

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

André de Gruy is the State Public Defender for Mississippi. He founded the Mississippi Office of Capital Defense Counsel in July 2001, and has continuously served as director of that program, now a division of the Office of State Public Defender. He previously worked as an intern, staff attorney and director of the Mississippi Capital Defense Resource Center Inc. and as an assistant public defender in Hinds County. He is a 1990 graduate of Mississippi College School of Law. He served on the Mississippi Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force and now serves on the Oversight Task Force. He served on the Mississippi Public Defenders Association Board of Directors for over 15 years including as President and chair of both the Training and Public Policy Committees. He is a “Life” member of MPDA. He is also a member of the National Association for Public Defense, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Mississippi Association for Justice. André has served on the Mississippi Public Defender Task Force and currently serves as a lawyer/advisor to the Mississippi Psychology Association’s Forensics Working Group and serves on Catholic Charities’ Poverty in Mississippi Task Force. He is married to Judge Elizabeth de Gruy, they have five children and one grandchild.

Justin Cook is a Jackson-native and has been at the Office of State Public Defender since January of 2008. He received his undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. Justin attended law school at the University of Mississippi. He lives in Jackson with his wife, Ginger, his daughter, Eloise, his son Oliver and their beloved dog, Stella.

Merrida Coxwell has developed a reputation as a fierce critic of social and legal injustice. This drive has compelled him to accept many criminal cases that other lawyers shunned or were afraid to accept. When a person has a legal problem and needs help, Mr. Coxwell believes it is his job to set aside personal views in order to provide quality and aggressive legal representation. His dedication and drive has earned him a strong reputation in the fields of criminal defense law, personal injury law, and in financial fraud litigation. When Merrida was a new lawyer, he represented eighteen (18) death penalty clients. Through hard work and dedication, Merrida developed a reputation for honesty, aggressiveness and fairness. He was asked by the Hinds County Circuit Court to defend Byron De La Beckwith, who was charged in the 1964 murder of Medgar Evers. This was a high profile case that became a major movie. Merrida also had successes defending two major alleged drug conspiracies in Federal Court. In both cases, set approximately one year apart, the juries found the defendants not guilty.

Beau Rudder is the Director of Training at the Mississippi Office of State Public Defender. From 2003 to 2012 he was an assistant public defender in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where he represented indigent clients charged with felonies ranging from non-violent drug offenses to capital murder. A native of Middletown, Ohio, Beau earned his BA from the University of Mississippi in 1999 and his JD from the University of Toledo School of Law in 2002. He is a board member and past president of the Mississippi Public Defenders Association and he is Secretary of the National Alliance of Indigent Defense Educators. He is also the recipient of the 2013 Gideon’s Promise Stephen B. Bright Public Defender Award. Beau lives in Madison, Mississippi with his wife Jacqueline and their two sons Abraham and Émile.

Bridgette Morgan is a native of the Mississippi Delta. She received her Juris Doctorate from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Before beginning her dream career as a public defender, Bridgette completed two judicial clerkships with Hinds County Senior Circuit Court Judge Tomie T. Green and Washington County Circuit Court Judge Margaret Carey-McCray. Bridgette also spent time as a solo practitioner primarily in the areas of criminal and civil defense. Bridgette currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Public Defenders Association and serves on the Mississippi Bar’s Public Information Committee. She is also currently enrolled in Gideon’s Promise, a strong community of public defenders. She was recently selected for the 2017 Mississippi Bar’s Leadership Forum. Bridgette’s life motto is: to respect humanity and to be careful how you treat one another because we are all one decision away from having a totally different life. When she is not zealously advocating she spends time with her five year old co-counsel Jaxson.

Khalil Cumberbatch is a formerly incarcerated national advocate for social justice issues. Khalil graduated from

Herbert H. Lehman in 2014 where he was awarded the Urban Justice Award for his work with under served and marginalized communities that have ineffective access to social "safety nets." Khalil previously served as Manager of Training at JustLeadershipUSA, advancing campaigns to reduce mass incarceration. Khalil also serves as a lecturer at Columbia University School of Social Work. Currently, Khalil is the new Associate Vice President of Policy at the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy where he will lead The Fortune Society's advocacy, policy, research, and community education efforts.

