Wilda White Named Executive Director

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Wilda L. White, Boalt Hall ’83, a prominent San Francisco plaintiff’s trial lawyer, as the new Executive Director of the Henderson Center for Social Justice effective December 15. After Mary Louise Frampton became the Center’s Faculty Director last spring, a national search for an Executive Director was undertaken and we were fortunate to have several exceptionally well-qualified finalists. Wilda brings a broad base of experience in both law and management to the Henderson Center as she holds an MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business as well as a law degree.

White began her legal career as a staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society in the South Bronx, primarily representing Spanish-speaking clients in unemployment, SSI and general assistance appeals, and landlord-tenant law. After returning to California, she joined the firm of Sterns & Walker, first as an associate and ultimately as managing attorney, representing plaintiffs in insurance bad faith, civil rights, and personal injury cases. There she successfully resolved what was considered at the time to be the first disability insurance AIDS case. She was also instrumental in persuading the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to end its practice of incarcerating mentally ill prisoners in the general prison population.

Most recently, she was a partner with Walker, Hamilton & White, where she handled personal injury, wrongful death, civil rights, employment, and disability discrimination cases. She has tried over 30 cases before administrative law judges, trial courts, and juries. In 2006, she was recognized as a Northern California Super Lawyer.

White also brings a range of other professional experiences to her new position. She was an Assistant City Editor of The Miami Herald during the time that the newspaper won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and was the investigative reporter on a story that resulted in the release of a wrongfully incarcerated prisoner. She was an international management consultant with McKinsey & Company where she specialized in strategic planning. She was appointed by Jerry Brown to serve on the Oakland Unified School District Board of Education from 2000 to 2002.

She has also been both a bar leader and a community advocate. She is a Board Member of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association as well as Chair of the Women’s Caucus and past Chair of its Diversity Committee. She is a life member of the Charles Houston Bar Association and a member of the American Association for Justice. She also served as the Executive Director of the Jack London Neighborhood Association, advancing the economic development and historic preservation of Oakland’s Waterfront District.
This year’s gala celebrated Cruz Reynoso (58) as the Henderson Center’s 2008 Trailblazer for Justice. Emeritus Professor of Law at UC Davis, former California Supreme Court Justice, and former Director of California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Reynoso is a civil rights icon. He was honored on this occasion by Judge Henderson, who reminded all those in attendance that it is important “to remember, give thanks, and to celebrate our heroes who have blazed a trail of justice for so many years in so many ways.” Henderson Center Faculty Director Mary Louise Frampton introduced Reynoso as a man who “never had the wind at his back, who was always walking into the wind, working for justice against the most powerful and entrenched interests, and incessantly under attack. He was making the path for the rest of us. And instead of resting on his laurels, Cruz is there on that same path today—inspiring and encouraging young social justice lawyers.”

A stunning feature of the evening was the showing of documentary filmmaker Abby Ginzberg’s preview of her film “Cruz Reynoso: A Man of All Seasons.” In the film, Reynoso shared with the audience a story of how his mother would always gladly share the family’s limited food with the local homeless. It was his mother who taught him that “it is our duty to share with those who have less,” an example that has shaped much of his life’s work.

Other honorees included Boalt alumnus Alegria De La Cruz ’03, the recipient of the third Thelton E. Henderson Social Justice Prize, and Dolores Huerta, recipient of the Social Justice Catalyst Award.

On the following day, Cruz Reynoso and Hon. Thelton Henderson joined other prominent social justice figures in “Conversations with Cruz Reynoso,” held in Boalt’s Goldberg Room. The morning session, “CRLA Through Four Decades: Challenges to a Social Justice Institution...
Then and Now,” featured Alegria de la Cruz, Joel Garcia, and Jose Padilla. The afternoon session, “Revisiting the Rose Bird Era: Lessons Learned from the 1986 California Supreme Court Confirmation Battle,” included Professor Joseph Grodin, former California Supreme Court Justice, and Hon. Thelton E. Henderson.

