



OCTOBER

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2022

TRUTH, EQUITY, & JUSTICE: HOW WE MAKE OUR WAY FORWARD (AGAIN) TOGETHER

Conference

Overview:

Generations of scholars have argued that America will never be whole until reparations are provided for the moral debt created by slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the vestiges of the caste system it created. The international cry for justice after the murder of Mr. George Floyd and the stark racial disparities laid bare by the pandemic have renewed the sense of urgency around reparations and truth and reconciliation commissions.

The Center for the Study of Black Life and Law at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, the Minnesota Humanities Center and the Minnesota Justice and Equity Partnership hosts a day filled with song, poetry, and conversation about how we move toward justice with:

- International renowned scholars and lawyers involved in securing reparations and creating Truth and Reconciliation commissions outside of the United States,
- Community advocates pursuing reparations and the creation of Truth and Reconciliation commissions in Minnesota, and
- Scholars and lawyers sharing insights concerning federal and state legislation involving reparations and the formation of truth and reconciliation commissions.

Invited guests include Virginie Ladisch, Senior Expert, Programs, at the International Center for Transitional Justice, Marcella Naidoo, former Regional Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and Executive Director of the Black Sash, and Minnesota's Attorney General Keith Ellison. This is a beginning, not an end. The event partners are planning a series of events in 2023 to continue this focus and work to transform our collective future.

This event will be available to rewatch until October 30, 2022. Continuing Legal Education Elimination of Bias credits will be applied for post-conference for lawyers seeking such credits.

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Conference Schedule

9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Kevin Lindsey

CEO, Minnesota Humanities Center and founding member of MEJP

Dr. T. Anansi Wilson

Associate Professor of Constitutional & Criminal Law, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Founding Director, Center for The Study of Black Life and The Law, and founding member of MEJP

Professor Angelique EagleWoman

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (Dakota), Director, Native American Law and Sovereignty Institute

Dr. Juleen Christopher

Founding member of MEJP and Cognitive Behavioral Research Scientist

Session Title

A View on South African Truth & Reconciliation Process

Course Description

South Africa, with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission and actions to dismantle Apartheid, is often cited as a model for advocates in the United States to better understand as they seek to achieve long awaited equity and justice for African Americans. Marcella Naidoo as the former Regional Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, the first Black South African to serve as the National Director of the Black Sash and her ongoing human rights work in South Africa will share her reflections on the Commission, the movement of Black South Africans into positions of authority, and the ongoing scale of change that has and is occurring in her home country.

Presenter

Marcella Naidoo, former Regional Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, and former Executive Director of the Black Sash.

Question & Answer session moderated by Kevin Lindsey

Small group discussions

10:15 a.m.

BREAK

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Conference Schedule

10:25 a.m.

Session Title

How We Are Moving Truth and Reconciliation and the Work of Reparations Forward in Minnesota

Course Description

Many individuals, community organizations, and local groups have initiated discussions and begun efforts of moving truth and reconciliation and the work of reparations forward in Minnesota. Learn how the work of truth and reconciliation and reparations in Minnesota is beginning to take shape in different forms and occurring across different areas in the state.

Introduction by Mike Burbach, Newspaper Editor, St. Paul, and founding member of MEJP

Panel discussion moderated by Kevin Lindsey

- Jim Bear Jacobs, Minnesota Council of Churches
- Sharon Press, Professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
- Trahern Crews and Marea Perry, St. Paul Recovery Act members

Question & Answer session moderated by Kevin Lindsey

Small group discussions

Reflections with Dr. T. Anansi Wilson

11:45 a.m.

Lunch

12:00 p.m.

Session Title

The Death of George Floyd and Breaking the Cycle of Inaction

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Course Description

After the conviction of Derek Chauvin by his office in the trial of the century, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison called for people in the United States to pursue true justice and systemic institutional change. As the 30th Attorney General elected in Minnesota sworn to uphold the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota and a tireless advocate fighting for the rights of all people, Keith Ellison will speak to importance of the rule of law and the pursuit of justice.

Introduction by Keon Dousti, Minnesota Attorney General's Outreach Coordinator

Presenter

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison

Session Description

Reforming, Restructuring, or Recreating the Criminal Legal System

Course Description

Many researchers have documented that the criminal legal system in the United States has significant disparities for African Americans at every stage of the process. As more than 25% of the world's incarcerated population resides in the United States, many advocates wonder if our criminal legal system can be reformed or whether we need to restructure or recreate our criminal legal system. Hear from three leading voices in Minnesota calling for change:

Introduction by A.L. Brown, Saint Paul Criminal Defense & Employment Lawyer Capitol City Law Group, LLC, and founding member of MEJP

Panel discussion moderated by Kevin Lindsey

- Justin Terrell, Minnesota Justice Research Center
- Emily Baxter, We Are All Criminals
- George Stephenson, District Court Judge for the Second Judicial District of Minnesota

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Question & Answer session with panel moderated by Kevin Lindsey
Small group discussions

1:50 p.m. BREAK

2:00 p.m. **Session Title**
Lessons Learned from the International Center for Transitional Justice on Truth & Reconciliation

Course Description

Since its inception in 2001, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) has worked in more than 50 countries around the world to address human rights violations, support local and national efforts that seek acknowledgment, reforms, and reparations, and restore trust in civic institutions that lead to creating a more just, equitable and peaceful world. Senior Expert, Programs Virginie Ladisch coordinates ICTJ's research efforts in the United States and leads ICTJ's work with children and youth. Ladisch will discuss ICTJ's work in the United States, how communities can partner with ICTJ, and the voices of children and youth can be incorporated within reparation efforts.

