



**Civil Rights Division Association
NEWSLETTER
Issue 14, April 2025**

Happy Spring! The Civil Rights Division Association (CRDA) is a non-partisan organization comprised primarily of former employees of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, with current employees also welcomed and encouraged to join. The CRDA Newsletter provides information on CRDA activities, member updates, and information about the work of the Civil Rights Division.¹ We are very excited to be able to stay connected with CRDA members and encourage member networking. Still need to join the CRDA? Just click to the [CRDA website!](#)

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NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

We invite you to share any news or personal updates for the Newsletter's Division Alumni News and Updates Section! This includes news about family or personal activities, interesting trips you have taken, job changes, career posts, publications, awards, recognitions and retirements. We also invite creative submissions and reflections, too! Creative submissions and reflections should be no longer than 500 words, and can be:

¹ The CRDA is a membership organization and is not affiliated with the U.S. Department of Justice or any other government agency. Any views expressed in the CRDA Newsletter are those of the author or organization.

- Insights on interesting experiences during your tenure with the Division;
- Photos of memorable events with a brief summary of the event; or
- Thoughts on or reviews of books, articles, movies or other publications pertaining to civil rights history and policy.

The CRDA is a nonpartisan organization, and the Newsletter will not publish any statements concerning any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

Please send your information to CRDA Newsletter Editor Lisa Wilson Edwards at CRDANewsletter@gmail.com. The Newsletter is published quarterly. **The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is June 15, 2025.**

YOUR PRIVACY MATTERS

As members of CRDA encompass Division alums and current Division staff, the CRDA Board recently determined that it would be in the best interests of members and the organization to utilize only non-government emails to circulate CRDA member correspondence. Earlier this year, each member received a survey that requested members to provide to CRDA a non-government email address, and to indicate if you wanted your non-governmental email accessible to members in the portal. If you have not done so, and wish to continue receiving CRDA correspondence, please send your non-governmental email address to: CivilRightsDivisionAssociation@gmail.com. In the email, please also indicate whether or not you approve your name being visible to the association membership.

DIVISION ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

CARRY IT ON

By Howard L. Feinstein*



"America has made commendable and incredible progress in matters of race. I never take that for granted, but continued progress will take collective and constant toil. What constitutes progress will not be universally embraced, and there will likely be backsliding and backlash. The endeavor will be complicated and exhausting, and it is worth every single bit of effort.

Michele Norris, *Our Hidden Conversations* (Simon & Schuster: 2024)

I recently read *The Barn*, Wright Thompson's searing, updated account of Emmett Till's murder and related legal proceedings. But it is really about more than that. It encompasses the long history of

the civil rights movement – in Mississippi and beyond -- and the coordinated, violent campaign to suppress that struggle. Once again, inevitably, this conjured up memories of my own involvement in that world, particularly my time in the Civil Rights Division.

Thompson takes us back to 1955, the year of Till's murder, one year after the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools in *Brown v. Bd. of Education*. In Yazoo County, in the Mississippi Delta where Till met his fate, the school district spent \$245 per student in the White schools, and \$3 per student in the Black ones. Separate but equal, indeed! The schools remain segregated, in fact if not law, today, in what is still the poorest area in the nation.

I flashed back to my first Civil Rights Division trial, a Texas school desegregation case. My first witness was a Black woman who had graduated from her segregated high school, believing, in typically colorful southern phraseology, that she was "shitting in high cotton." She later came to realize that the curriculum and resources came nowhere near preparing her for the real world. Just one of many sad stories I was eventually called upon to rectify as a litigator and prosecutor.

Mississippi and I go way back. In my undergraduate days, I was detained by the authorities while driving the back roads of the Magnolia State. Driving a car with California license plates during the heart of the civil rights era, I was a prime target for surveillance. In fact, the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, established for the purpose of fighting integration and controlling civil rights activism, had an official mandate to "protect the sovereignty of the state of Mississippi and her sister states from *encroachment* thereon by the federal government." This occurred not far from and not long after the murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. I guess I was too young and naïve to be as scared as I should have been.

