



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LAW AND SOCIETY
BERKELEY LAW

CSLS SPEAKER SERIES

Monday, November 6, 2017

MELYNDA PRICE

University Research Professor and W. L. Matthews, Jr. Professor of Law
University of Kentucky

“What Would Mama Do? Save Our Sons and Daughters and Anti-Violence Organizing Among Black Mothers of Murdered Children in 1980s Detroit”

This paper explores the formation of Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOSAD) and the work of Clementine Barfield in the 1980 and 1990s. In 1986, two of Clementine Barfield’s sons were shot while passengers in a car driven by their older brother. The youngest of the siblings was killed on impact and the other son sustained lifelong injuries. The death of Derick Barfield was the beginning of an organized campaign against youth violence that would extend well into the 1990s and continues to shape organizing among mothers in Detroit and nationally. This paper is an early writing of a larger book project that takes up the question of how we understand activism among black mothers of murdered children as both historical and current forms political work in the context of the role of race and gender in U.S. politics. I focus on activism as both the move from grief to politics and the impact of these mothers on the political landscape in which they are active. Women’s use of their identity as mothers to effect change or as a mobilizing tool is not a new phenomenon in the U.S. or globally, but the political construction of black motherhood has been fraught with arguments of pathology and in need of reform since its nascence in chattel slavery. Little scholarly attention has been given to this particular type of activism among black women and how it challenges our understanding of black motherhood and politics.

Professor Prices’s paper is available online at our website and in hard copy at the Center.

PLACE Selznick Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Avenue
TIME **12:45 – 2:00pm.** Coffee and water provided. Bag lunches welcome.
INFO <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/center-for-the-study-of-law-society/>
EMAIL csls@law.berkeley.edu

Jonathan Simon, FACULTY DIRECTOR | **Rosann Greenspan**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR