Senate history as well. During the confirmation hearings for Ketanji Brown Jackson, Republican senators spent what seemed to be the majority of the time airing their resentments of how Democrats treated prior nominees like Judge Robert Bork who was confirmed more than three decades ago or even Justice Brett Kavanaugh. They also subjected Jackson to some of the most ludicrous questions ever directed at a nominee for the Supreme Court. Even Sen. Dick Durbin who presided over the hearings was taken back by some of the Republican Senator's questioning telling Jackson her nomination was a "testing ground for conspiracy theories and culture war theories".

All of us were left wondering, "what was really being tested during this absurd line of questioning?" Here are some of the main standouts questions we were left in shock by.

### CRITICAL RACE THEORY?

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, asked Jackson to explain her understanding of Critical Race Theory, why she referenced it in a 2015 speech, and if it's taught in K-12 schools? Jackson told him that Critical Race Theory, "is never something I've studied or relied on, and it wouldn't be something that I would rely on if I were on the Supreme Court... They don't come up in my work as a judge, which I'm respectfully here to address."

### THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS TEST

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham promised Jackson that Senators would not question her on where she attended Church, what religious groups she belongs to, how she chose to raise her children, and what she believes in.

"Nobody's going to do that to you. And that's a good thing," he said. The next day, he broke that promise.

When it came time to question Jackson, his first question to her violated *Article VI, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution*, which states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or Public Trust under the United States".

One day after promising no Senator would ask Jackson where she attends church, he asked: "What faith are you, by the way?"

### WHAT IS A WOMAN?

Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn, went above and beyond to hit on a whole package of questions that were politically charged issues including transgender athletes and gender identity. Though the question that will likely go down in Senate history is when Blackburn asked, "Can you provide a definition for the word 'woman'?"

Jackson replied that she could not, "I am not a biologist."

### MORE POLICE? FEWER POLICE? CATCH MORE MURDERERS?

Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton went as far as to ask "Does the U.S. need more police or fewer police?"; "Senator, the determination about whether there should be more or fewer police is a policy decision by another branch of government", Justice Jackson replied.

Sen. Cotton then continued pressing for unrelated opinions to the job she was nominated for: "Do you think we should catch and imprison more murderers or fewer murderers? Justice Jackson gave the "say little" response of, "it's very important that people be held accountable for their crimes". Though the nation witnessed how embarrassingly difficult some of the question posed by few Senate members to Justice Jackson were, the majority are anxiously waiting to see what further history she will make in this remarkable event.

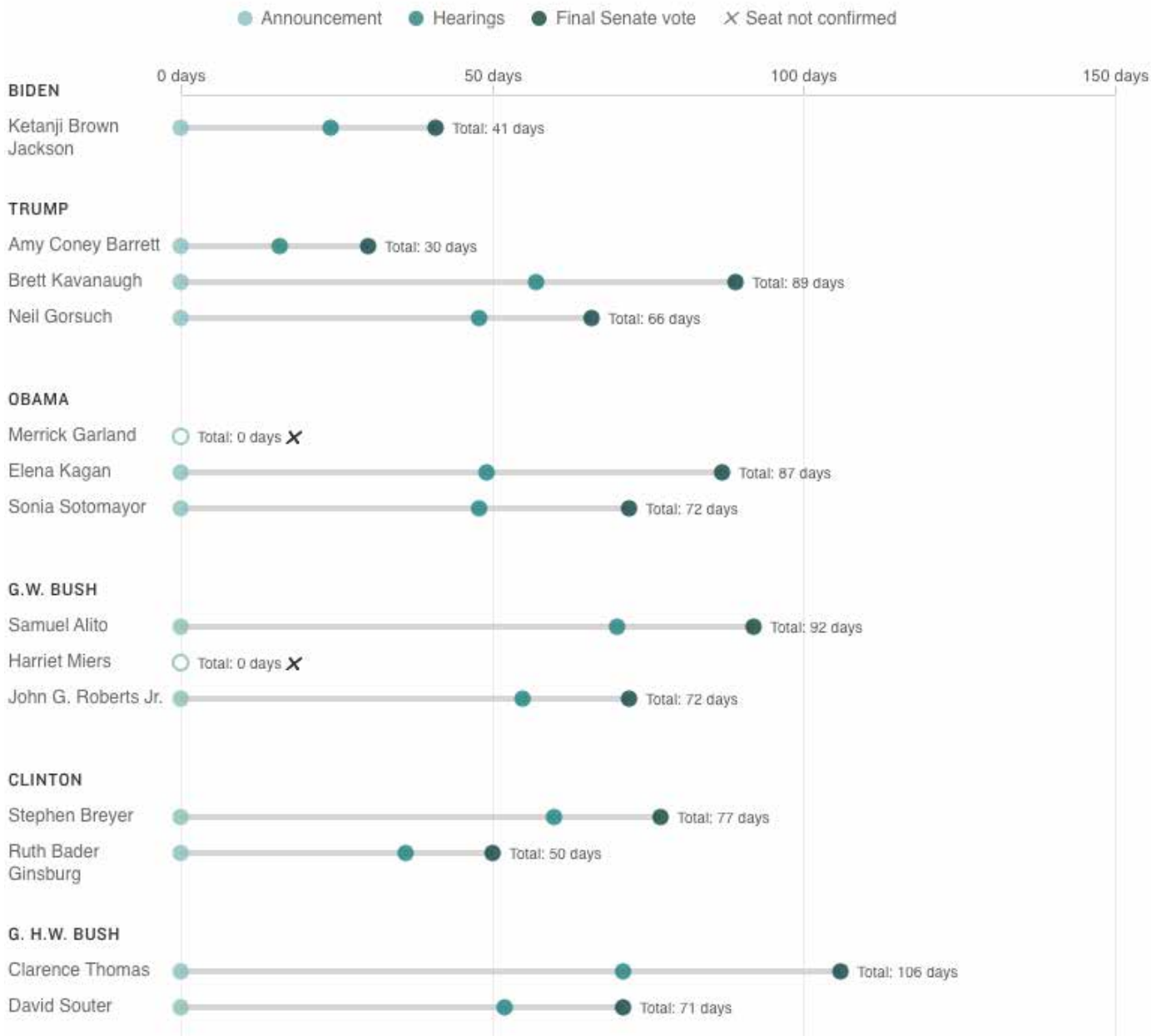


Photo Credit: Mandel Ngan

# THE DATA.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's historic confirmation was expected to be completed by Easter. Here's a look at how long it took to confirm previous Supreme Court nominees.

## How long does it take to confirm a SCOTUS nomination?



Source: Congressional Research Service, Supreme Court, Senate.gov and White House.gov  
 Credit: Jess Eng, Daniel Wood, Connie Hanzhang Jin and Barbara Sprunt/NPR

# THE KBJ RALLY.

## Demand Justice Invites 50 SULC Students to the U. S. Capital for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's First Day of Confirmation Hearings

By: Abeer M. Farid



President Joe Biden promised that America would see the first African American woman sit on the Supreme Court in his lifetime; and he delivered. The nomination of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was hardfelt through the halls of Southern University Law Center as students were in jubilation expressing their sentiments, “*She looks like me!*”

Demand Justice, a grassroots organization, is committed to the reformation of the Supreme Court while working to ensure representation on the Highest Court that reflects the majority of Americans. Demand Justice invited 50 SULC students to be present for Justice Jackson’s first day of confirmation hearings. Once students were made aware of this opportunity, many spoke as to what this monumental moment meant to them in hopes of obtaining a coveted spot in D.C.



Photo Credit: United States Department of Justice



Photo Credit: @POTUS on Instagram.

Students flew into Washington D.C. from New Orleans to attend a welcome dinner at the Hilton in Capital City. The next morning, students ate breakfast ahead of the rally and, with pride, 50 students wore SULC cardigans and stood between the Supreme Court, and Capitol Building rallying support for Justice Jackson.

Met with opposition, SULC students remained unfazed and proceeded with their activities with decorum and civility before the hearing began.

This historic event was covered by media around the country. SULC students were highlighted in articles by The Advocate, CNN, Vice News, The Houston Chronicle, Good Morning America, NewsOne, Southern Illinois, and more.



Photo Credit: Abeer M. Farid

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was officially confirmed as the United States first African American Woman Supreme Court Justice at 2:18 PM ET on April 7, 2022.

# HER IMPACT!



The morning after the election of 2016, I expected to wake to shattered ceilings and, unfortunately, this was not the case. The election of 2020 lasted four days as law students around the country spent more time with their TVs watching election results than with their families. Finding out that in my lifetime, I would see the first woman VP, another crack was added to the glass ceiling. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's confirmation is another, yet deeper crack in the ceiling. In my opinion, she is the most qualified candidate for the job of Supreme Court Justice. For the first time in 233 years, there is not a white majority on the bench. With an African American Indian woman as VP and the first African American female Justice on the Supreme Court, the ceiling shall shatter sooner than predicted. - Abeer M. Farid

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to me is personified hope and promise for a diverse part of America that is underrepresented, yet one that is rising – a multi-cultural educated woman minority. Her presence on the Highest Court of the land is an example of the best parts of what this country has to offer. - Victoria Gonzalez



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination means I can be seen in a way no Black Woman lawyer, or Judge has ever been seen before. Her nomination has put her on a world stage to showcase her intelligence, qualifications, skill, and grit. For that, I am forever thankful. -Ebony Cormier

As a graduating 3L, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court solidifies the idea that I will defy all odds that may be stacked against me. As a Black Woman in law, I am privy to the ins and outs of the legal system. In law school, we are required to take Constitutional Law where I learned about groundbreaking precedents that have greatly affected my community, but are not opined by people that look like me. Yes, we were fortunate to have the Hon. Thurgood Marshall, and the Hon. Clarence Thomas fulfill the representation of the Black Man on the bench but, the voice of the Black Woman had not even been considered throughout the history of the Supreme Court until now. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court confirms that I, as a Black Woman, matter in the legal field, and I can achieve any heights that I so desire. - Quiana-Joy Ochiagha