Glenda McGraw Regnart serves as Counsel to the Firm for Cascadia Cross Border Law, the Law Office of Margaret D. Stock, and as the Managing Attorney for Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Immigration Legal Services. Ms. Regnart spent approximately fifteen years working in the federal government, most of which was with the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement serving in a variety of roles, including Chief Counsel for the New Orleans Field Office. Ms. Regnart was stationed at the Oakdale, Louisiana Federal Detention Complex and prosecuted removal cases involving criminal aliens, national security and high profile immigration removals. Ms. Regnart is a native of, and resides in LeCompte, Louisiana, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Louisiana College, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and a *Juris Doctor* from Mississippi College School of Law. She is a member of the Mississippi and Alaska Bar Associations, the Federal Bar Association, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association

Tom Fortner represents clients in criminal cases in all federal and state courts throughout the State of Mississippi. He is the former Public Defender for Jackson County and Hinds County, Mississippi. Tom has been representing citizens accused of all types of felony crimes for over 33 years, and he has tried hundreds of cases to verdict before juries. He graduated from undergraduate school at Tulane University in 1975 and received his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1981.

Anthony Ray Hinton, death row exoneree, will share his story of wrongful conviction, survival on Alabama's death row, and decades-long journey to exoneration and freedom. In 1985, Anthony Ray Hinton was convicted of the unsolved murders of two fast-food restaurant managers based on the testimony of ballistics experts for the State who claimed that the crime bullets came from a dusty revolver found in Mr. Hinton's mother's closet. Without the benefit of a competent expert to challenge the State's ballistics experts, an all-white jury convicted Mr. Hinton and he was sentenced to death. After years of petitioning to have the revolver re-analyzed, three independent experts concluded that the bullets could not have been fired from that revolver, and that they could not even have all been fired from a single gun. Mr. Hinton is now free after 30 years, and will join us to share his story and discuss the changes that need to be made to prevent these types of injustices from happening to other innocent people.

Jeffery Robinson is a deputy legal director and the director of the ACLU Trone Center for Justice and Equality, which houses the organization's work on criminal justice, racial justice, and reform issues. Since graduating from Harvard Law School in 1981, Jeff has three decades of experience working on these issues. For seven years, he represented indigent clients in state court at The Defender Association and then in federal court at the Federal Public Defender's Office, both in Seattle. In 1988, Jeff began a 27-year private practice at the Seattle firm of Schroeter, Goldmark & Bender, where he represented a broad range of clients in local, state, and federal courts on charges ranging from shoplifting to securities fraud and first degree murder. He has tried over 200 criminal cases to verdict and has tried more than a dozen civil cases representing plaintiffs suing corporate and government entities. Jeff was one of the original members of the John Adams Project and worked on the behalf of one of five men held at Guantanamo Bay charged with carrying out the 9/11 attacks.

In addition to being a nationally recognized trial attorney, Jeff is also a respected teacher of trial advocacy. He is a faculty member of the National Criminal Defense College in Macon, Georgia, and has lectured on trial skills all over the United States. He has also spoken nationally to diverse audiences on the role of race in the criminal justice system. He is past president of the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and a life member and past member of the board of directors of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Jeff is also an elected fellow of the American College

Navketan Kaur Desai is an immigration attorney at Taggart, Rimes & Graham, PLLC. She represents clients in various aspects of Immigration Law, including family based, employed-based, naturalization, and removal proceedings. Nav holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law. While in law school, she clerked for MS Supreme Court Justice David Chandler and interned at the MS Attorney General's Office in the executive and civil departments. Nav immigrated from India at the age of ten with her family. Learning English as a third language, she is also fluent in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and Gujarati. Nav lives in Ridgeland, MS, with her husband, Sunny Desai, and German Shepherd, Ari Desai.

Josh Spickler is the Executive Director of Just City, a new nonprofit that supports a stronger right to counsel and smarter criminal justice policies for Memphis and Tennessee. He was previously Director of the Defender's Resource Network at the Shelby County Public Defender's Office. Josh also served on that office's Special Litigation Team, which administers the Jericho Project, a nationally-recognized jail diversion program for people with serious and persistent mental illness and substance abuse issues. He spent several years in private criminal and insurance defense practices as well. Josh regularly presents to civic organizations and works with local and national media to communicate stories about indigent defense and criminal justice reform. He is a 2000 graduate of the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis.

Keep up with Just City and justice issues on Twitter at [@JustCity901](#) and at [facebook.com/JustCity901](#). To see pictures of Josh's kids, check out [@joshspickler](#).

Stacy Ferraro is the Juvenile Parole Resource Counsel. Stacy's position is funded by the generous support of the Vital Projects Fund. Stacy's position is the product of a private-public partnership between the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD). Starting in 2001, Stacy has worked in death penalty litigation at trial, appeal and post-conviction including federal habeas cases. She has extensive experience as both a mitigation specialist and an attorney. Stacy is a graduate of Duke University and University of Mississippi School of Law.