In my off-and-on musical career, I played piano in the Delta's juke joints, sometimes with current blues phenom Cristone Ingram, aka "Kingfish", and other contemporary musicians in the cradle of the blues. I also performed at a benefit for displaced hurricane refugees from Mississippi's Gulf Coast region, and spoke at a luncheon hosted by the Clarksdale Rotary Club (I still have the coffee cup I received as my honorarium). Perhaps more meaningfully, I was invited to participate in the installation of a marker on the Mississippi Freedom Trail in honor of Aaron Henry, who labored valiantly with Fannie Lou Hamer and others to lift Black Mississippians from their status as little more than indentured servants. Now, I never thought I'd ever see a Mississippi *Freedom* Trail, and I get invited to similar commemorations in the South as well. Events like these are gratifying for my self-image. But really, don't they amount to rather inconsequential nostalgia?

After all, we are currently in the midst of a withering attack on civil rights, and we seem to be impotent in its face. Back in the day, widespread exposure to such attacks often resulted in ameliorative response. The televised police brutality in 1963 against children protesting segregation in Birmingham – including high-pressure firehoses and police dogs – was a key factor in the eventual passage of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act. In 1965, the official violence visited upon peaceful protesters in Selma led directly to congressional passage of the Voting Rights Act later that year.

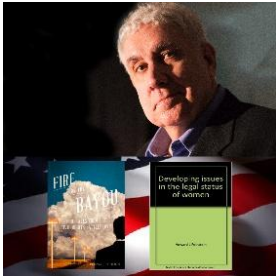
Fast-forward to the Covid era. The horrific execution of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 was shown nationwide. Once again, corrective legislation was introduced in the form of the 2021 George Floyd Justice In Policing Act. But this time, the bill died in the Senate. And things are not getting any better. These days, the Justice Department is embarrassing itself on issues of civil rights and civil liberties at the federal district court level. The recent opinions by District Judges Coughenour and

Boasberg (both initially appointed to the bench during Republican administrations) could have ended our DOJ careers, had we been on their receiving end. We had, and retain, a special responsibility concerning these matters. We are not merely past or current federal employees. We are Officers of the Court, obligated to promote justice and uphold the law, along with a duty of candor, going well beyond the basic attorney-client relationship.

But you don't need to be lectured by me. We each have our own personal ethical standards, and I certainly have not always lived up to mine. All I know is, we can't sit the current situation out. The stakes are too high, and we have options. We can write letters, make phone calls, participate in demonstrations, assist on litigation, join in *amicus curiae* filings, and speak and organize at schools, churches, civic and social organizations and other forums.

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. When slugger Willie McCovey returned to the S.F. Giants after a stint with other teams, he recalled how, during the red-hot pennant races of the 1960's, he would make late night visits to the high point of Twin Peaks for radio reception of broadcasts of the rival Los Angeles Dodgers' games. When he rejoined the Giants, he stated "I'm not too old to do it again."

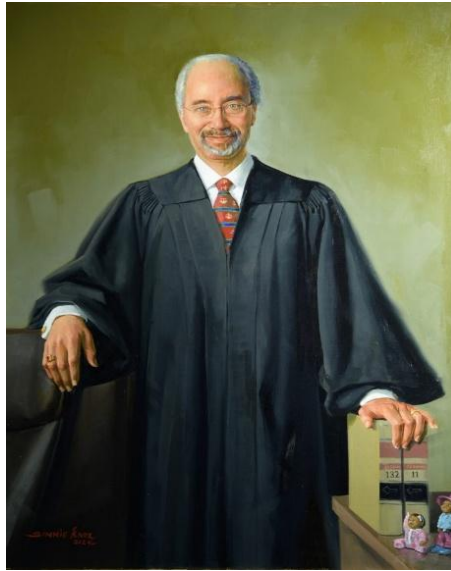
Neither are we.