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination verifies that individuals from the most underrepresented ethnic groups can reach the nation's Highest Court. Outside of our HBLS experience, African-Americans are rarely seen within the legal sphere; we account for about 5% of all attorneys. To see her in that position means that my sisters, my nieces, and girl cousins are also capable of similar greatness. I hope that this moment is the spark of inspiration that fuels the careers of lawyer leaders for generations to come. -Joseph Coleman



Justice Jackson's nomination means to me that we as Women, Black Women, are a force to be reckoned with. Against all odds Justice Jackson made a dream a reality, and little girls, especially little black girls, now can dream this same dream and see it come to reality. Her nomination means that there is representation of Black Women in the Highest Court in a land that once said I'm not American because of the color of my skin. Her nomination means to me that even though she was the First she SHALL not be the last. - LaKeisha Sanders

This moment is more than just historic, for me it's confirmation. It's the confirmation that when my daughter looks at me and says, "Mommy, that can be you!" I can believe it. - Kenesha Phillips



## Looming Shadows of the Epstein Trial

By: Amber Lintzen

The last four years have been full of newsworthy stories. One of the most well-known is that of Jeffrey Epstein. Epstein was part of an “elite” circle in New York; he had connections to Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew, and Ghislaine Maxwell. Epstein had hundreds of millions of dollars and a private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and was considered a philanthropist but, this would change overnight. In July of 2019, the FBI-NYPD Crimes Against Children Task Force raided Epstein’s Manhattan mansion, and arrested Epstein on federal charges of sex trafficking minors in Florida and New York. They discovered hundreds of sexually explicit photographs of fully and partially nude women, some of which were confirmed to be minors. Authorities also discovered a fraudulent passport, and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Epstein was housed at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City, most widely known for housing offenders like John Gotti and Joaquin “*El Chapo*” Guzman.



Photo Credit: Stephanie Keith

Since Epstein’s death, several victims have come forward to speak about their abuse, and many have filed civil suits against Epstein’s estate for restitution. In 2020, Epstein’s estate finances revealed that Epstein’s estate paid out nearly \$50 million to more than 100 women. Investigations inevitably led to the arrest of Ghislaine Maxwell on sex trafficking charges, an investigation into Prince Andrew, and Jean-Luc Brunel, a French model scout.

Although Epstein died in 2019, this scandal continues to unfold. Most recently, Ghislaine Maxwell was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years on 5 out of 6 charges that were pending against her. However, rumors are surfacing that a juror error could lead to a mistrial.

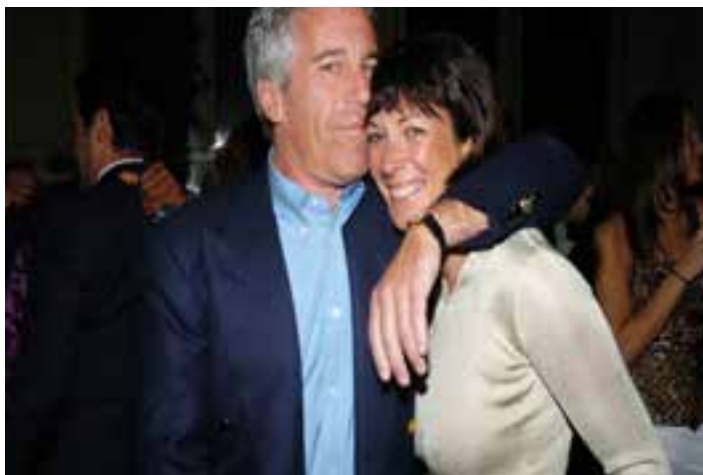


Photo Credit: Joe Schildhorn | Patrick McMullan

Arguably one of the most well-known memes of our generation surfaced after Epstein died by suicide in August 2019. Did Epstein really kill himself? Although the coroner ruled Epstein’s death a suicide, some expert forensic pathologists argue that he was murdered. Many conspiracists believe that Epstein had so much blackmail on the rich and powerful that he was murdered to protect their identity. These conspiracies are warranted after details surrounding his suicide surfaced. Two days before Epstein died, he signed a will placing over \$750 million into a private Virgin Islands trust. Although Epstein was supposedly heavily guarded, the cameras in the jail ironically malfunctioned on the night of his death.



Photo Credit: Davidoff Studios



# HER PROPOSAL.

## The Mediation Room: A Different Approach to Qualified Immunity

By: Abeer M. Farid



Photo Credit: Abeer M. Farid

Following the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, 2020's summer season faced a reckoning after the world witnessed the murder of George Floyd. Nostalgic of the nation's history of racial violence, people of all ages crowded the streets in protest of police brutality towards Black Americans. For rising second-year law students, 2020 fall semester meant enrollment in constitutional law studies, a course that showed law students the deceptive shield law enforcement hides behind known as qualified immunity.

Justiciability is one of the first doctrines discussed in Constitutional Law. This doctrine lays the foundation on whether a party holds the right to bring an action in federal court. Unfolding this doctrine, second year law students discovered the doctrine of standing. This issue of standing arises when a defendant in a case argues for a dismissal for a plaintiff's lack of standing and often shows up when a constitutional violation is alleged.

Regarding the liability of law enforcement, the qualified immunity doctrine is an automatic defense to extinguish all personal liability. The naked eye viewed the protests like a call for justice and accountability, but underneath was a call for change. However, it must be traced back to the root of the issue: a dismissed liability of an officer for violating a citizen's constitutional right.

Precedent behind qualified immunity first found itself embedded in the theory of good faith through the Supreme Court case of *Pierson v. Ray*, where the Court rationalized protecting officials from frivolous lawsuits because there was

reasonable belief the government official was acting with pure intentions. The Court eventually scrapped this approach in *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, they held government officials were protected under qualified immunity as long as no violation of a clearly established right was committed, and yet, the concept of a "clearly established right" was not defined by the court leaving the doctrine in limbo.

At the turn of the century, the Supreme Court formalized the idea of "sequencing" it must decide the merit of this defense. In 2001, a structural two-prong test was first introduced in *Saucier v. Katz*. First, the court must determine whether the complaint positions a constitutional violation. Second, it must then determine if the alleged violated right was clearly established at the time of the incident. However, such test was deemed to bear a short life-span.

In 2009, *Saucier* was overturned by *Pearson v. Callahan*, where the Court relaxed the mandatory sequencing of the two-prong test. This relaxed approach led to an amplified partiality of government officials in actions regarding constitutional violations.

Finally, the practice of mandatory sequencing would be restored as it was first formalized in *Saucier*. The application of this stricter test is the future in concluding the most just verdict.



Photo Credit: Demario Butchee

# HER PRECEDENT!



Photo Credit: Getty Images

Nominated by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor was the first Woman to become a Supreme Court Justice in the United States 60 years after women were given the right to vote pursuant to the 19th Amendment. During her time on the Court, Justice O'Connor was considered to be one of the most powerful women in the world.

Justice O'Connor was confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate and was often the deciding vote in monumental constitutional matters. More notably, her vote affirmed the right of universities to use affirmative action to promote racial diversity on campus in *Grutter v. Bollinger*.

Justice O'Connor upheld the principle of government neutrality towards religion. In *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky*, her concurring opinion stated, "Those who would renegotiate the boundaries between church and state must therefore answer a difficult question: Why would we trade a system that has served us so well for one that has served others so poorly?" This was her precedent.

# HER DISSENT!

As each attack against a woman's bodily autonomy entered the Court, her frequent dissent became imperative.

Prior to Judge Jackson's confirmation, but after the passing of Justice Ginsburg, Justice Sotomayor stood in her truth and power through her dissents.

Pursuant to *In Re Whole Woman's Health*, a law provided shorter time-frames to access an abortion and implemented legal repercussions for assisting a person attempting to obtain one. Justice Sotomayor's dissenting opinion ripped the perspective of the majority. In the defense of not only women, but the Constitution itself, Justice Sotomayor said: "This case is a disaster for the rule of law and a grave disservice to women in Texas, who have a right to control their own bodies. I will not stand by silently as a State continues to nullify this constitutional guarantee. I dissent."



Photo Credit: Brendan Smialowski

# HER VOICE.



Photo Credit: Andrew Harnik

Her white pant suit symbolized purity. Her pearls symbolized the sisterhood of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Inc. Her smile symbolized the glass ceiling shattered.

On January 20, 2021, America overcame another hurdle as Senator Kamala Devi Harris became the first Woman Vice-President, first African American Vice-President, & first Indian American Vice-President.

On April 7, 2022, Vice-President Harris presided over the vote to shatter another glass ceiling: the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court.

# HER PROCLAMATION.



Photo Credit: Patrick Semansky

Just 14 days after a historic insurrection at the U.S. Capital, then 23 year old Amanda Gorman begins her spoken word asserting her presence on the steps of the Capital building professing her pride of her African American roots and being the daughter of a single mother. Young girls around the world watched inspired as Gorman stated *“Victory won’t lie in the blade but in all the bridges we’ve made....It’s because being an American is more than a pride we inherit, it’s the past we step into and how we repair it. We’ve seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it, would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.”*

She carries on to say, *“But one thing is certain, if we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy, and changes our children’s birthright.”*

At the inauguration of the First Woman Vice President, Gorman ended with, *“For there is always light if only we’re brave enough to see it; if only we’re brave enough to be it.”*

# HER PURITY.

Following the death of her mother, Representative Ilhan Omar was raised by her father and grandfather in Somalia. Rep. Omar’s family came to America seeking asylum in 1995. After moving to Virginia, her father provided for her and her siblings by cab driving and working at the post office.

When Rep. Omar saw that her *“identity”* was defined by her hijab, she sought solace in the words of her father, *“They are doing something to you because they feel threatened in some way by your existence.”*

As the first African American refugee to serve in Congress, there have been many attacks on her character. Rep. Omar received more death threats after April 2019 when then President Trump made comments about her and the 9/11 attacks. Pushing through the hatred and bigotry, Ilhan Omar has advocated for \$15 minimum wage, universal healthcare, student loan debt forgiveness, and the abolishment of ICE.