Erin Briggs, a native of Jackson, Mississippi, is an Assistant State Public Defender with the Office of State Public Defender. In her position, Erin handles direct appeals of felony convictions where her clients received sentences up to life in prison. She has worked in Indigent Appeals since 2008. Erin graduated from Jackson State University (B.A., 2003) and the University of Mississippi (J.D.. 2006). After law school, Erin served as a judicial law clerk to Chief Judge Leslie D. King of the Mississippi Court of Appeals. Erin lives in Pearl, Mississippi with her husband, Micah Briggs, Sr. She is the step-mother of five and expecting her first bundle of joy in late January 2018.

Toscha DuBose is a native of Moss Point, MS where she grew up with her family and still currently resides. She is the second eldest of her siblings. Toscha is currently an investigator with the 19th Judicial District Public Defender's Office where she quickly moved from being a legal assistant to her current position as Investigator. Toscha is a member of National Defender Investigator Association. Previously she was the Court Clerk for the City of Moss Point Municipal Court where she spent over a decade supervising and managing the municipal court services in the city. Toscha is a graduate of William Carey University, where she received a BS in Business Administration. Toscha is the proud mother of her only child Nyaia Liddell who is currently a sophomore at Tougaloo College where she is majoring in Biology. Toscha is a self-driven professional woman who values helping others and strives to instill those values in her daughter Nyaia. In her spare time, Toscha enjoys spending time with her family, her friends, her grandson Bentley and her lovable Cocker Spaniel named Doretz.

Jake Howard joined the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2015. He serves as Legal Director and works out of MJC's office in Jackson, Mississippi. Jake has litigated civil rights and criminal cases at the trial, appellate, and post-conviction stages in state and federal court. Since 2012, he has been the co-coordinator of an effort to ensure that all juvenile offenders serving life sentences in Mississippi's

prisons receive an opportunity for release on parole pursuant to the United States Supreme Court's decisions in *Graham v. Florida* and *Miller v. Alabama*. Prior to moving to Mississippi, Jake was an E. Barrett Prettyman Fellow in the Criminal Defense and Prisoner Advocacy Clinic at the Georgetown University Law Center and a law clerk for the Honorable Myron H. Thompson at the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama. Jake graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard Law School and received a masters of laws degree in advocacy from Georgetown University Law Center. He also received a master's in teaching from the University of Washington and a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Michigan.

Judge Jack L. Wilson of Madison was appointed to the Court of Appeals by Gov. Phil Bryant on July 1, 2015. He was elected to an eight-year term in November 2016. Judge Wilson grew up in Jackson and Tupelo and graduated from Tupelo High School. He attended the University of Memphis, earned a Bachelor of Accountancy from the University of Mississippi, and received a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review. After law school, he clerked for Judge Gerald Bard Tjoflat of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Judge Wilson previously practiced law with the firm of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP in Jackson, Miss., and Mayer Brown LLP in Washington, DC. His practice focused on appellate litigation and general civil litigation involving a variety of subject matters including business and commercial disputes, class and collective actions, and arbitrations. He represented clients in state and federal trial and appellate courts throughout the country, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Judge Wilson also served as Deputy Counsel and later Chief Counsel to Gov. Phil Bryant.

He is admitted to practice in all state and federal courts in Mississippi; in the District of Columbia; in the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Fifth, Seventh, and Eleventh Circuits; and in the U.S. Supreme Court. He previously served as a commissioner on the Uniform Law Commission, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Public Employees Retirement System, and as president of the Mississippi Lawyers Chapter of The Federalist Society. He has also served as an adjunct instructor at the Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Wilson and his wife, Amanda, have three children, Emily, Jack, and Henry. They live in Madison, where they are active members of Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church.

Chip Glaze, JD, LMFT has served as the Director of The Mississippi Bar Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program since 2011. He previously served as Clinical Director of the Program for four years. He received his Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy in 1994 from Mississippi College and his Juris Doctorate from the Mississippi College School of Law in 2002. Chip is a licensed Mississippi attorney and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He has extensive experience in behavioral health counseling, family therapy, and crisis intervention with professionals. Chip lives in Jackson, MS, with his wife, Laura and their three sons, Daniel, Mason, and Gray.

Melissa ("Missye") Selman Martin serves as Deputy General Counsel of the Mississippi Bar. Missye evaluates, investigates and prosecutes disciplinary matters and other litigated cases. In addition, Missye works with the Ethics Committee in developing opinions interpreting the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct and recommending changes to those rules. She also serves as the liaison between the Office of General Counsel and the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program. Prior to coming to the Bar, Missye focused her private practice on civil litigation, commercial real estate transactions and appeal work. She is licensed in the state and federal courts of Mississippi and Tennessee, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court. She is an honor graduate of the University of Mississippi and the University of Mississippi School of Law.