**Howard Feinstein served as an attorney in the Civil Rights Division from 1976 to 1987. He is the author of "[Fire on the Bayou: True Tales From The Civil Rights Battlefront](#)," nominated for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. He is also author of "[Developing Issues in the Legal Status of Women](#)," and "Decathlon" (Poems). He has taught government and law at several colleges, and served on the boards of Empowered Women International, The Crosby Domestic Violence Scholarship Fund, and Congregation Beth Chai. He is currently a rhythm & blues musician. The views expressed in this this Reflection are solely those of the author.*

Celebrating Federal Judge Richard Roberts' Portrait Unveiling in Washington, D.C.

By Lisa Wilson Edwards*



Official portrait of U.S. District Court Judge Richard W. Roberts

On February 20, 2025, the official portrait of U.S. District Court Judge Richard W. Roberts was unveiled at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (DESA). DESA's Vice Principal of Arts, Isaac Daniel, hosted the unveiling ceremony after a performance by the DESA student show choir. Vice President Daniel recounted Judge Roberts' personal accomplishments in the musical arts early in his life, and two of Judge Roberts' musical compositions were performed by DESA students. After a video tribute by Judge Roberts' former law clerks, and professional and judicial colleagues, Mr. Knox, with Judge Roberts, unveiled the portrait.



Judge Roberts and portrait artist Simmie Knox

In his remarks to the audience, Judge Roberts spoke of the rich talents of D.C. Public School students, particularly the DESA students. He expressed particular gratitude to the many individuals at the courthouse who make it possible for jurists to do their job well.

Acclaimed portrait artist Simmie Knox has painted the official portraits of numerous high-ranking officials and judges, including the portraits of Pres. William J. Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton which hang in the White House, Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, former Attorney General Eric Holder, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, and the Hon. Charles Rangel and Hon. John Conyers, former congressmen whose portraits hang at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

Richard W. Roberts was sworn in as a United States District Judge for the District of Columbia in 1998. He became the Chief Judge of that Court and a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States in 2013. Judge Roberts assumed senior status and retired from active service in 2016. Before his appointment to the bench, he served as Chief of the Criminal Section in the Civil Rights Division. In prior posts, he served as Principal Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and for the Southern District of New York, and an associate with the Washington, D.C. law firm Covington & Burling. After law school, Judge Roberts started his career as a civil rights prosecutor in the Division, hired through the Attorney General's Honors Program.

Among the significant matters for which Judge Roberts was responsible during his career as a federal prosecutor with the Division was the successful trial of *United States v. Joseph Paul Franklin* in which a serial killer was sentenced to two consecutive life terms for violating the civil rights of two black Salt Lake City joggers in a fatal racially motivated sniper attack. For his efforts in that case, Judge Roberts received a special commendation from the Attorney General. He also successfully tried involuntary servitude cases involving child slavery in a religious cult, peonage, and the death of a migrant worker forced to work against his will.

Judge Roberts has taught extensively during his career. He was a visiting faculty member of the Harvard Trial Advocacy Workshop for 38 years, and has taught trial practice as an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University Law Center and as a faculty member at the Justice Department's National Advocacy Center. Judge Roberts has conducted international judicial and prosecutorial training in Jamaica, Liberia, and Kenya.

Judge Roberts has been extensively involved in his community and is an active Vassar College alum. He is a founding member and past deputy general counsel of the Washington, D.C. chapter of Concerned Black Men, Inc., and served for many years as a member of the Vassar Board of Trustees, the Alumnae/i Association of Vassar College Board of Directors, the Board of Directors of the Abramson Scholarship Foundation, and the Board of Directors of the Council for Court Excellence and the Council's executive committee. Judge Roberts is a former member of the Council on Foreign Relations and served two terms as co-chair of his local public school restructuring team.

Judge Roberts is a highly recognized leader in the law. He is a Master in the Edward Bennett Williams Inn of Court, and a life member of the Washington Bar Association Judicial Council and of the NAACP. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity, was bestowed the Thurgood Marshall Award by the National Black Prosecutors Association and was awarded the Alumni Association of Vassar College's Outstanding Service Award. He serves as a writing coach for first year Howard University Law School students, and volunteers with the March on Washington Film Festival and the African American Alumnae/i of Vassar College.

Judge Roberts earned an A.B. degree *cum laude* from Vassar College in 1974, and in 1978 received an M.I.A. degree from the School for International Training and a J.D. degree from Columbia Law School.