Oh What A Night…
Proposition 209 and Public Employment

This fall, HCSJ completed the report *Proposition 209 and Public Employment in California: Trends in Workforce Diversity*, the first report in a series on the impact of Proposition 209 and public employment in California. Analyzing data from 1990 through 2007, HCSJ found that both women and Latinos are underrepresented in the state workforce. Future HCSJ reports will evaluate matters of job quality and advancement by examining hirings, promotions, and wages.

The interest generated by the publication of the HCSJ research reports *A Vision Fulfilled?* and *Free to Compete?*, documenting the devastating impacts of Proposition 209 on women— and minority-owned businesses competing for government contracts, led to a multitude of requests to speak about the work. The Henderson Center, in partnership with the California Commission on the Status of Women, California Women’s Legislative Caucus, Latino Legislative Caucus, Legislative Black Caucus, Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development, led a packed legislative briefing in Sacramento and a nationally attended webinar. The research was also presented to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, the Insight Center’s Inclusive Business convening, the Colorado Minority Business and Women’s Office, the California Association of Equal Rights Professionals at their annual conference, and to Boalt alumni at the Alumni Weekend.

Employment for Formerly Incarcerated Women

The Henderson Center just released *A Higher Hurdle: Barriers to Employment for Formerly Incarcerated Women*, the first study documenting the unique obstacles faced by women attempting to re-enter the job market after a period of incarceration. The report found that formerly incarcerated women are less likely to receive positive inquiries to their job applications and are excluded from many positions for which they are qualified. The research also found that there are few resources available to help women overcome these and other hurdles. Monique Morris presented the research to the Congressional Black Caucus on Washington, DC. in July, and the work was featured in the 2008 report commissioned by U.S. Representative Danny K. Davis, *Restoration: Re-establishing African American Families and Communities.*

Please check our website for updates to news on our latest research reports, calendar of events, and details about our lecture series and conferences: [http://www.law.berkeley.edu/hcsj.htm](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/hcsj.htm)
Sleeping outside, living in a car, soliciting employment, convening in a public space and suffering in public from a mental illness are criminal offenses in most cities in the United States. This criminalization of poverty results in increasing numbers of poor families, young people, elders, and veterans facing police harassment, abuse, and even arrest and incarceration for living in poverty. Last spring the Henderson Center brought together an innovative and powerful mix of voices from poverty and race scholars and advocates, policy makers, activists, artists, and community leaders to explore strategies for ending the criminalization of poverty and provide an analysis of the harmful impacts of this dangerous trend on poor people and society as a whole.

The conference was co-sponsored by POOR Magazine, East Bay Community Law Center, the Center on Culture, Immigration, and Youth Violence Prevention, and the UC Berkeley Institute for the Study of Social Change.

Dorothy Roberts, Kirkland & Ellis Professor of Law at Northwestern University, delivered the keynote Raven Lecture entitled “The Criminalization of Poverty and the Biopolitics of Race.” She termed the governmental punishment of the poor as “societal contempt for those who couldn’t survive in a supposedly fair-market economy.” Criminalizing poverty, she stated, “serves primarily a political function: it reinforces an unjust social order by placing the blame for inequality on its victims.”

Among the panelists was Gary Linker, Director and Founder of New Beginnings Counseling Center, who explained Santa Barbara’s ten-year plan to eradicate homelessness, that features an innovative “RV Safe Parking” rule allowing homeless car-owners to park their vehicles in designated areas each night, decriminalizing their living in the only homes available to them: their cars.

Professor Gary Blasi, from UCLA School of Law, compared the issues of poverty to foreign battlefields. “Like a war, there are casualties.”
Transformative Justice in Communities of Color

This international convening brought together scholars from around the world to focus on the private injuries within communities of color resulting from the public harms of colonization, subordination, and legacies of slavery. Participants explored such questions as how to shift the conversation about reparations away from a focus on restitution and toward a concern about cultural losses, violence (including police violence and gender violence), and ill health among communities of color.

