

September

12-14, 2014



**Project for Integrating
Spirituality, Law and Politics**

**Law in the 21st Century:
Creating a Legal System that Fosters
Empathy, Compassion and Mutual
Understanding**

City University of New York School of Law | Touro Law Center
Network of Spiritual Progressives | Community Legal Resource Network

Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law and Politics 2014 Conference

*LAW IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CREATING A LEGAL SYSTEM THAT FOSTERS EMPATHY, COMPASSION, AND
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING*

CLE Credits Available

MISSION STATEMENT FOR CONFERENCE

To help build a more loving and caring society by creating a legal culture that fosters empathy, compassion and mutual understanding; and to bring together a community of people committed to this goal.

I. THE VISION

Friday, September 12 – 6:00-9:00 PM

6:00-6:30 PM - Registration and Hors D'oeuvres

6:30-7:15 PM- Greetings from CUNY School of Law (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

Led by:

Cheryl Howard

Associate Dean for Student Affairs, CUNY Law School

Opening – Reading of Excerpts from Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' With Musical Improvisation

Led by:

Sina Choi

Staff Attorney, Housing Works

Ryan Dooley

Assistant Director, Pipeline to Justice Program, CUNY Law School

Degna Levister

Clinical Professor of Law, CUNY Law School

Ben Myers

Mass Defense Coordinator, National Lawyers Guild, NYC Chapter

7:15-8:15 PM- **PLENARY: A spiritual-progressive vision of law and its potential for healing and transforming the social fabric** (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

Panelists:

Maria Arias

Judge, Kings County Family Court, Brooklyn, NY

Bruce Peterson
Judge, Fourth Judicial District, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Victor Goode
Professor of Law, CUNY Law School

8:15-9:00 PM - Wine and cheese reception (Outside The Dave Fields Auditorium)

II. IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

Saturday, September 13 – 9:30 AM -6:30 PM

9:00-9:30 AM - Continental Breakfast and registration (Outside Main Auditorium)

9:30-10:00 AM - Guided Meditation and Practice on Opening the Heart to a Vision of Social Justice (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

Led by:

Rhonda Magee
Professor of Law, University of San Francisco Law School
Board Member, Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

10:00-10:45 AM - PLENARY: The Spiritual Dimension of Social Justice: Vision, Goals and History of the Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law and Politics (PISLAP) (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

Speakers:

Peter Gabel
Editor-at-Large, TIKKUN Magazine
Former President and Professor of Law, New College of California

Nanette Schorr
Supervising Attorney, Family and Education Law, Bronx Legal Services, Bronx, NY

10:45-11:15 AM- Break Into Small Groups for Discussion of Ideas in Opening Two Plenaries and Connecting These Ideas to People's Lives and Work

11:15-11:30 AM - Break

11:30-1:00 PM – PLENARY: Legal Education, Community Lawyering, and the Courtroom (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

How can a spiritual-progressive vision of law transform the way law is taught and the way law is practiced in our communities, and how can an awareness of the spiritual bond that connects us transform the culture of the courtroom and other public, legal settings?

Speakers:

Doug Ammar
Executive Director, Georgia Justice Project, Atlanta, Georgia

Rhonda Magee
Professor of Law, University of San Francisco Law School

Lenny Noisette
Director, Justice Fund for U.S. Programs, Open Society Foundations
Former Executive Director, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem

1:00 -2:00 PM -

LUNCH (location to be announced)

Buffet Lunch served to participants, meeting in groups of common interest

2-2:15 PM -

Movement Meditation on Opening the Heart to a Vision of Social Justice

Led by:

Victor Goode
Professor of Law, CUNY Law School
(The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

2:30-3:45 PM -

Breakout Sessions (Legal Education; Community Lawyering, the Courts and Judging)

OPTION 1: LEGAL EDUCATION: *Transforming Legal Education in the Classroom and the Legal Clinic (Room 3/114)*

How can law school classes simultaneously teach students the legal doctrine and analytical skills that they need to pass the Bar and yet also introduce a vision of law that affirms human connection and fosters compassion and cooperation? And how can our law school clinics model new forms of legal representation grounded in commitment to the achievement of social justice and the well-being of the client as a whole person?