Judge Roberts' portrait is available for public viewing at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington D.C.

*** Lisa Wilson Edwards worked in the Division's Appellate Section for nearly 20 years, and the Employment Litigation Section for five years. She is currently Associate Bureau Chief in the Wireline Competition Bureau at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C. The views expressed in this Reflection are solely those of the author.*

Celebrating Richard Wasserstrom's Memoir

By David Marlin*



Richard ("Dick") Wasserstrom, who was an attorney in the Civil Rights Division in 1963, has written a memoir that others might be interested in reading.

Dick, an academic whiz-kid (BA from Amherst 1957, LLB Stanford 1960, PhD Michigan 1960, at age 23) began teaching law and philosophy at Stanford in 1960. Because he had never practiced law, he decided in 1963 to take a one-year leave of absence to get some legal experience and his choices came down to a Supreme Court clerkship or the Justice Department. He decided on the Civil Rights Division. He was guided, he writes, to choose civil rights from his experiences attending a House Unamerican Activities Committee hearing in San Francisco, organizing a new chapter of the ACLU in Northern California, and principally by following the civil rights protests and suppressions that inflamed the nation.

While at Stanford, ever the informed observer, Dick wrote articles concerning one's duty to obey unjust laws that were published in the *Journal of Philosophy* and the *UCLA Law Review* (there are ten published articles accompanying this memoir, one dated 1966 that appeared in the *University of Chicago Law Review* criticizing the views of Burke Marshall that appeared in the *Columbia University Press* in 1964). Fun to read both. He moved to Washington with his wife Phyllis and two children, and was assigned to the Division's Alabama group headed by David Norman. I was a member of that group, having joined the Division in 1961 after practicing law in Connecticut. We bonded and for 60+ years we've remained close friends.

Dick's stay in the Division was brief but memorable. Dick was deeply troubled by his introduction to segregated Alabama, the cruelty he witnessed, the closed society, as all of us were, and the presence of segregated schools in spite of the 1954 *Brown* decision outlawing them. He describes "Freedom Day" in Selma on October 7, 1963, when he and Thelton Henderson were assigned as observers. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee had mobilized hundreds of persons to register as voters and Sheriff Jim Clark had mobilized deputies to "keep order." Sheriff Clark had banned anyone

bringing food or water to those in line to register which provoked Dick to phone Washington to determine what to do about this injustice. He was reminded that he was an observer only. This incident and the litigation restraints on young lawyers were factors that led Dick to leave the Division when he was offered the position as the first full-time Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Tuskegee Institute in January 1964.

His memoir is long (213 pages), rich in detail, nothing held back, and the three years the Wasserstrom family spent in Tuskegee will be of particular interest for Civil Rights Division alumni and current members. Dick went on to teach philosophy and law at UCLA, and then to head the philosophy department at University of California, Santa Cruz.

I have only praise for Dick Wasserstrom's memoir. You will find it enjoyable and informative. It's available on request by emailing Dick at wasser@ucsc.edu.

**David Marlin served in the Division from 1961 to 1965. During that time, he was a trial attorney in Alabama working on voting cases and pursuing school desegregation at military bases before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which conferred jurisdiction to the Department to file school cases. The views expressed in this Reflection are solely those of the author.*

CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION NEWS

Pam Bondi sworn in as U.S. Attorney General



United States Attorney General Pam Bondi is sworn into office by Associate Justice Clarence Thomas

Pam Bondi was sworn in as Attorney General on Feb. 5, 2025. She served as Attorney General for the State of Florida from 2011 to 2019. Bondi was a defense attorney for President Donald Trump during his first impeachment trial in 2020. Prior to her nomination as Attorney General, she led the America First Policy Institute. She was confirmed by the Senate in a 54-46 vote.

Attorney General Pam Bondi Dismisses DEI Lawsuits Involving Police Officers and Firefighters, Advances President Trump's Mandate to End Illegal DEI Policies

On February 26, Attorney General Bondi announced that she directed the Civil Rights Division to dismiss lawsuits against various jurisdictions across the country involving the hiring of police officers

and firefighters. The press release announcing the dismissals stated that these lawsuits, launched by the previous administration, unjustly targeted fire and police departments for using standard aptitude tests to screen firefighter and police officer candidates. “American communities deserve firefighters and police officers to be chosen for their skill and dedication to public safety – not to meet DEI quotas,” said Attorney General Bondi.

