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Keywords

Angela Davis, African-American community, criminal justice community

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT—NORTHSTAR AWARD: SPOTLIGHT ON ANGELA DAVIS*

*Interview by Professor Jamin Raskin***

*Introductory Message by Professor Cynthia Jones****

It is my honor and pleasure to introduce the Spotlight on my very dear friend and mentor, Professor Angela Davis. No other person is more deserving of an award or a Spotlight for contributions to the African-American community at the Washington College of Law (“WCL”) than Angela Davis. I will let others speak in glowing terms about her numerous professional accomplishments in the criminal justice community as a preeminent legal scholar and advocate. I will restrict my comments to Professor Davis’ unyielding commitment to the success of African Americans in the law as aptly illustrated by her steady hand in guiding my career.

I first met Angela Davis in 1989 when she was the Deputy Director of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (“PDS”). I was in my third year of law school at WCL, working as an intern at PDS, and she supervised my internship. I did not work directly with her then, but our paths crossed again in 1992 when I applied to be a staff attorney at PDS. She was then the director of PDS and hired me. She gave me the most challenging and rewarding professional experience a young lawyer could hope to receive. Eventually, she left PDS, but in 1999, our paths crossed again when I applied to be the Director of PDS and Angela was a member of the PDS Board of Trustees. She played an instrumental role in my selection as the PDS director. Once she became Chair of the Board of Trustees, we worked together constantly and our friendship grew exponentially.

As the director of PDS, I aspired to be the kind and gentle director that Angela had been. She was immensely popular, well-loved, and fostered a tight, nurturing community environment that kept morale high. She left very big shoes to fill, and neither I, nor any subsequent PDS director, was ever quite able to establish the kind of relationship with the staff that she enjoyed.

In 2002, when I decided to explore teaching law, Angela guided me through the process of becoming a visiting professor and then being selected as a full-time law professor at WCL. Even today, she continues to guide and mentor me. In fact, I was not able to be present at the Sylvania Woods Conference because Angela unselfishly declined an invitation to speak at a prominent national conference at UCLA. She encouraged the organizers to

invite me to participate instead so that I could present my scholarship and establish myself among the leading criminal justice professors in the country. I am not sure what I have done to deserve such a wonderful and devoted mentor and friend who invests herself so completely and wholeheartedly in my success and well being, but I am so very grateful.

Quite simply, WCL is a better educational institution because Angela Davis is here. WCL students are better educated about criminal law and procedure, criminal defense, and trial advocacy because Angela Davis is here. Furthermore, the larger legal community is better educated about the pervasive problems of racism in the criminal justice system and the use and abuse of prosecutorial discretion because Angela Davis’ voice is here.

To borrow the words of the great Chaka Khan, Angela Davis is EVERY WOMAN when it comes to advancing the cause of African Americans in the law. Whether it is getting on the phone to find a job for a deserving BLSA student or alumna, or hiring African-American students as her dean’s fellows, or calling on her many friends and colleagues to come to WCL events, or moderating panels for BLSA events, or hosting an annual celebration at her home to honor all the African-American graduates of WCL, or mentoring aspiring law professors of color all over the country to enable them to transition into academia, or hosting an event at her home each summer to bring together all of the law professors of color in the DC metropolitan area, or simply giving sage advice to the other African-American professors at WCL, Angela is EVERY WOMAN in this African-American legal community because she constantly and energetically works to help African Americans succeed in the law.

So, Angela, (or, “Amani,” as you are known by your closest friends), I know you do not feel comfortable receiving an award for simply helping black folks succeed in the legal profession. I know you feel that this is just the “right thing to do.” But not everybody does it, and even less do it as well and as often as you do. So, thank you. If Shirley Chisholm was right when she said: “*service [to the community] is the rent we pay for room on this earth,*” you have overpaid what you owe. With this award and this Spotlight, we attempt to give some of that back to you.

The Modern American honors Professor Angela Davis for being chosen as the recipient of the Northstar Award for the 10th Anniversary of the Sylvania Woods Conference on African Americans and the Law. Professor Jamin Raskin recently sat down with Professor Angela Davis to discuss her extensive experience with the criminal justice system, activism, and her new book.