Photo Credit: Lorie Shaull

# HER STRENGTH.



Photo Credit: Unknown

Notably denied attendance to the premiere of her own Oscar nominated film, *Gone with the Wind*, actress Hattie McDaniel faced racism and segregation throughout her entire career. After appearing in more than 300 films, McDaniel only received credits for 83.

The Academy Awards in 1940 occurred at The *“Whites Only”* Ambassador Hotel. Although her agent, and escort for the awards, was white, McDaniel was not allowed to with her fellow co-stars and the two were given a table in the back of the room as a special favor from the hotel.

McDaniel received her Academy Award with grace and decorum, and only requested to be a credit to her race. The racially charged discrimination continued as she was denied entry to the after party because of her complexion, and was barred from celebrating with her fellow cast mates.

# HER EXPERIENCE.

## Surviving Law School in a Pandemic

By: Viky S. McDonald

The journey to becoming an Attorney begins with the completion of an undergraduate degree. Next, every prospective candidate has to conquer the LSAT with a score sufficient to grant one the opportunity for admission into their law school of choice. The Admissions Committee for each respective university reviews prospective candidates applications, and offers admission based on the candidate's likelihood to succeed in their law school environment. Upon admission, that's when the real work begins.

My law school journey began as a non-traditional student. I worked in various law firm settings prior to attending law school. Those experiences were imperative because they set the foundation for my understanding of the legal system.

In the Fall of 2019, my lifelong dream of being admitted into law school became a reality, and I was one step closer to becoming a practicing attorney. I was admitted into Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, LA. I attended daily in-person classes; had the opportunity to network with professors and classmates; experienced cold calls; studied in the library stacks between classes; brought lunch to campus; and spent long hours studying in the library; including plenty of restless night meetings with my study partners after hours.



Photo Credit: Google Images

Law school is intensive and competitive, but the most important skill that we walk away with after law school is the ability to think analytically. The process of analytic thinking is a theoretical approach. The legal style of writing has a philosophical approach. It's not rocket science, but it has a flare that one must understand to produce a quality work product. Thus, understanding the direction and approach of legal writing is key to being successful in this profession.



Photo Credit: Google Images

In the Spring of 2020, an unplanned and unannounced event occurred. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) plagued the world, drastically challenging our sense of normalcy. Our worlds were flipped upside down in a matter of days. Our finances, and our mental health were at war with an invisible enemy. Everyone's priority was to survive and maintain the safety of their loved ones. Thousands of individuals lost their loved ones, children, spouses, friends, parents, and other close relatives due to this unforeseen act of God.

Transitioning from in-person classes to a fully virtual setting in my second semester of law school was a major change. Acclimating to a schedule that worked for me, creating boundaries, keeping up with assignments, and reading materials were a constant battle. Not to mention, the mental barriers that I faced daily trying to ensure that my family remained safe. Fear and anxiety were at an all-time high. However, the fire to pursue my Juris Doctor degree was still there.

The Summer of 2020 was the most chaotic and uncertain time. Many of the opportunities that I had been presented with were no longer available. Due to COVID, many companies and law firms laid off several employees, and shifted others to remote environments to protect the health of their employees.



Photo Credit: Google Images

In the Fall of 2021, there was an uprising in COVID-19 cases due to the number of individuals who traveled during the summer. In spring 2021, things were still very chaotic; however, a sense of normalcy began to dawn upon us because this was an environment that we've had no choice but to survive in. The Summer of 2021 was a very successful summer for me. Companies and firms began offering me opportunities again.



Photo Credit: Google Images



Photo Credit: Google Images

Entering my last year of law school amidst a global pandemic was not ideal. However, it is my belief that we are all excited, thankful, and blessed to say that this journey will soon come to an end. The relationships, lessons, and friendships that I've gained have been the most impactful. I hope to maintain the level of camaraderie, integrity, and *seriousness of purpose* to showcase the **Lawyer Leaders** that SULC is known to produce.

This is an exciting time to enter the legal profession. Although there are many uncertainties, our attention should be shifted to entering the 2% of the most highly educated individuals. This is an honor, and a privilege. Don't take this moment lightly because many wish to step into your shoes. Press forward, stay diligent, and think about the lives you'll positively impact upon entering this prestigious profession.

I wish each of you success and happiness, as you embark on this journey to become an Attorney.



Photo Credit: Google Images

# HER OPINION.

## *Ramos v. Louisiana* By: Alexis Turnage-Shipley

Before *Ramos v. Louisiana*, Louisiana and Oregon were the only two states which still allowed a defendant to be convicted without an unanimous jury verdict. This meant that all jurors did not have to reach the same verdict in order for the defendant to be found guilty. The question that followed was, “*Whether allowing Louisiana and Oregon verdicts to be non-unanimous violated the protections afforded to every citizen through the Sixth Amendment?*”

The Court in *Ramos v. Louisiana* answered that question with a resounding yes, because the Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial requires a unanimous verdict to convict a defendant of a serious offense. This is implemented against the States via the Fourteenth Amendment. Ramos was convicted of second-degree murder on a 10-to-2 jury verdict and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Ramos appealed his conviction stating that the state of Louisiana did not reach their burden of proof “*beyond a reasonable doubt*” because two jurors did not vote to convict, but rather to acquit Ramos on the charges.

The Sixth Amendment says that, “*in all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law.*” From the text and the structure of the Constitution itself, it sets forth requirements of a “*trial by an impartial jury*”, and one of which is the requirement of a jury reaching a unanimous verdict. Without this requirement, the state’s burden would never be reached.

The State must prove each and every element of a crime beyond a reasonable doubt. If there is a person on the jury who still has questions about whether the defendant is guilty or innocent, then the State did not reach its burden of proof. Justice Gorsuch shot down the argument that Sixth Amendment rights did not extend to the states by via the the incorporation doctrine & the Fourteenth Amendment. He explained that there was, “*no question*” that the Sixth Amendment’s unanimity requirements applies to federal and state criminal trials equally. Even with these principles in mind, the dissent stated that they didn’t have any dispute with these principles under the incorporation doctrine and Sixth Amendment, but rather that the issue of stare decisis requires them to affirm Mr. Ramos’s conviction. Justice Gorsuch ruled, however, that this unanimity requirement was clear even when *Apodaca* was decided.

Justice Gorsuch also considered reliance interests when deciding *Ramos*. There were only two states who still allowed non-unanimous jury verdicts: Louisiana and Oregon. This would mean that there would only be a few cases which would need to be retried if *Ramos* were overruled. The dissent worried that the defendants would seek to challenge their non-unanimous convictions through some sort of collateral review such as *habeas corpus*.

However, *Teague v. Lane* shows that the newly recognized rules of criminal procedure do not normally apply in collateral reviews. Justice Kavanaugh also spoke on the retroactivity of the *Ramos* decision and said it should not apply considering it is not a substantive rule of criminal law or a watershed rule of criminal procedure. These reliance interests of Louisiana and Oregon were still not enough to keep the precedent from *Apodaca*.



Photo Credit: iStockPhoto

# THEIR TIPS.

## 15 Tips for Law School

By: Marissa K. Bosley

First semester of 3L year, we sat in Room 130 and listened as we were told, "Look around, the person sitting next to you might not make it back next semester". There are many people who aspire to attend law school and believe they have what it takes. However, some people will graduate with their Bachelors with above a 3.5 GPA, have all the best study habits, or have amazing extracurriculars on their resume to obtain enrollment in a law school, but then fail classes anyway or not graduate. In light of the law school environment, here are fifteen tips for those new to "Trusting the Process" to ensure they have a successful matriculation.



Photo Credit: iStockPhoto

1. You just started your first semester, make sure you are looking through your syllabus from each course and reading it thoroughly before asking your professor any important course questions because remember **RIF - Reading is FUNDAMENTAL**.
2. They say, "1L year they scare you to death, 2L year they work you to death, and 3L year they bore you to death." In reality, the three years are simply a marathon, so keep up the **seriousness of purpose**.
3. Immediately learn how to outline thoroughly
4. Schedule meetings with your **Student Advisor** frequently so you can get feedback on your hypo answers/writing.
5. Learn to brief cases specific for you. You should also collaborate with classmates to split cases so you aren't "too overworked" and classes go by smooth.

### 6. My writing tips as a **Student Advisor**:

- o Your Issue/Conclusion should be the shortest part of your answer, make sure they are written concisely and to the point of the call of the question.
- o Break down your rule into FOUR parts: first, the definition of the law, second, the elements of the law, third, the definition for each element, and lastly, any further explanations needed for the call of the question.
- o When navigating your analysis, highlight the facts, the law, and your reasoning (where the facts intertwine with the law) in three different colors to check your work; you should have all three colors present.
- o Your analysis section should always be generally equal length or longer than your rule section.

7. Practicing hypos your first year is extremely important for you to learn this new style of writing for the rest of your law school experience. Be sure you are doing this **BEFORE** finals crunch time.

8. Attend events to network with classmates. Getting to know your peers is imperative for connections that could help you in your future as an attorney.

9. Join a **student organization** because this is great experience for your resume, and it creates opportunities to learn more about the area of law that interest you.

10. Run for **SBA Executive Board** positions for the experience of a lifetime as a lawyer leader, especially if you are attempting to run for office one day.

11. Start applying for **On-Campus Interviews (OCIs)** as soon as you can, to increase your opportunities for during and after law school and to put yourself out there. It may be some of the worst interviews of your life but... hey, it's practice right?

12. Use a class superlative that you won during 2L year as inspiration for your next Public Defender Newspaper article.

13. ALWAYS USE A PLANNER, so you can keep track of all your activities and be sure that you are remaining professional and arriving on time to your meetings, classes, and more.

14. Take the MPRE during your 2L year... Okay, this may sound like a joke but it is real. Glad I took it Fall of 2L year!