The press release stated that despite no evidence of intentional discrimination — only statistical disparities — the prior administration branded the aptitude tests at issue in these cases as discriminatory in an effort to advance a DEI agenda. And it sought to coerce cities into conducting DEI-based hiring in response and spending millions of dollars in taxpayer funds for payouts to previous applicants who had scored lower on the tests, regardless of qualifications.

The press release states that President Trump and Attorney General Bondi are dedicated to ending illegal discrimination and restoring merit-based opportunity nationwide, and in all sectors. But doing so is particularly important for front-line public-safety workers who protect our nation, including firefighters and police officers. Prioritizing DEI over merit when selecting firefighters and police officers jeopardizes public safety.

The press release stated that the dismissal is an early step toward eradicating illegal DEI preferences across the government and in the private sector.

DIVISION ALUMNI NEWS AND UPDATES

Here are news and updates on our former Division colleagues:

Kar Dobinski announced her retirement from the Division after 39 years. Kar served as an attorney in the Criminal Section, including as Deputy Chief. During her time in the Section, Kar led trials in three prosecutorial areas of police brutality, hate crimes and human trafficking (including convicting infamous Sante Kimes as well as members of the Ecclesia cult led by Eldridge Broussard); developed expertise in Garrity law starting with heading the filter team for the prosecution of the police officers who assaulted Rodney King; broke ground in federal investigations of hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ persons; and headed the National Church Arson Task Force. Kar graduated from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Kar extends eternal gratitude to former Criminal Section Chief Linda Davis for “taking a chance on” her and would love to hear from Division colleagues! You can reach Kar at kdobinski99@gmail.com.



Bonnie Robin-Vergeer

Bonnie Robin-Vergeer recently announced her departure from the Division after 11 years. Bonnie served in the Division’s Appellate Section from 2014 to 2025. Her roles in the Appellate Section

included Deputy Chief, Special Counsel and Appellate Attorney. She was most recently Chief of the Appellate Section for the last three years, from 2022 to 2025. Prior to joining the Division, she served as an attorney in the Department's Office of Legal Counsel from 2011 to 2014. Bonnie graduated from Georgetown University and Stanford Law School.



Sheila Foran

Sheila Foran retired from the Division recently after 21 years of service.

Sheila joined the Division's then-newly established Office on Disability in 1992, serving as lead attorney in the Department's first disability rights pattern or practice case which secured a significant jury verdict. During her early years, she negotiated the Department's first Americans With Disabilities Act consent decree and led an enforcement initiative eliminating unnecessarily broad inquiries into mental health and substance abuse histories for professional licensing.

In 1999, she left the Division to join the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the Department of Health and Human Services where she served as Special Counsel to the Director of OCR, and later Acting Deputy Director. At OCR, Sheila spear-headed, among other things, national initiatives addressing racial disparities in healthcare.

In 2011, Sheila returned to the Division's Disability Rights Section where she was on the *Lane v. Brown* litigation team. This lawsuit led to community integration and competitive employment for over 10,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The *Lane v. Brown* team was awarded the John Marshall Award for Outstanding Legal Achievement in Litigation. In 2015, Sheila joined the Division's Policy and Strategy Section where she served as Acting Chief and as Special Legal Counsel until 2025. There, she spearheaded Department-wide hate crimes enforcement and prevention initiative, and the development of the United Against Hate Community Outreach Program, which was implemented in coordination with the Executive Office of U.S. Attorney. Prior to her recent departure from the Division, Sheila was leading the Division's initiative addressing the intersection of artificial intelligence and civil rights.