ACTIVISM IN A MUCH NEEDED AREA

You're known for having a very upbeat, optimistic and buoyant personality and approach to life. A lot of people who deal with the criminal justice system as liberals get depressed, despondent, and cynical. So why are you not a cynical, jaded person after everything you've seen?

I am a little bit discouraged and frustrated about problems I've seen in the criminal justice system, because I've worked hard to change some of them and I don't see those changes taking place. For example, around issues that I care about in criminal justice like the sentencing laws that are so draconian, the policies and practices that perpetuate racial disparity in the criminal justice system are awful, and the Supreme Court's cases really make it impossible to do anything about that. And there's not a lot of legislation out there dealing with issues like racial profiling or selective prosecution, and those are issues that I care deeply about. But I don't give up hope on those issues, and I continue to lobby around and write about those issues, but it is discouraging. I see a little bit of progress being made, especially around issues like racial profiling, and I see people making baby steps. I remain hopeful, but I'm not feeling totally optimistic.

What's your answer to the question all criminal defense lawyers get about how you can represent "those" people who are doing x, y, and z, knowing that some of them are guilty?

Oh, depending on who asks me on what day, I give different answers. *[Laughs]* I have *never* felt bad for hearing the words "not guilty." It's always been a feeling of great joy because I feel that the criminal justice system really fails particularly poor people so much, that I felt a lot of joy in doing what I did. But the bottom line is you never know. I have never in my life judged a client -- never. It's not my role to judge them. And the people I represented, I always said, "There but for the Grace of God go I." We're not talking about bad, evil people. If I lived the lives my clients had to live, who knows what I would have done, and I can say that to every single person.

I never thought about whether they did it or not, because frankly I didn't care. My role there was to make sure I was standing beside them, as probably the only person in the system who was going to ensure they got respect, were well-represented, and who was not going to let the almighty hand of the government come down on them and take advantage of them, as often happens when people don't have good representation. And I always felt really, really good about that. I mean, my personality is such that I've always been for the underdog. Whoever people hate, I just want to help them because I don't like the idea of folks looking down on them and judging them. And I always stand up for the underdog. So it was a good fit for me. I always felt good about it.

GROWING UP IN THE SEGREGATED SOUTH

Most people who attain a certain level of education and social privilege prefer to forget about unpleasant things, like

arrest, incarceration, prison, rape and abuse. What is it in your past that has motivated you to stay focused on something that you clearly have the luxury of forgetting about if you want?

Well, I'm an African-American woman born in Phenix City, Alabama, on the border of Alabama and Georgia near Fort Benning, in 1956, so it's kind of hard to forget. I grew up in segregated Alabama, and I remember separate water fountains and public accommodations. I have very distinct memories of that. Traveling from Alabama to my aunt's house in South Carolina with my parents, my father, who was in the Army, used to drive all that long distance wearing his formal dress uniform because he thought that if he wore that when we traveled, we would be able to stop and get gas and food. A police officer arrested me when I was nine years old, *[chuckles]*, because I was walking in a White neighborhood, and got into an altercation with this White kid who didn't want me and my friends riding our bikes on *their* street, which was a public street. I tell this story in my Criminal Procedure Class every year when we talk about arrest. So I've had life experiences.

But the bottom line is, it's not just about my past, it's about everyday being faced with these issues, even now in 2006. I have family members, young, male family members being constantly stopped by the police. As a middle-class Black woman, I'm confronted by issues of race all the time. I have been followed around stores. I have been in a grocery store—this was before I started teaching, when I was at Public Defender Service ("PDS")—I had on a suit that day and was carrying a briefcase. And I had a woman come up to me and ask me where the canned peas were -- in a way that she *clearly thought I worked there*. And it was kind of like I was invisible as a Black woman. I mean, she sees this Black face, and she immediately assumed I was supposed to be waiting on her.

And that happens to me all the time. You can talk to most Black folks who have come to certain points in their life, where they've achieved certain things, and they still are confronted with race issues. You are constantly reminded about the fact that you are Black and somehow people treat you differently, see you differently, don't see you, you're invisible, or if they see you they have certain assumptions. Those things don't change because your socioeconomic or professional status changes. It's not the same as it was a long time ago. But it's still there.