The convening was launched with the annual Honorable Mario G. Olmos Law and Cultural Diversity Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor Eric Yamamoto, University of Hawai‘i William S. Richardson School of Law. Yamamoto’s lecture on “Rethinking Reconciliation: Social Healing Through Justice” urged “reconciliation with a bite” to redress damage to communities and society in the form of the “four R’s of Social Healing through Justice”: Recognition of the cultural humanity of others; Responsibility for healing group-based wounds; Reconstruction of political and economic power; and Reparations through money or access to education and economic development. Professor Angela Harris, Chair of the Henderson Center’s Faculty Executive Committee and the organizer of the symposium, invoked the term “trenzas” (braids) to describe her concept of the convening as “a braiding together of disparate things that can look messy and untidy but can also make beauty.”

At the convening on the following day, Rebecca Tsosie asked what steps communities of color, including Native American tribes, need to take to connect with others. She suggested that “we must be willing to imagine a different future” and also to ask what the “story of victimhood” has cost such communities. In “Reparations for Gender and Sexual Violence,” Sharene Razack equated sexual violence, which is often disguised in benign ways, as genocide. When the violence is misrepresented, she noted, the remedies are irrelevant. In the final session, “The Reparations Movement at a Crossroads,” Alfred Brophy, Eric Yamamoto, and Charles Henry reviewed the possibilities and limitations of traditional reparations versus restoration and transformation. The video of the full convening will be posted soon on our website.
Cynthia Valenzuela, the National Director of Litigation for MALDEF in the Los Angeles National Office, was warmly received by students and faculty at Boalt as the Center’s Practitioner-in-Residence this fall. She presented a Ruth Chance lecture entitled “Latinos in Education: Shaping the Law, Shaping America’s Future,” in which she described her personal experience with educational segregation as a student in Tucson, Arizona and how her “passion for equality and justice was formed in part by this experience.” At MALDEF she “has the honor and privilege of monitoring compliance with the ongoing consent decree” of the Tucson School District. As the Director of Litigation for MALDEF, she now represents parents who have the same aspirations as her parents had for her—“a quality education, a connection to opportunity, and a path to success.” At Boalt, Cynthia met with student organizations, counseled individual students in office hours, met with social justice faculty, and participated in a panel with Vincent Pan, Executive Director, Chinese for Affirmative Action; Nancy Appel, Associate Director, Anti-Defamation League; and Jonathan Simon, Professor of Law, UC Berkeley School of Law on “The Rhetoric of Hate: Fuel for Violence Against Immigrants and People of Color.”
Social Justice Alumni Network

The Henderson Center launched the Social Justice Alumni Network in May to connect public interest lawyers around the country with one another, to forge stronger ties between the social justice alumni and the Henderson Center, to create relationships between alums and our new Student Network, and to devise ways for the Center to support and assist alumni engaged in public interest and social justice work. More than a hundred social justice alumni have already joined the Network.

Let us know by e-mail to csj@law.berkeley.edu if you would like to be part of the Network. We recognize that there are a myriad of ways to do social justice work - whether it be at a legal services office, a non-profit, a government agency or policy organization, a firm, or even as a volunteer - so we encourage you to be involved.

Left to Right: Jaime Feder ‘04, Carlie Ware, Mary Louise Frampton, Liz Voigt ‘04, Brook Thacher ‘03, Liz Garfinkle ‘03, Michelle Wilde Anderson ‘04

SAVE - THE - DATES

March 12, 2009 - Annual Raven Lecture
March 13, 2009 - Spring 2009 Symposium
April 15, 2009 - Pro Bono Public Interest Celebration

Pro Bono Public Interest Celebration

In April, the Henderson Center, in collaboration with the Career Development Office, held a reception in honor of all the members of the Boalt community who have dedicated themselves to public interest work. We celebrated the tremendous public interest and pro bono accomplishments of our graduating class and recognized the inspiration and encouragement that public interest alums and mentor attorneys provide to our students.
Vicki De Goff (Boalt ’72, Order of the Coif) is a partner in De Goff & Sherman, specializing in appellate litigation. She has a long history of social justice activities. Vicki attended Berkeley as an undergraduate and participated in the Free Speech Movement. While attending graduate school in mathematics, she switched to law so she could try to make a positive difference in people’s lives. At Boalt, she volunteered at Alameda County Legal Aid. Following an appellate clerkship, she had a "Reggie" fellowship at San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation working on landmark actions fighting cuts in benefits for elderly, blind and disabled people. Vicki learned civil litigation at a small liberal San Francisco firm before becoming a civil appellate lawyer. She was active in California Trial Lawyer Association, authoring a dozen major amicus curiae briefs in the California Supreme Court on behalf of consumers and being Editor-in-Chief of its magazine "Forum".