Raheemah Abdulaleem

Raheema Abdulaleem recently left federal government service after 16 years. Raheemah joined the Division's Employment Litigation Section in 2009, after seven years in private practice. At the Division, she tried complex litigation cases brought under Title VII in federal district court. Her work included a religious accommodation suit against the City of Philadelphia which she successfully settled, and a Title VII case against the California Department of Corrections for failing to end sexual harassment against an employee. She was also involved in the Division's lawsuit against the City of New York, alleging that the City engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination in the hiring of entry-level firefighters. During her time with the Division, Raheemah also worked on the Department's Clemency Initiative where she reviewed federal inmate petitions for clemency and made recommendations to the Pardon Attorney that were forwarded to the President.

In 2015, Raheemah left the Division to join the Executive Office of the President's Office of Administration under President Obama. During her time at the White House, Raheemah rose within the Office of Administration from Senior Associate General Counsel to Deputy General Counsel under three Presidential Administrations. In 2022, she was appointed General Counsel and Special Assistant to the President. In this role, she was responsible for, among other things, compliance and risk management, staff development and performance management of White House employees, policy development and oversight of governance documents, and advised the chief financial officer on the budget.

She recently announced her departure from the Executive Office of the President. In March 2025, she joined the Global Office of the General Counsel at PWC, as Director.

Raheema graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School.



Taryn Wilgus Null

Taryn Wilgus Null recently announced her departure from the Division after 10 years, and that she has begun a new role as Senior Counsel at State Democracy Defenders Action. Taryn served as a Senior Attorney in the Division's Employment Litigation Section for 10 years, from 2015 to 2025, where she litigated cases under Title VII against state and local government employers, and cases under the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act. Taryn was lead attorney in *United States v. Mobile County Sheriff's Office*, where the United States alleged that female corrections officers were subjected to a hostile work environment. The Department ultimately settled and the Sheriff of Mobile County agreed to implement measures to curtail sexual misconduct at the jail and monetary relief for female victims in the amount of \$2 million. Taryn was also lead attorney in the Department's Title VII suit against the State of Michigan and Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), which alleged that female correctional officers at Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility were discriminated against because of sex. The case was settled and the MDOC agreed to specified remedial measures and compensatory damages in the amount of \$750,000 for eligible victims.

Taryn graduated from Stanford University and University of Michigan Law School.



Alyse Bass

Alyse Bass announced her retirement from the Division after 33 years. Her work centered on enforcing the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) as an attorney in the Disability Rights Section. In announcing her departure, she stated: "It was an honor to work for the DOJ for 33 years, enforcing this barrier breaking civil rights law. In retiring from government service, I will miss collaborating with my exceptional colleagues and friends in the Civil Rights Division."

As a senior attorney in the Disability Rights Section, Alyse was dedicated to investigating and resolving or litigating ADA cases involving employment discrimination and denial of equal access to public and private services, programs and activities, and enforcing all aspects of the ADA. Alyse was lead attorney in *United States v. Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corp. (PATH)*, where the United States alleged that PATH, among other things, violated the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act by requesting and obtaining genetic information (family medical history) from railroad workers. The case was settled and PATH agreed to injunctive relief that barred future requests for family medical history information from workers. Alyse was a lead attorney for the Division as part of a compliance review of the accessibility of Tufts Medical Center in Boston. Alyse, working with the U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, negotiated a settlement for ensuring equal access for persons with disabilities at the Medical Center. Under the agreement, Tufts agreed to improve physical access to its facilities by, among other things, removing barriers at public and common use, and provide accessible patient rooms in its medical departments.

She recently announced the launch of her new business, Bass ADA Consulting. Alyse graduated from Brandeis University and Duke University Law School.



Sara Niles

Sarah Niles announced her departure from the Division after 24 years of service. Sarah was a Senior Trial Attorney in the Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section. In announcing her departure, Sarah stated: "It was such a privilege to do impactful work with the Division's brilliant, dedicated, and supportive attorneys and other professionals. I am particularly proud of my work in enforcing fair lending laws, including redlining cases that resulted in over \$800 million of new mortgage loans in communities of color throughout the country."

In addition to serving as a Senior Trial Attorney in the Section, Sarah served as Coordinator for the Department's Combatting Redlining Initiative. This Initiative was launched in 2021 by then-Attorney General Merrick Garland and Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke to tackle redlining, a discriminatory practice where lenders deny or avoid providing mortgages or other credit services to neighborhoods based on the race or national origin of the residents of those neighborhoods. Sarah also served as the Division's Alternate Agency Ethics Official for many years.