15. Barrister's Ball will come up in the springtime, also known as "Law School Prom", where professors and faculty attend. It is important that when you attend you remember to remain at least somewhat sober while also holding yourself professionally with integrity during the event. You don't want to come back looking like a fool in front of people you still have to see on Monday.

\*Disclaimer\* These tips are not a comprehensive list of guidance for law school, I encourage you to look to the faculty and administration for more advice towards your seriousness of purpose in law school.

# HER-STORY.



Elizabeth Blackwell becomes first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States  
**January 1849**



Jeannette Rankin becomes first woman in House of Representatives  
**April 1917**



Rebecca Felton comes first woman in the U.S. Senate  
**October 1922**



In "The Battle of the Sexes," tennis great Billie Jean King beats Bobby Riggs in straight sets during an exhibition match  
**January 1973**



Sandra Day O'Connor sworn in as first woman US Supreme Court Justice  
**July 1981**

President John F. Kennedy signs into law the Equal Pay Act  
**June 1963**

Indira Ghandi becomes first woman Prime Minister of India  
**January 1966**

The FDA approves first birth control pill  
**May 1960**

Fe del Mundo is the first woman admitted to Harvard University  
**August 1932**

Title IX of the Education Amendments is signed into law by President Nixon  
**June 1972**

**May 1851**  
Sojourner Truth deliver "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech

**October 1916**  
Margaret Sanger opens first birth control clinic - now known as Planned Parenthood

**December 1955**  
Rosa Parks, refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama

**May 1932**  
Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean

**November 1960**  
Ruby Bridges is the first African-American child to desegregate an all-white Elementary School in Louisiana

**March 1969**  
Golda Meir becomes first woman Prime Minister of Israel

**January 1973**  
Supreme Court Landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade*

**May 1979**  
Margaret Thatcher becomes first woman Prime Minister of the United Kingdom



**August 1920**  
Ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote in the U.S.



**July 1964**  
President Lyndon B. Johnson, signs the Civil Rights Act into law; Title VII



**June 1983**  
Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space







U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi becomes the first woman Speaker of the House  
**January 2007**



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is confirmed as the first African American woman Supreme Court Justice  
**April 2022**

Geraldine Ferraro is name first woman VP nominee  
**July 1984**

Janet Reno is sworn in as the first woman Attorney General of the United States.  
**March 1993**

Angela Merkel becomes the first woman Chancellor of Germany  
**November 2005**

Sonia Sotomayor is sworn in as the first Puerto Rican woman Supreme Court Justice  
**August 2009**

Amy Coney Barrett is sworn into the Supreme Court  
**October 2020**

President Clinton signs the Violence Against Women Act  
**September 1994**

The U.S. military removes a ban against women serving in combat positions  
**January 2013**

**January 1997**  
Madeleine Albright is sworn in as the U.S. first woman Secretary of State.

**August 1993**  
Ruth Bader Ginsburg is sworn into the Supreme Court

**January 2006**  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf becomes first woman president of Liberia

**August 2010**  
Elena Kagan is sworn into the Supreme Court

**January 2021**  
Kamala Harris is sworn in as the first woman, African American, and Indian Vice President of the U.S.

**December 1988**  
Benazir Bhutto becomes first woman prime minister in Pakistan

**\*November 2008**  
Barack Obama is elected the first African American President of the United States

**July 2016**  
Hillary Clinton becomes the first woman to receive a presidential nomination from a major political party



# HER REALITY.

## Reshaping the Practice of Law: The Effects of the Pandemic on the Legal Profession

By: Bettina Ballet

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. At that time, no one knew of the profound and long-lasting impacts this pandemic would have on our society. People across the globe were forced into this “*new normal*.” Notably, the way we were accustomed to working, learning, and interacting with others changed forever. Its impact left no aspect of life untouched, and the legal profession was no exception.

Only two short years since the pandemic’s emergence and the overall structure of the legal profession was almost completely remodeled, giving the members of this field a virtual existence. While most will argue that the pandemic’s virtual impact has positively influenced the practice of law, others will argue the contrary.

The American Bar Association (ABA) released a report in 2021 titled, “*Practicing Law in the Pandemic and Moving Forward*.” This report provided statistical data that reflected the pandemic’s impact on a wide range of members of the legal field including law students, lawyers, and judges. This instant article seeks to expound on the ways in which the pandemic has directly affected the members of the legal profession.

### Zoom School of Law

In 2020, the traditional way of law school was brought to a halt as law students across the country were forced to quickly transition from in-person to virtual classes (ABA). Law schools used platforms like *Zoom* and *Microsoft Teams* to hold class sessions where professors could lecture and interact with students in real-time. This virtual platform also extended to the infamous, “*law school final exam*.” These exams were proctored through testing software that allowed students to sit for them at essentially any location. Many students were able to easily transition to this remote learning environment and enjoyed the convenience of attending class and taking exams from the comfort of their homes. On the other hand, remote schooling presented quite a struggle for some students who experienced difficulty adapting to this change due to technology barriers, incompatible learning styles, and other personal issues. Despite these transitional issues, remote learning was only the beginning of the pandemic’s virtual influence as this impact had already spread to the practice of law.

### The Virtual Lawyer

In many ways, the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic have been deemed beneficial to lawyers. Arguably, the most impactful and beneficial effect is the work from home (WFH) wave. During this pandemic, lawyers left their offices and started working from home. Although WFH is not new to lawyers, the pandemic made this type of work environment extremely popular within the legal profession. A study conducted by the ABA shows that more than half of all lawyers in the U.S. reported that they work from home close to 100% of the time (ABA). Researchers even anticipate that the WFM phenomenon will have a lasting impact in years to come due to its advantages.

Lawyers find it quite advantageous to communicate with their clients and perform other work-related duties without having to go into the office. Remote work has also led to an increase in job opportunities. As such, lawyers have received and accepted job offers that they otherwise would not have received/accepted before the pandemic due to physical barriers like distance.

Other benefits include the convenience of attending Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses. A number of jurisdictions including Louisiana require that their attorneys complete a certain number of CLE credits each year. Due to this new virtual conversion, with a simple click, lawyers can attend CLE courses to discuss and obtain knowledge about various pieces of legislation. Also, virtual networking has become widely used, connecting lawyers from around the country and the globe. In essence, the pandemic has made the legal profession much smaller and easier to access.



Photo Credit: Google Images

## The Virtual Court

Consequently, the judiciary has also gone virtual. At the height of the pandemic, state executive orders were issued that prohibited in-person court proceedings. Shortly thereafter, federal laws like *the Cares Act* were passed which permitted courts to use platforms like *Zoom* to conduct hearings and trials in order to prevent injustice (ABA). This ultimately allowed courts to continue to operate during the pandemic. Lawyers and their clients were able to attend proceedings from the comfort of their homes or offices. This opportunity was also extended to criminal defendants that were in custody. These defendants used video platforms to attend their hearings and trials without having to leave the correctional facility. Although most of these executive orders have been lifted, many courts still use video platforms to conduct their proceedings.

## The Downside of the Pandemic

Although the use of technology in the legal field has yielded great benefits, it has noticeably created a negative impact for some lawyers. The ABA conducted a study to see how lawyers were adjusting to the change in work and home life. Some of the lawyers reported increased levels of stress and disengagement due to a number of reasons including disruptions within the home and a lack of social interaction with peers.

Consequently, these lawyers have expressed their desire to either return to the office, reduce their hours, or stop working entirely (ABA).

In short, as the COVID-19 Pandemic has been extremely impactful on the entire globe, it has also affected smaller entities like the legal profession, and it is not finished altering the practice of law. One of the most important, if not the most important, skill a law student and lawyer can have is the ability to adapt to change during these unprecedented times and any that may follow. If anything, this pandemic has taught us to expect the unexpected and always be prepared.



Photo Credit: Google Images

HER STYLE.

# A Mini Guide: Dressing the Part for Zoom

By: Jayde Daniel

In the past three years, so much has changed. The last time I wrote an article about fashion and law, I wrote about the staples that everyone should have in their wardrobe, now it seems that has changed. Is athleisure the new business casual? Is business casually the new wave? To say "everything has changed since covid." would be the understatement of the century. Covid changed the way we go to work, where we go to work, when we go to work, the commute to work, and ultimately, and most importantly (in my opinion) what we wear to work. Because one can go to work from Bora Bora or bed, work attire has changed from a full suit to pajamas.

One of the new normals for those of us working from home, is facing the inevitable Zoom meeting fatigue and staring back at ourselves on our computer screens wondering, "is this really the best way to represent myself?" Raise your hand if you feel like your on-camera self is not the best reflection of who you are.



Photo Credit: Unknown

You're not alone. Use these tips to make sure that even virtually, you're dressed to impress and are taking care of yourself.

### 1. Always be fully dressed

For interviews, meetings, etc. always have pants on even, I like to put on a full suit just in case but if that's not your speed put on a solid color legging or pajama pants so that no matter what it looks cohesive.

### 2. Get into a routine

This may seem like a no-brainer but the pandemic funk has a lot of people in a mental funk but, sometimes just showing up takes more than what people know but develop a uniform or I know how easy it is to get into a funk because ninety percent of the time your camera is off and it's more than likely no one will ask you to turn it on but the off chance that someone does you should be ready. Developing a uniform, a simple blouse, fitted polo, or a nice shirt. As far as hair goes, have your signature style whether that's a braid-out, waves, dreads, or a wig, I suggest doing your hair/tying your hair up at night to minimize your morning routine.

### 3. Changing your location

Sitting at home can become cumbersome. Going to a local workspace or cafe to get some work done. A change of scenery can do wonders for the mental.

Everyone feels self-conscious about the way they look on camera. Keep that in mind during your next Zoom meeting, and don't worry too much about what your team thinks about your looks. With that in mind, there's plenty you can do to appear more professional on Zoom. That way, you'll feel less nervous when it's your turn to speak up.

# HER VISION.

## Law & Racism: Professor Angela A. Allen Bell Pioneers a New Curriculum as the United States Continues to Pass Legislation Consumed in Systemic Racism

By: Abeer M. Farid

*"We can no longer be married to law while it has an illicit affair with injustice."* – Angela A. Allen-Bell, Esq.