Led by:

Susan Brooks
Clinical Professor of Law, Drexel University Law School

Marjorie Silver
Professor of Law, Touro Law Center

OPTION 2: COMMUNITY LAWYERING: *Individual Rights, Community Lawyering, Social Healing and the Law (Room 3/301)*

How can we safeguard individual rights and the dignity and integrity of the individual while at the same time creating a socially just, inclusive, and community-affirming legal system? Are there ways to both build bonds of empathy and compassion with our clients and also address the structural problems that low-income communities face?

Led by:

Doug Ammar
Executive Director, Georgia Justice Project, Atlanta, Georgia

Lenny Noisette
Director, Justice Fund for U.S. Programs, Open Society Foundations
Former Executive Director, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem

Nanette Schorr

Supervising Attorney, Family and Education Law, Bronx Legal Services, Bronx, NY

OPTION 3: The Courtroom as a Moral Opportunity (Room 3/302)

The courtroom is perhaps the most important arena where our culture's ideas of law and justice are transmitted in a public setting. Is it possible to bring spiritual and moral depth to the courtroom and courthouse experience so as to make visible our common humanity and capacity for social healing? How are judges doing this now?

Maria Arias

Judge, Kings County Family Court, Brooklyn, NY

Bruce Peterson

Judge, Fourth Judicial District, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Gretchen Rohr

Magistrate Judge, Superior Court, Washington D.C.

3:45-4:00 PM-

Break

4-5:30 PM -

PLENARY: Restorative Justice as a Vehicle for Social Transformation (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

In recent years, the restorative justice movement has become a powerful voice for a new kind of legal response to conflict, one based upon empathy and compassion rather than judgment and condemnation. Our speakers on this plenary exemplify the breadth of this movement, demonstrating the influence of restorative justice principles in such diverse settings as the middle and high schools of Oakland, California, a law school clinic in Madison, Wisconsin, and New York City's school discipline culture. In what ways can restorative justice's emphasis on healing and transforming relationships support social change within the wider community? How does restorative justice embody Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of justice as "love correcting that which revolts against love"?

Speakers:

Alexander Artz

Attorney, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Fania Davis

Executive Director, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, Oakland CA

Jonathan Scharer

Director, Restorative Justice Project, University of Wisconsin Law School

5:30-6:30 PM -

Wine and Cheese Reception (Main Hall)

III. MOVING FORWARD WITH THE VISION

Sunday, September 14

9:30-10:00 AM - **Continental Breakfast**

Contemplative Practice on Opening the Heart to a Vision of Social Justice (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

Led by:

Hon. Maria Arias

Judge, Kings County Family Court, Brooklyn, NY

10-11:30 AM - **PLENARY: Transformative Law Practices in New York** (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)

In addition to restorative justice, we have seen in recent years the development of many new forms of law practice that are seeking to bring an elevating and empowering dimension to the work of a lawyer. Do the various transformative law practices flourishing in New York, including mediation for low-income New Yorkers seeking divorce, the New Common Law's effort to bring story-telling and organizing to economic justice cases, and the creation of new low-cost legal access hubs that take a holistic approach to client representation, begin to form a new kind of lawyering, one that can inspire a new generation of legal activism?

Speakers:

Antoinette Delruelle

Coordinating Attorney, Mediation Project,
New York Legal Assistance Group

Jay Kim

Staff Attorney, Common Law NYC

Ngoc H. Nguyen Weiner

Holistic Lawyer and Social Entrepreneur
Former Cofounder and Chief Program Officer, Civic Legal Corps

11:30- 1:00 PM: **CLOSING GATHERING (The Dave Fields Auditorium, Room 2/301)**

Sharing feedback from conference participants, planning next steps, and joining together in a closing ritual