In addition to her work in the Division, Sarah served as a Senior Counsel in the Department's Office of Legal Policy in 2024, and Special Assistant United States Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia in 2000.

Sarah graduated from Cornell University and Boston University School of Law.



Stacey Young

Stacey Young announced her departure from the Department after 16 years. Prior to her departure, she served as an Attorney in the Civil Rights Division from 2019 to 2023, and then again in 2024 to 2025. Prior to joining the Civil Rights Division, Stacey was a Senior Litigation Counsel in the Civil Division. She also served as Associate Counsel to the Vice President for 10 months.

In addition to her work as an attorney in the Division, Stacey served a President and Founder of DOJ Gender Equality Network (DOJ GEN) for eight years, from 2016 to 2025. DOJ GEN was an organization that advocated gender equity and equality for DOJ employees and across the federal government sector. Since leaving the Department in January 2025, Stacey Founded and is Executive Director of Justice Connection, a non-profit organization that seeks to assist DOJ employees looking for employment and transitioning into the private sector.

Stacey graduated from Binghamton University and Emory University School of Law.



Kristen Clarke

Kristen Clarke, former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, recently announced that she has joined the faculty at Howard University School of Law. She will conduct research and engage with the Howard Law community on racial justice and civil rights, particularly around intersections with technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Kristen led the Division from 2021 to 2025. She previously served as President and Executive Director of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She also worked at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and led the Civil Rights Bureau for the New York State Attorney General's Office. Early in her career, she served as an attorney in the Division's Voting Section.

Kristen graduated from Harvard College and Columbia Law School.

IN MEMORIAM

The CRDA is saddened to share news of the passing of this Division alum:

K. William ("Bill") O'Connor **1931-2024**

K. William "Bill" O'Connor, 93, of Tampa, Florida passed away on October 18, 2024, after a 10-year battle with Parkinson's disease.

Bill was born on August 1, 1931, to Hector O'Connor and Lucile Johnson in Washington, DC. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1952 on a Naval ROTC scholarship and was commissioned as a second lieutenant, United States Marine Corps (USMC). After his military service, he returned to University of Virginia Law School, graduating in 1958. Following a brief private practice, he worked several positions within the Justice Department, including roles in the Civil Rights Division.

He tried major cases involving civil and constitutional rights in the Division. He tried *US v. Bethlehem Steel Corporation* as a violation of equal employment under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. He was also co-author of "The Report of the January 1970 Grand Jury," an analysis of the killing of Black Panther Fred Hampton by the Chicago Police Department. He excelled in prosecutions of public official corruption obtaining the conviction of the governor of Guam (*US v. Bordallo*); major fraudsters like *US v. Arthur A. Goldberg* and *US v. Arthur Lowell*; and even a Hollywood star, *US v. George Raft*.

He received three presidential appointments, all requiring U.S. Senate confirmation, during his career. He was appointed Inspector General of the Community Services Administration in 1981. From 1982-86, he served as Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, Merit Systems Protection Board, Washington, DC. He was appointed in 1986 as U.S. Attorney for Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, serving in that capacity until 1989. Following his retirement, he maintained private practice in Medford, Oregon.

Bill wrote three books, *Strands*, *At War in America*, and *Days of Thunder*. He was an avid scuba diver. After retirement, he built two houses in the hills of Southern Oregon. He was a dog lover who loved hiking in the hills. A lifelong Catholic, he was also an altar boy in the Church.

Of all his accomplishments, he was most proud of his family. Bill was predeceased by his son, Blair O'Connor, and his grandson Ian Joseph O'Connor. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Allie O'Connor; and his children from his first marriage to Sylvia Gasbarri: daughter, Fran O'Connor (Samuella); sons Brian O'Connor (Nelly) and Brendan O'Connor (Carol); daughter-in-law, Frances Lizama O'Connor; and his brother-of-the-heart, Stephen Koplan (Harriet). He is also survived by nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.