### The Course

Professor Angela A. Allen-Bell is an Associate Professor at the Southern University Law Center and a respected local, national, and international legal scholar with expertise in civil and human rights. Professor Allen-Bell, at the time of this publication, holds the B.K. Agnihotri Endowed Professorship. Her work primarily focuses on social and restorative justice and the interplay between race & justice. She is also one of the founding members of the advocacy team that led the effort to reform Louisiana's jury system through the adoption of legislation that would require unanimous juries in criminal trials in Louisiana state courts.

Following her fight to free the *Angola 3*, Professor Allen-Bell shifted her focus from not only teaching Constitutional Law at the Southern University Law Center, but curated a class specifically discussing racism and how it relates to everyday conversations. Topics included the meaning of race, stereotypes, gender, sexuality, criminal justice, trauma, cultural competency, and advocacy.

Summer of 2021, Professor Allen-Bell introduced a course titled *Law and Racism* to begin a conversation with law students and their experiences with everyday racism and micro-aggressions. Students were encouraged to connect acts of racism with laws that inevitably and covertly promote racism in society today. Students studied different areas of culture connected with law and heard from experienced activists and professors in their endeavors to continue the fight for restorative justice.

At the end of the six-week course, dedicated and passionate students worked together to present a symposium discussing the current issue of the lack of people of color chosen to sit on a jury based on the ineffectiveness of the jury wheel. The discussion addressed the government's lack of review of the system that sends out jury summons. Students wrote articles and op-eds to promote this issue and the symposium while other students chose to take on other personal issues as a result of discussions during the course.



Photo Credit: Angela A. Allen-Bell

### The Federal Jury Symposium

An issue brought to light by Professor Allen-Bell, dedicated students work together to organize an event that amplifies the importance of the 6th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and to explain its relationships to fair trials protections, including the ability to have an accused person's fate decided by a jury of their peers. Students' articles published were presented while guest speakers spoke to correlating topics.

Speakers of the symposium included Professor Angela A. Allen-Bell, who provided historical and geographical context and explained how it intersects with voting. Will Snowden, founder of the Juror Project, discussed the importance of jury service and the significance of diversity on a jury. Tom Aiello, Professor at Valdosta State University, discussed the continuing execution of modern-day Jim Crow policies in the current jury selection and lastly, Sheri Johnson, assistant of Clinical Programs at Cornell Law School, discussed the court's role in achieving racial equity and provided litigation insights.

The symposium was organized by students in Professor Allen-Bell's *Law and Racism* course in collaboration with the Vera Institute, Louisiana Capital Assistance Center, the Promise of Justice Initiative, the Center for African, African American Studies at the Southern University New Orleans, and VOTE.

# HER VULNERABILITY.

## The Golden Standard: Two Olympic Scandals, One Fate

By: Pedro Alfonso Trevino Jr.

Destined for the 2020 Summer Olympics, which faced delays due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, her feet were finally able to glide through the track. Timed at 10.86 seconds at the 2020 U.S. Olympic Trials in the 100-meter relay, her destiny came into fruition. Now the sixth fastest woman in the world, Sha'Carri Richardson was catapulted to the spotlight, becoming America's Olympian.

Then something failed. A positive urine test for THC, commonly found in marijuana, blew through the headlines. Suddenly, one hundred meters became the distance between the Olympics and her destiny.

When she returned home, she received devout support from fans giving her a roar of applause. Her team was proud to have her back and everyone spoke words of pure understanding because they knew her situation was beyond difficult. When she received her suspension pending the investigation surrounding her failed drug test, it was ultimately found such drug use was unintentional and the usage of such drugs was an accident on the part of the Olympian. Except the Olympian was actually Kamila Valieva, not Sha'Carri Richardson.



Photo Credit: Patrick Smith

Richardson was not greeted with understanding, instead she was greeted with judgement. Valieva experienced one day of suspension while Richardson endured a month-long suspension that overlapped with her Olympic competition by one day. ONE DAY.

Valieva's drug test found a cocktail of narcotics in her system, two that are not banned substances by the World Anti-Doping Agency, Hypoxen and L-carnitine, and one banned substance, trimetazidine. According to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, this cocktail had the ability to increase Valieva's endurance during her figure skating performance.



Photo Credit: Lintao Zhang

However, Richardson tested positive for THC, and while banned, shows no scientific evidence that it provides anyone with heightened performance in a competition.

Claims made by Valieva asserted that the ingestion of trimetazidine, a heart medication, was an honest accident. Even when such claims were met with outrage from the sports community, her word was enough for the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which is the ultimate tribunal who handles such complaints. However, the use of marijuana to cope with becoming an Olympian in the midst of her biological mother's death warrants no excuse to the same agencies for Richardson.

Richardson's suspension prevented her from competing. However, Valieva suspension resulted in her being catapulted to the Beijing Olympics. The scandals surrounding both women showed the world how truly skin-deep humanity can be. A petite blonde Russian figure skater remained innocent even when proven guilty. On the other hand, a young brown-skin track star, sentenced guilty even when proven innocent.

In the end, the ability to lie in the face of truth is impossible. The world will never know what would have been if Sha'Carri Richardson competed. Would she have a medal? Would it have been the gold? What records would she have broken? In the end, the world knows the result of these two scandals.



Photo Credit: Twitter

# THEIR IDENTITY.

## Facial Recognition Technology: The Danger of False Positive Readings to Our Constitutional Rights

By: Dalton Breshears

Once a distant nightmare for dystopian authors like George Orwell, his visions of a society ruled by an oppressive and ever-watching eye have become alarmingly accurate in the world we find ourselves in today through Facial Recognition Technology. Facial Recognition Technology (henceforth referred to as FRT) are systems of computer programming capable of identifying a person's physical identity from digital images or videos of their face.

Advocates of FRT argue that the advances in this field of technology contribute to our society's ability to stay safe from physical and cyber-related harm that could otherwise plague our communities. However, critics of FRT contend that the unabated continuation of the technology with its faulty and effectually discriminatory nature inevitably will lead to a rapid deterioration of citizen's constitutionally protected rights.

Currently, FRT is used by an assortment of different agencies including the FBI, law enforcement, the DMV, airports, social media, banks, and criminal prosecutors. These organizations and entities employ FRT by gathering existing documentation on the targeted person through driver's licenses, mugshots, social media account pictures, and a database of over 670 million pre-existing photos of United States citizens. Statistically, one's face is already a part of the database being used by public and private agencies to promote these technologies. Despite this immensely invasive database, FRT systems proves to be dangerous to the citizens it was intended to protect.

Consider the story of Robert Williams, who was wrongly accused and arrested as the byproduct of FRT failing. Mr. Williams, a black man, was falsely identified, arrested, and held in a detention center for 30 hours. FRT was one of the tools used by law enforcement that led to his arrest. The FRT misidentified Mr. Williams to law enforcement as an alleged perpetrator of a robbery that occurred earlier that year. The misidentification occurred because the FRT had completed a 'false positive' reading of Mr. Williams's face. A false positive occurs when the conclusion made by FRT on a person's identity is wrong but is flagged as being accurate. This means that although the FRT is wrongfully identifying two different people as the same person, the software tags them as the same person, nonetheless.

Furthermore, false positive readings have an exceptionally disturbing history with Black and Asian American communities. According to the Washington Post, FRT systems misidentify Asian and Black people up to 100 times more than White people. The inaccuracies in the recognition software occurs for a variety of reasons, including the implicit biases transferred to the software from the creator, a lack of quality photos of Black and Asian Americans, and the color of a person's skin, which affects the way light is reflected and represented in FRT software.

Simply put, the darker one's skin color is the more difficult it becomes for FRT to accurately identify them. Moreover, the lack of quality in standardized photos for Black and Asian Americans creates an uncontrolled environment which leads to a massive increase in false positive readings.

Another point of contemplation revolves around the evolution of a person's face over time. Unlike a fingerprint, faces change due to factors such as altering hairstyles, weight fluctuations, and normal aging, which only further ensures more inaccuracies in the FRT system leading to additional false positive readings.



Photo Credit: iStockPhoto

Mr. Williams was wrongly accused because the FRT failed to identify him and then he had to argue the man in the photo committing the alleged crime was not him. This is a massive violation to one's constitutional right of due process, and breaks against the notion that one is assumed, 'innocent until proven guilty' in this country.

This phenomenon of false positive misidentifications was so prevalent that the ACLU ran FRT software on 120 California state legislators and the software wrongly identified 26 of the state legislators as criminals, representing an error rate of 1 in 5. It is important to further note that a disproportionate number of those misidentified legislators were Black and Asian American.

Given this country's history, such a system continues the oppression of, not just marginalized groups of people, but all people. One must then ask themselves whether endorsing such a technology system that can target, track, and harm people outweighs their constitutional right to due process.

The rapid and unobstructed rise in FRT should cause even the strongest supporters of the technology to pause and question whether its advancement holds more worth than the inescapable erosion of one's constitutional rights.

# HER OBSERVATION.

## Natural 20/20 Vision: 2020's Historical Hurricane Season

By: Brittany Calecas

From beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic to the events surrounding the murder of George Floyd, one thing that remained widespread in Louisiana was its historic hurricane season in 2020.

Being a law student is stressful enough, but when you add the historic hurricane season on top of that, it made things even more stressful. Classes were being cancelled, which sounds great in theory, until you still have assignments to work on and studying to do, so you don't fall behind in your classes. On top of that, especially those of us who are local, we weren't just worrying about our well-being during these storms, but we were worried about our friends and families that were possibly having their homes and lives destroyed by them. This hurricane season really put so much additional stress on us law students that we definitely did not need.

Being the second time in history where storms were named through the Greek Alphabet, this particular season broke and tied records. There was a total of thirty named storms that year, with winds pushing close to at least thirty-nine miles per hour. Fourteen storms became hurricanes, carrying winds of at least seventy-four miles per hour. Seven became major hurricanes, with winds of at least one hundred and eleven miles per hour.