Vicki’s many professional achievements include being President of the prestigious California Academy of Appellate Lawyers and the Edward J. McFetridge American Inn of Court. She has long been a fellow of the highly selective American Academy of Appellate Lawyers. Over the years, three Chief Justices of California have appointed Vicki to important committees including the Advisory Committee to the Supreme Court on Publication of Court of Appeal Opinions (2005-2006), Appellate Indigent Defense Oversight Committee (1995-2007) which insures that indigent people convicted of crimes have proper state-funded appellate representation, and the Advisory Committee to the Judicial Council regarding Implementation of Proposition 32 (1984). Vicki was invited to become a member of the Witkin Legal Institute Advisory Board at its creation in 1997. She has been named one of the top 50 women Super Lawyers in Northern California for 5 years running and in in Best Lawyers America for over a decade.

Vicki continues her commitment to social justice, serving as an officer for the Center for Youth Development Through Law and supporting dozens of other organizations. As a young person herself, Vicki was an outspoken advocate for social justice. During grammar school, she protested against girls not being allowed to be traffic monitors. She spoke out against injustice throughout her secondary education, including "Ban the Bomb" marches and was at San Francisco City Hall during the demonstrations against House Unamerican Activities Commission. Decades later, Vicki’s compassion caused her to become a vegan in early 2007.
Monique Morris Tapped as NAACP Research Director

Monique Morris, the Henderson Center’s renowned research director, has been selected as the NAACP’s National Research Director. Monique has done ground-breaking original research at the Henderson Center and recently presented our findings on the employment barriers facing formerly incarcerated women to the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington. This is a bittersweet time for us as we will miss Monique a great deal, but it is a magnificent opportunity for her. Fortunately, one of her responsibilities at the NAACP will be collaborating with universities and research centers around the country on racial justice issues so we will be continuing to work with her long distance. She will be in the NAACP’s national office in Baltimore, Maryland but will return to California periodically. The Henderson Center’s research manager Michael Sumner will continue to develop, publish, and expand the research that Monique introduced to the Center.

We recently said good bye to Jessica Borja, HCSJ research assistant, who has begun a Ph.D. program in at the University of Chicago.

In Memoriam~Priscilla Battis

The Henderson Center’s first Administrator, Priscilla Battis, lost her long battle with cancer in February. She was widely respected during her five years at Boalt (1999 - 2003) for her standards of excellence and professionalism. “Not only was Priscilla instrumental in the successful launch and development of the Center, she was a brilliant editor and a visionary spirit,” said Frampton.

Farewell Viki Ortiz

A cherished member of our community, Victoria “Viki” Ortiz, Boalt’s Assistant Dean for Student Services since 1998, has been appointed Dean of Admissions and Assistant Dean for Student Services at the brand new UC Irvine Law School. While at Berkeley, Ortiz authored the article “Color Me Queer, Color Me Family: Camilo’s Story,” which appeared in Critical Race Theory: Histories, Crossroads, Direction, a collection of essays published in 2002. Over the years, Ortiz impressed students and fellow faculty alike with the incredible amount of care with which she handled her work. We wish her much luck at UC Irvine and will not soon forget her warmth and community-building here at Boalt.

Ariana Ceja Appointed HCSJ Program Assistant

We are so pleased to welcome our new Program Assistant, Ariana Ceja, who comes to us from California State University, Long Beach, where she worked for the Vice President for Student Services and the Director of Judicial Affairs. She received her B.A. in Psychology from Humboldt State University and her M.S. in Criminal Justice from Cal State Long Beach. Since her arrival in August, Ariana has become our graphics, web, and technical guru, as well as our program events planner—in short, she’s indispensable to the smooth running of the Henderson Center.
The Henderson Center is grateful to our generous sponsors for making 2008 a successful year for social justice.

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