Introduction by Jamal Faleel, Head of Litigation and Disputes, Minneapolis, Norton Rose Fulbright, US LLP, and founding member of MEJP

Presenter

Virginie Ladisch, Senior Expert, Programs, at the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)

Question & Answer session moderated by Kevin Lindsey
Small group discussions

2:55 p.m. BREAK

3:05 p.m. Reflections with Dr. T. Anansi Wilson

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Session Title

The Labyrinth and The Minotaur – The Incarceration Play Project

Course Description

Once upon a time, a monster was born, and we built a maze to lock it away. But its cries from deep underground disturbed our sleep . . . The play, and now short film, examines the stories of people who have spent their lives working and living inside our modern-day labyrinth – the Minnesota incarceration system. This panel will discuss the making of this project, how this effort centered the voices of those impacted by Minnesota’s incarceration system, and what they hope will happen with Minnesota’s incarceration system.

Introduction by Kevin Lindsey

Panel discussion moderated by Kevin Lindsey

- Leah Cooper, Co-Artistic Director Wonderlust Productions
- Michele Livingston, Criminal Legal System Reform Advocate
- Noelle Faye, Assistant Ombudsperson for Minnesota Department of Corrections

3:50 p.m. Closing Remarks by Dr. T. Anansi Wilson

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

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Partners

Minnesota Equity and Justice Partnership (MEJP)
Center for the Study of Black Life and Law at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Minnesota Humanities Center

Presenters

Marcella Naidoo, former Regional Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, and former Executive Director of the Black Sash. Marcella is an Organizational Development Expert with over 30+ years of management and leadership experience within government (including Truth & Reconciliation Commission) tertiary education (University of the Western Cape), several NGO's and Community Organizations.

Jim Bear Jacobs, Minnesota Council of Churches. The Council is implementing a 10-year plan to dismantle the structures and repair the damage of racism in Minnesota.

Sharon Press, Mitchell Hamline Dispute Center, the Truth and Action project seeking to achieve justice in our criminal legal system by acknowledging that we must first understand the truth.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, sworn in as Minnesota's 30th attorney general on January 7, 2019. As the People's Lawyer, Attorney General Ellison's job is to help Minnesotans afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect. His guiding values are generosity and inclusion.

Justin Terrell, Executive Director Minnesota Justice Research Center (MJRC). MJRC is committed to re-imagining a criminal legal system that is fair, equitable, accountable, and restorative in justice.

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Trahern Crews, is the co-founder and lead organizer with Black Lives Matter Minnesota, and he is the chair of the Green Party of Minnesota and chairs the party's media committee. He is Chair of the Green Party of the U.S. Reparations Working Group and Co-Chaired the Saint Paul Recovery Act Steering committee to get the Reparations Resolution passed. From 2014 to 2015, he served as spokesperson for the Saint Paul Green Party (4th Congressional District) Campaign Manager for Marcus Walker for Senate 2012, Campaign Manager for Lena Denise Buggs For MN State Representative. Formerly, he served as the community liaison at Dayton's Bluff Community Council connecting residents with the resources Dayton's Bluff Community Council and the City of Saint Paul has to offer. He also worked closely with the Neighborhood Development Committee. Trahern Crews taught Black history and Urban Agriculture at Truth Academy and has mentored Black youth at New Lens and Gladiator Records.

Marea Perry, a lifelong resident of St. Paul, is the Executive Director of Secrets2Truths. She is a devoted mother with a passion and dedication to youth development and is also committed to community change through her work as a social, criminal and racial justice activists.

Emily Baxter, Executive Director of We Are All Criminals. WAAC is dedicated to challenging society's perception of what it means to be a criminal.

Virginie Ladisch, Senior Expert, Programs, at the International Center for Transitional Justice. Virginie Ladisch leads the International Center for Transitional Justice's work on children and youth. In that capacity she has provided technical support around ways to engage children and youth in transitional justice processes in Canada, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, and Tunisia. From the time she joined ICTJ in 2006 until 2009, Virginie worked as part of the Reparations program, and headed the Cyprus and Turkey country programs.

Leah Cooper, Co-Artistic Director of Wonderlust Productions, a professional ensemble creating new works driven by community stories. She has been the first Executive Director of the Minnesota Theater Alliance, co-founding Partner at MinnesotaPlaylist.com, and Executive Director at the Minnesota Fringe Festival.

Noelle Faye, Assistant Ombudsperson Investigator for the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Having previously been incarcerated, Noelle was the first criminal legal impacted fellow of the Mitchell Hamline ReEntry Clinic.

Michelle Livingston, Advocate for Voices for Racial Justice, Art from the Inside, and the Power of People Institute. Michelle has been walking with a loved one who has been incarcerated for 20 years this November 2022.

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Founding Members of MEJP:

Juleen Christopher, PhD
Cognitive Behavioral Research
Scientist

Kevin Lindsey
CEO, Minnesota
Humanities Center

Jerry Blackwell
Founder and Chairman,
Blackwell Burke P.A.

A.L. Brown
Saint Paul Criminal Defense &
Employment Lawyer
Capitol City Law Group, LLC

Mike Burbach
Newspaper Editor, St. Paul

S. Jamal Faleel
Head of Litigation and Disputes,
Minneapolis
Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP

Dr. T. Anansi Wilson, JD/PhD
Associate Professor of Constitutional
& Criminal Law, Mitchell Hamline
School of Law
Founding Director, Center for The
Study of Black Life and The Law