Of all the storms, eleven made landfall in the continental U.S., breaking the country's previous record of nine in 1916. Ten of these storms formed all in the month of September, which is the most storms to form in one month on record.

There were two major hurricanes that formed in the month of November: Eta and Iota. Iota was the strongest storm to form so late in hurricane season when it became a Category 5 storm on Nov. 16, 2020.

Of the eleven storms that made landfall in the US, four of those storms made landfall in Louisiana: Cristobal, Laura, Delta, and Zeta. It was originally thought that Hurricane Marco made landfall in Louisiana, but the NOAA determined during its post season review that Marco fizzled out before making landfall. Cristobal was a tropical storm when it made landfall on June 7, 2020, east of Grand Isle.

Laura developed into a Category 4 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 150 mph on August 27, 2020. Hurricane Laura made landfall near the Louisiana-Texas border in Cameron Parish. Local news stations predicted Hurricane Laura's storm surge would be "unsurvivable." Hurricane Laura's storm surge climbed its way to 17 feet, tying with the 1856 Last Island Hurricane as one of the strongest to make landfall in Louisiana.

A Category 2 hurricane, Delta made landfall on Oct. 9, roughly 15 miles east of where Hurricane Laura made landfall a little over a month earlier. It had sustained winds of over 100 mph.

Zeta was initially thought to be a strong Category 2 hurricane when it struck land on Oct. 28, in Cocodrie, Louisiana. During the NOAA's post season review, Hurricane Zeta was recategorized as actually having been a Category 3 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 115 mph at the time of landfall. The eye passed right over the city of New Orleans. Hurricane Zeta ended up breaking the record for having the latest date in which a major hurricane made landfall in the continental US.

Overall, the 2020 Hurricane season was clearly a historic one for Louisiana.



Photo Credit: Google Images

# HER ASSESSMENT!

## “Participation” Grading Amidst a Pandemic

By: Chelsea Gravel

Let us preface this article with (*what should be*) a notably obvious statement. In any situation, but especially during a global pandemic, “*participation*” should not be counted against students in such a way that gives rise to a failing grade.

The Covid-19 pandemic has already increased student anxiety and depression— and while we all, students, and professors alike, are still learning how to manage and master virtual learning— the denial of a grade that was earned based on competency due to a professor’s objective view of participation, only adds to that stress. In normal times, in a structured classroom setting removed from the disquietude of a rampant decline in a student’s or their family’s health, finances, and/or employment, participation can be more understandably expected. These, however, are clearly not “normal times”. Deducting such a large number of points due to participation requirements such as “*having your camera on*” is inequitable and unjust. It’s impossible to argue that students are getting the same experiences and opportunities via remote learning during the pandemic as one would face-to-face and to assess a student’s competency as if that’s still the case is ludicrous.

Non-cognitive behaviors, such as focus, “*self-discipline*”, and participation, should be looked at separately, if at all. While several authors strongly advocate this principle— Megan Knight, Associate Professor at the University of Iowa and Robyn Cooper, Ph.D., Professor at Drake University, explored the “*almost cult-like*” importance of these grading procedures in America in their article “*Taking on a New Grading System: The Interconnected Effects of Standards-Based Grading on Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and Student Behavior*”. Even in 2019, when the article was written, well before the undoing of the Covid-19 pandemic, honestly assessing these non-cognitive behaviors within flexible delivery models was a challenge. As such, it is much more important to separate or even omit non-cognitive behaviors in order to accurately assess what a student has learned in this new normal of virtual delivery. When non-cognitive behaviors and academic learning is inappropriately combined, the result is “*hodgepodge grading*” in which the meaning of grades is mistranslated and misunderstood.



Painting by Chelsea Gravel

Students should be graded/assessed largely, if not solely, on the competency of the material learned and tested on being expected to engage in participation, in the way of having a camera on and/or being able to speak at all times is discriminatory as students have a multitude of issues they are experiencing such as, distractions at home, family/child care, insufficient or lack of access to the technology required, and crippling anxiety from not knowing what comes next, is clearly not the only way to “*participate*”. When these students are tested on the material delivered, the ability to perform proficiency of knowledge, should apprise professors that attending (logging onto) class and actively listening is an adequate form of participation. While the student may not have had every opportunity to speak or be seen via their webcam, if they are capable of reiterating substantive information, they have undeniably participated in active listening and/or studying the material outside of regularly scheduled class times and have put forth the effort in learning despite of all the issues they could be facing.

Again, in any situation, but especially in the throes of a global pandemic, “*participation*” should not be counted against students in such a way that gives rise to a failing grade. If a student never speaks, never has their camera on, and subsequently bombs an assessment, it is understandable to deduce that such a student does not have a grasp on the material— but if a student, for whatever reason listed above or not listed at all, is unable to “*participate*” but can completely answer questions of their knowledge on the subject matter that is the only true and honest assessment.



# HER REFLECTION.

## Resilience: Accepting Our New Reality

By: Yuri Haslyett

“Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good.”

— Elizabeth Edwards

On March 14, 2020, the Chancellor held a meeting letting all students know that due to so many unknowns dealing with COVID-19, the school would be closing our in-person environment and temporarily transitioning to a virtual environment. Of course, there was panic and hysteria amongst each other, but we truly were not prepared for how drastically our law school experience was about to change. From March to May, COVID-19 only got worse and in turn a lot of changes started to happen. All of our classes went virtual, our final exam environment changed, and many students started to lose the internships that they worked hard to get. In less than three months, our reality of law school was changed and there was no idea of when the changes would stop.

I am writing this two years later and the changes are still happening. Every semester the class of 2022 experienced different policies and transitions because of the unpredictability of the virus. The school consistently tried to create a sense of normalcy, but we knew that our experience with law school was being drastically impacted and it was up to each of us to figure it out. And we did. Every time our situation changed, we complained, but we recovered quickly and adapted. Some were directly affected by COVID-19, some of us lost loved ones, and some of us struggled with maintaining our mental health, but we made it to this point. On May 21st, we can all say we did it, despite our circumstances. As we separate and go on different paths, remember that this path was tough, but also remember how you made it in the end.



# HER MESSAGE.

## Advice Column from a 3L

**Dear Current & Future Students:**

Silence in the face of opposition is simple. Neutrality in the arena of divisiveness is uncomplicated. However, maintaining constant vigilance and preparation to speak for the unspoken seems to be the most difficult part.

Still, the work must be done. At Southern University Law Center, students are provided with the necessary instruments to combat any obstacle in today's legal battlefield. This school will grace anyone the ability to know when to break silence and shatter neutrality. Unlike like any other legal institution across this nation, Southern University Law Center positions its students outside of their comfort zone. Gradually, students realize the Law Center runs deeper than its halls. It is a sanctuary for the people destined to stand and speak on the right side of America's courtroom. Professors exude a legal prowess, while providing the expertise needed in this field.

Fellow colleagues will sit next to each other in unison, reinforcing to each other this knowledge. As Chancellor Pierre would say, “This law school makes history every day.”

Whether a future state representative, corporate law partner, or a probate attorney, everyone that is a product of the Law

Center are all, by design, social architects.

Every student, virtually or physically present, has the duty to exercise the correct standard of care in using the power provided to create change. What type of change is to be envisioned? When marginalized people are attacked, will a blind eye turn or is it time to speak out? Has the passion for this proven to be enough to sacrifice, at times, friends? Or family? It is possible to fight for the rights of others? To be a voice beyond emotions, but one of logic and the law that has the power to protect the marginalized? Which side of history is worth the fight: the one of liberation or oppression?

Because it can be done. Each student of this Law Center are brilliant. They are resilient. Most of all, they are remarkable. All that enter Southern's doors have a reason and must walk in their purpose. However, one must do more than wanting a purpose. One must need it. It comes with immeasurable sacrifices to one's energy, and even happiness, but will set you apart from the status quo. Never forget, not only is it worth it, but you are worth it.

“I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.” - James Baldwin.

Sincerely,  
**Kandi Gilder**

# HER PRAYER.

## Finding Her Rainbow: Kesha's Legal Battle with Producer Dr. Luke

In 2009, Kesha's debut single "Tik Tok" had a chokehold on the nation as it dominated the charts and radio station everywhere. Little did the public know, the song was five years in the making and lengthy legal troubles would follow the young artist as she hit stardom.

It seemed as if Kesha's prayer was to be answered in 2021 when former New York Governor Cuomo passed a law designated to prevent wealthy people from filing frivolous lawsuits to intimidate and stifle free speech. SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) was enacted for defendants to be awarded the costs of legal fees if lawsuits were initiated in bad faith and only for meritorious litigation. The legal battle in itself is whether Dr. Luke is considered a public figure as he is a music producer and not the one performing. This legislation requires that even private figure plaintiffs to prove actual malice on the issues of public concern.



Photo Credit: Mary Altaffer

Kesha signed to Dr. Luke's label in 2005. One month later, Kesha's dialed her mother claiming she had no idea where she was or what had happened the night before. She says to her mom, "I don't want to be a rape case victim. I just want to get my music out." One year later, Kesha signed a management deal with DAS Communications but returns to Dr. Luke. Despite DAS's termination, the company continued to find her work and later alleged Kesha was coerced by Dr. Luke to return to his label. Following the release of her first album, in 2010, DAS sued Kesha for \$14 million in unpaid commissions and Dr. Luke for interfering in their partnership amount in another \$12 million.

In 2011, Kesha testified under oath that her producer, Dr. Luke, never made any sexual advances towards her yet she allegedly had told her inner circle of his unethical and unlawful behavior when they were alone.

Kesha's sophomore album does not do as well in the industry as her relationship with Dr. Luke takes a turn for the worse in 2012. Kesha insinuates creative differences as she was forced to record the song "Die Young" in which she received major backlash after the Newtown massacre.

Her legal troubles were well under way in 2014 when she filed an explosive lawsuit against Dr. Luke claiming sexual assault and battery involving the use of date rape drugs and an incident where he was so violent she escaped barefoot down the Pacific Coast Highway. The lawsuit accused the producer of long-term emotional and psychological abuse involving fat-shaming which caused Kesha "severe depression, post-traumatic stress, social isolation, and panic attacks." Her only prayer in the lawsuit was to be released from her record deal from Dr. Luke and no criminal charges would be filed.

However, Dr. Luke's legal team was in full effect as they filed a countersuit in New York for defamation and denied all allegations.

In 2015, Kesha argued the parent label, Sony, had put her in physical danger by allowing her to work with Dr. Luke because they allegedly had the knowledge of his harmful behavior and enabled his abuse for years.

In 2016, Kesha filed an emergency preliminary injunction to be released from under Dr. Luke, claiming her career would suffer "irreparable harm" if she had to wait for the sexual assault suit to be resolved in order to record new music without his involvement. She further pled to the court to expedite the decision the original lawsuit.

As she placed her faith in the legal system, Kesha's freedom was not granted as she was denied her request and cited there had "been no showing of irreparable harm." The opinion noted that Sony had permitted Kesha to record new music without the involvement of Dr. Luke, but her legal team refute Sony's statement claiming it as an illusory promise and the label would not promote her work.

Kesha appealed the judge's denial of injunction on March 21st for freedom from her contract. In the pleading, Kesha declared the judge's ruling is upheld a form of "slavery" because she was working against her will. Later, on Instagram, Kesha admitted that Dr. Luke had offered to release her contingent on her recanting all accusations of abuse. Kesha, clinging to her truth, said she would rather let the truth ruin her career than "lie for a monster ever again."

Disputing Kesha's claims that her contract is a form of slavery, a New York judge threw out her counterclaims of abuse against Dr. Luke. and claimed Kesha is acting unreasonably. In the first quarter of 2017, Kesha did not hold back as she released emails allegedly from Dr. Luke that support her abuse claims. Dr. Luke responded by claiming the emails are taken out of context. In March, a judge rejected Kesha's third attempt at freedom. It was implied that Kesha

should have known the risk of signing with Dr. Luke as his “alleged abusive behavior was foreseeable.”

In July of 2017, the public receives Kesha’s first solo song since the lawsuit, “Praying,” with an announcement regarding the release of her third album.

At the height of the #TimesUp movement in 2018, Kesha held back tears as she delivered a heart wrenching and powerful performance at the Grammys of her most recent single. Following, Kesha suffered a major setback when a New York appeals court sided with a previous judge denying her release from her contract.



Photo Credit: Kevin Winters

In 2019, Lady Gaga released a statement recalling her first time meeting Kesha in Dr. Luke’s home studio where she found her in a backroom with only her underwear on. When asked about her own opinion about the allegations of Dr. Luke, Gaga responded, “if you are asking what my view is of his reputation, I made my view of him and his reputation when I saw her in that back room,” Gaga said. “I felt and knew in my heart that she was telling the truth, and I believe her.”

Fifteen years after initially signing with Dr. Luke, Kesha received a devastating blow in 2020 as Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Jennifer Schecter ruled Kesha defamed Dr. Luke. Kesha’s legal team plans to appeal the decision.

After years of filing and pleading, Kesha prayed the 2021 SLAPP law would give her some sense of relief going forward. However, an appellate court in New York upheld the lower court’s ruling from 2020 that Dr. Luke was, in fact, not a public figure. The court also affirms the Kesha’s statements were defamatory and that she can be held liable for statements made by her legal team and press agent.

In her hit single “Praying,” Kesha says, “And we both know all the truth I could tell; I’ll just say this is ‘I wish you farewell,’” and sings her wish of being free from this industry regulated contractual form of slavery.

As law students interested in entertainment law, the claims and counterclaims of her battle have legal heads spinning. Her fight shows the reality and prolongation of the legal matters in litigation. As her legal battles continue to ensue over a decade later, the support from her fans and other artists have aided her in returning to her roots of making music and hope for the legal battle to come to a rest.

# HER VERSION.

## *Bad Blood*: Swift Discovers Loop-Hole in Obtaining Ownership

When you think *Tim McGraw*, you think Taylor Swift. At just 17 years old, she rose to stardom becoming a household name. At this formative age, Swift had no idea she *Should’ve Said No* to the clause in her original contract regarding the ownership of her music.

Following the expiration of her six-album contract with Big Machine Records, Swift signed with Republic Records and her legal dispute began when American Media Proprietor, Scooter Braun, bought her previous label, and thus had ownership of all six of Swift’s albums. Swift alleged the label would not allow her to perform her old material at the 2019 AMAs and the purchase of her masters were contingent upon re-signing with Big Machine Records. Later, Swift announced, she would be there *Forever and Always* for her fans and other musicians by releasing re-recorded albums including bonus tracks from the vault.

The issue was not of capital for Swift to purchase the masters but rather the principle. Unlike other artists, Swift is powerful enough to survive a blowback from a legal battle. Since, Swift has become an advocate as her underlying message in the dispute is that all artists should have ownership over their own work. When asked her best advice for new musicians, she says with experience, “get a good lawyer.”

In the industry, her actions were labeled as calculated and manipulative due to her gender but she responded with her music video of, *The Man*, showing Swift dressed as a man while her accompanying lyrics state, “And I’m so sick of running as fast as I can; wondering if I’d get there quicker if I was a man.”

As fans fell apart emotionally fresh off the release of *Red* (Taylor’s Version) the ten-minute version of *All Too Well* was the longest track to officially hold the number one spot on the charts and in broken hearts everywhere.

Whether someone stood on under the *Starlight* on *Holy Ground* when they heard their first Swift song on *The Very First Night* or they were *Enchanted* to meet her, Taylor Swift’s *Reputation* was dragged through the mud only for her to address the music industry, challenging, “are you *Ready For It?*”



Photo Credit: Dave Hogan

# HER LOVE.

## *Con La Familia:* Legally Broken Generational Curses

By: Pedro Alfonso Trevino Jr.

Approaching graduation, a weight rests on most shoulders. The worry of success. The fear of the bar exam. Many, if not all anticipated graduates feel the aforementioned. However, for some, an unfamiliar pressure feels pressed on them.

For some, this pressure runs deeper than final exams and bar prep, but through their veins. Like if one fails, they not only failed themselves, but their whole family. Minority students often have to experience obtaining a degree as a generational achievement. Minority law students endure the same, but now, the generational stakes have risen to new heights.

Her name was Elvira G. Garcia, but I remember her as Gran-mama. In my adolescent years, I was not only fortunate to know my great-grandmother, but blessed to know her story.

Born in 1915, she yearned for knowledge, but the current socio-economic structure prevented such endeavors. At that time, the only monolingual people allowed to receive an education were English-speaking students. Not only were Spanish-speaking children denied the ability to learn English, but also a Spanish-based curriculum. Little *Elvirita* was not allowed to learn reading or writing in either language, but only to learn her letters and numbers. With first grade being her highest level of education, she was forced into the cotton fields. At that time, little Mexican girls were put to work prior to their male counterparts. Soon after, she would learn how to sew, eventually becoming an exemplary seamstress.



Photo Credit: Pedro Alfonso Trevino Jr.

Decades later, she greets into the world her eldest granddaughter. Halfway through her life, her thirst for knowledge remained unquenchable. As my mother, her granddaughter, progressed through each grade level, so would *Elvirita*. Writing letters to her granddaughter, and my mother sending letters back, she would eventually learn how to read and write in both languages, an image and story now engraved into my inner self.

However, her story is not singular. Rather, it is plural. Historically and systemically, this nation has denied minority communities, especially marginalized women, the ability to receive an education. Each generation denied access to an education weighs on the next generation.

Enter the theory of generational trauma, which is when trauma of one person transfers to their descendants, creating a family pattern. In the realm of education, when one is denied access, it runs deeper than books and chalkboards, but opportunities that were then denied because of that access. This then passes through generations, where parents, in good faith, push their children beyond the threshold they were denied a chance to reach. However, when that child passes through, they enter uncharted waters with no compass. For many law students, doubt, and anxiety blossom from this moment, because now what? What is next? Only time will tell.

Nevertheless, throughout one's matriculation, a realization comes that this pressure is necessarily not a terrible thing. What felt impossible for the ones who came before us, suddenly became possible. In a world of firsts, once a generational curse is broken, now has the power to be a generational blessing for the next.



Photo Credit: Pedro Alfonso Trevino Jr.

# HER LEGACY.

## The First University Was Founded by a Woman, Yet Her Gender is the Least Educated in the World

By: Abeer .M. Farid

In August of 2019, the one of the first statements heard by SULC students at orientation was from Chancellor Pierre, where he stated, “It is a privilege to have the knowledge of the law.” This statement left some students confused as they continued about their day. The statement, however, has echoed these past three years through current events. Having the right and privilege of attending a university in the United States, it is easy to forget the illiteracy that surrounds the country. Studies show that illiteracy leads to war, famine, and overall human right violations.

The first university in the world was founded by a woman named Fatima Al-Fihri in 859 A.D. She was the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Fez, Morocco. During her lifetime, she was known as the “mother of boys” as this nickname stemmed from her charity work and the students she took under wing.

When she inherited a sum of money from her father and husband, she built a mosque in her community. This was the first religious institute and the largest Arab university in North Africa. Still operating today, the mosque was later formally named the University of Qarawiyyin. The date of reference is the year that the mosque was founded implying its educational character roots back to the inception of the building.



Photo Credit: Google Images

Currently, woman make up more than two thirds of the world’s illiterate population. Girls living in rural areas are twice as likely than urban girls to not attend school. In Pakistan, just a half kilometer increase in distance to a school will decrease a girl’s enrollment by 20%.

In South Sudan, a country chronically faced with violence and war, almost 75% of girls do not go to school. In Niger, only 17% of women are literate. Only 1% of girl in Burkina Faso



Photo Credit: Google Images

complete secondary school and in Ethiopia, two out of five girls are married before the age of 18 barring them from completing their education.

In other third world nations, the small villages do not have access for girls to go to school as it is seen as a luxury and only a requirement of boys. These villages in India or Bangladesh, for example, have a high child marriage rate and high newborn mortality rate. Further, poorer families that live in small villages with limited resources will sell their young daughters off, between the ages of 10-18, for marriage to older men in order to take care of the rest of the family. This prevents the married girls to be given a chance of starting or finishing primary education. Often time, the “married” girls are never seen again by their families. Depending on how young the girls are when they give birth to their first child, they will often die in the process.

After United States troops were extracted from Afghanistan, the Taliban did not hesitate to retake power that was held from them as long as the U.S. troops were deployed in the area. During their first rule, girls were not allowed to go to school, yet they were promised an education through secondary school under their leadership this time around. With the rigid dress code in place, young and eager to learn girls showed up to the gate of the schools in hopes the Taliban’s promise was true. When they arrived, they were sent home by Taliban officials and were told to wait for another announcement.

The idea that law students are privileged to know the law is a heavy burden to carry. With this knowledge, future attorneys can continue with United Nations efforts in providing access to education to girls around the world regardless of their socioeconomic status and the war-torn living conditions.

# MEET OUR GRADUATE EDITORIAL STAFF

## Editor-In Chief



Paola Estrada is a native of Honduras and like many others at SULC, is the first lawyer in her family. Something she had never before considered. Prior to law school she attended Brigham Young University-Idaho, obtaining a degree in Business Management. However, her life experiences led her to pursuing an advanced legal education. While at SULC she served as the Editor-in Chief for The Public Defender Newspaper. She is also an active member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

Upon graduation, she plans on entering the legal world of data privacy. Her advice to others is that sure law school gets rough but once you look back it'll be the best thing you've ever done.

## Article Editor



Dalton Breshears serves as an Editor for The Public Defender Newspaper and as a member of the SULC Animal Legal Defense Fund Chapter, SACSCOC Student Representative, and Investigatory Honor Code Committee. Upon graduation, Dalton is interested in putting his legal knowledge to work in the technology fields and doing pro bono work for animal rights organizations. During his time at SULC, he has learned a plethora

of things, but one of the greatest lessons he has learned was that one's journey to their purpose will always begin with the small step of taking chance and believing in yourself.

## Development Editor



Kandi Gilder was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. She is the granddaughter of a cowboy and a nurse, and the daughter of two veterans. She knew from the age of five that she wanted to be an attorney when she grew up, and that is how she came to attend The Southern University Law Center. During her time, Kandi has been a member of the Board of Student Advisors as a teacher's assistant, the Treasurer of Environmental Law Society, member of the task force of SULC Campus Climate and Sexual Harassment, Development

Editor of the Public Defender Newspaper, and a Thurgood Marshall College Fund Scholar. In addition, she clerked for the Honorable Judge Nandi Cambell, Section G Criminal Court.

## Production Editor



Amber Lintzen is a proud resident of Eunice, Louisiana—the Cajun Prairie Capital of the World. She is the Production Editor for The Public Defender Newspaper, and an active member of Women in Law, Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and the Board of Student Advisors. After graduation, Amber plans to sit for the Louisiana Bar Exam and begin working as a judicial law clerk at the 27th Judicial District Courthouse in St. Landry Parish. Her advice to students is not to let their J.D. be the only thing you leave law school with; instead, leave here knowing you did everything you wanted and then some.

## Article Editor



Deep in the Southernmost tip of the State of Texas, in a region known as the Rio Grande Valley, Pedro Trevino grew up in rural Starr county, surrounded by mesquite trees and cacti. His childhood consisted of raising cattle, ranch maintenance, and the annual county fair. Zooming into his undergraduate career, he attended the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley, where he double majored in Political Science and English with a Creative Writing emphasis and a Legal Studies Minor. After graduating from UT-RGV in May of 2018, Pedro began employment at the insurance defense

firm of Roerig, Oliveira, & Fisher, LLP, until receiving his acceptance letter from Southern University Law Center in April of 2019. Now a third-year law student, Pedro is a current member of the Board of Student Advisors, the Journal of Race, Gender, and Poverty, and a Fellow in the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project.

## Mechanical Editor



Abeer Farid's pre-law school activities included community service, teaching, and competitive tennis. At the University of Houston, she was involved in Mock Trial, Phi Alpha Delta, and NSLS, while earning a degree in Political Science with a minor in Medical Anthropology. After her acceptance to the Southern University Law Center, she studied while working as a research assistant for Professor Angela A. Allen-Bell and served on the Board of Student Advisors. Under Professor Bell, Abeer was involved in the Federal Jury Symposium during the summer.

Abeer also spent her summers interning at the Family Court in East Baton Rouge Parish under the Honorable Lisa Woodruff-White where she earned the LSBA Law Student Pro-Bono Award in 2020. In the summer of 2021, Abeer interned at the Harris County District Attorney's Office in Houston, Texas. In her final year, Abeer had the privilege of being a fellow for the Marshall Brennan Constitutional Literacy program and the Mechanical Editor for The Public Defender Newspaper. After she sits for the Texas BAR in July of 2022, Abeer plans to obtain an LLM in International Law.

# MEET OUR GRADUATE STAFF WRITERS



Brittany Calecas is a 3L at Southern University Law Center, graduating in May 2022. She is planning on sitting for the Louisiana Bar exam in July 2022. She graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in May 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. She also received a minor in Psychology and Sociology. Currently, she works as a law clerk at the Louisiana Department of Justice in the Attorney General's Office Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. Brittany is a staff writer for The Public Defender Newspaper, and an active member in Women in Law, Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and the Board of Student Advisors.

After graduation and passing the bar, she hopes to practice criminal law in some aspect. Something she learned in law school is that it is okay not to be perfect at everything you do; just do your best, and you will still succeed.



Bettina Ballet was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and raised in Dallas, Texas. She attended Howard Payne University, earning her B.A. in Social Science-Jurisprudence (pre-law), Public Policy-Civic Leadership, and English cum laude. She is currently a 3L at Southern University Law Center and will receive her J.D. in Spring 2022. While at SULC, Bettina has pursued externships in criminal law, personal injury, and family law as a legal assistant and judicial intern. She has conducted extensive research on criminal trends with a focus on reducing recidivism rates. To that end, she will be working at a criminal defense law firm in Dallas, Texas.



Marissa K. Bosley is soon to graduate on May 21st and has been a part of a long list of student organizations throughout their time at SULC, including the Journal of Race, Gender, and Poverty, Board of Student Advisors, Environmental Law Society, SBA Diversity Committee, National Police Accountability Project, Criminal Law Society, and the Public Defender Newspaper. Bosley is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where they have roots in Cajun and French culture. She graduated from LSU with a bachelor's in Political Science with a concentration in Public Policy. Bosley is always

working on a project and has many passions, including ballet where they found themselves graduating with a minor in dance. Upon graduation, they plan to take the Louisiana BAR and UBE to practice public service in different parts of the country. They would like to say that SULC has truly been the best experience for their choice in law schools. The rich cultures and diversity that the Law Center was able to surround them with and truly rewarded their journey to learn more about other people, other countries, and really help them grow as a person. This will be what they will treasure the most about their time at SULC.



Chelsea Gravel is from Central Louisiana, and now lives just outside of Nashville, Tennessee, with her three children. She is a 3L at SULC and has enjoyed a variety of internships with civil rights research projects, the public defender's offices, and advocacy groups.

If she could possibly describe law school in just one quote, it would be... *"Resilience is accepting your new reality."* - Elizabeth Edwards



Ashley Muse is a 3L from Orrville, Alabama. Ashley received her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Alabama A&M University. Ashley is interested in several areas of law including Intellectual Property, Family Law, and Personal Injury. After graduation, Ashley plans to sit for the Georgia Bar and hopes to continue her career with The Barnes Law Office, located in Atlanta, Georgia. Ashley's biggest takeaway from law school is *"The Dream Doesn't Work Unless You Do."* Simply put, a dream is just a dream, but with hard work, the dream is bound to become a reality.



Viki S. McDonald is a native of the Dominican Republic. She is the daughter of two immigrants, Victor and Victoria. Her parents migrated to the U.S., searching for better opportunities. She is a proud mother of two, Phalen (age 7) and Sarai (age 4), who is also supported by her loving spouse, Albert McDonald. Becoming an attorney has always been her dream. She currently serves as the Student Bar Association 3L Class President (former 2L Class Representative), Research Assistant, Executive committee of Christians at Law, The Pro Bono Project, Women in Law, BARBRI, and The Louis A. Martinet Legal Society. After graduation in May 2022,

she plans to begin her legal career as a licensed attorney. When Viki is not studying law, she enjoys quiet time at the beach, reading, and quality time with loved ones.



Alexis Turnage-Shiple is from Bogalusa, Louisiana and attended Southeastern Louisiana University, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology and Sociology. She is now a 3L at Southern University Law Center, and a staff writer for The Public Defender Newspaper. As well as a member of Women in Law, Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and the Board of Student Advisors. Alexis is currently interning at the 21st JDC Public Defender's Office in Livingston, Louisiana. After graduation, she wants to pursue a legal career in criminal law in Louisiana.



Yuri Hayslett is a 3L graduating in May 2022. She was born and raised in Memphis, TN where she also attended Christian Brothers University and obtained her B.S. in Business Administration. While at SULC, she dedicated time to being VP of IPLA, a Teacher's Assistant, and member of Tax Law Society. Yuri plans to continue her legal education by attending the Tax LL.M program at SMU Dedman School of Law and then pursuing a career in Tax and Intellectual Property. One thing law school taught her is that when something seems tough or hard to understand, that means that you are on the right track to figuring it out.

Never let something get the best of you.



Jayde A. Daniel is from Houston, Texas, and an Alumna of Prairie View A&M University with a degree in Agricultural Sciences. Currently, Jayde is a third-year law student at Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, LA. She is interested in fashion law, intellectual property, and civil litigation. Upon graduating from SULC, she plans to sit for the UBE in Texas.

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