But I can see somebody saying that that would make them want to distance themselves even more from the underclass, the people that were caught up in prison. I remember my [Harvard Law School] teacher Randall Kennedy wrote this article about the politics of respectability. I took his point to be, we have to distance ourselves from the criminal underclass and the people who are the objects of police attention, in order to make clear that our race is not a criminal race.

I'm not sure he meant that, I think he meant, not "distance from them" in a sense that you forget about those people and you don't want to be helpful to them, or you don't want to do any-

thing to change it. It's that you distance yourself in a sense that you're gonna create this different persona so that this idea of Blacks as criminal, as bad, as evil, is changed. It's sort of changing people's minds about behavior in a certain way. I'm not sure, I won't try to interpret Kennedy and what he meant.

But if your interpretation is correct, I could never do that. I've wanted to be a lawyer since I was in the sixth grade. And at the time, I thought I wanted to be a civil rights lawyer, whatever that meant. I didn't really know what that meant. But given my experiences growing up, I knew I wanted to help Black people to overcome discrimination and the vestiges of slavery. I ended up becoming a Public Defender, and I still think that was, in a way, being a civil rights lawyer. But, I guess my point is, from when I first had aspirations of being a lawyer, I knew that I was going to be doing something to help poor people and people of color, and I didn't know exactly how that was going to happen. That's what I've always wanted to do. There's no way I could have done anything else.

FROM HARVARD TO THE PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE TO THE NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

So take us through your experience at Harvard Law School?

My experience at Harvard Law School [1978-1981] was not that great. I had a great experience at Howard [1974-1978]. I met my now-husband [a Howard University graduate student and assistant Tae Kwon Do teacher, where they met, and were married after she finished law school] and had a great four years there.

At the time, there was only one Black professor [at Harvard Law] and that was Clyde Ferguson. Derek Bell was there for part of the time, and he was one of my favorite professors. I had no other Black professors. I just felt very isolated at Harvard because at the time, there was not really much of a focus on public interest work. Now, Charles Ogletree is there running the Criminal Justice Institute, and there's a much greater focus on public interest work. When I was there, you had to really struggle if you were interested in doing public interest work. And I felt very isolated nervous, scared, and out of my element. But I made it through. And now I go up there every year to teach trial advocacy. It's different now.

Being a public defender was truly what I was born to do. I loved the whole twelve years I was there, both when I was representing clients and when I was running the office. I just feel like it's probably the most important contribution that I've made in the world, or will probably ever make.

The way I ended up going [to the National Rainbow Coalition] was, when I was the director at PDS, I heard that Jesse Jackson was starting this new program called "Save Our Youth"—a mentoring program for kids who were in the criminal justice system. I heard that he was having these meetings in these local churches in DC with prosecutors and judges. As usual, the Public Defender Service was left out. So I just crashed one of the meetings. I just showed up and introduced

myself and said "I heard you were meeting about *our* clients, and I would like to participate." And the rest is history. You know how Rev. Jackson is—"Oh yeah, I want her to work on this!"

At that time I'd been at PDS for 12 years and I was the director, which was very different from representing actual clients. I was doing budget and administrative stuff. And it also felt like, instead of representing just the clients in my individual caseload, I was representing every single client in the office. I didn't get the money and the resources, I was letting all the clients down, and it was getting to be quite stressful. I'd been there for 12 years and I thought, let me try to do something different and affect change in a different way. So I went to the Rainbow Coalition and I stayed there for one wild, intense, and crazy year. *[Laughs]* I did some interesting things, and learned a lot about politics – a lot that discouraged me and some that encouraged me.

NOT BLIND TO RACISM

An important part of your career is that you've refused to be blind to racism and its effects on the criminal justice system. But you've never defined yourself, in exclusive ways, as a "race person," and you're a hero to students who are Black, Hispanic, White, Asian American, gay, straight. And so, your moral and political beliefs go beyond just fighting racism. Right?

Yes they do. Very much of what I think about, write about, and do is about race, pretty much because that's been my life experience, and that has been what has defined my life experience. I haven't defined myself in that way. Race and racism have defined that for me. I've been accused by people of seeing race in everything -- "playing the race card" – whatever that means. I hate that phrase. You know, it's not as if I go around looking for race in everything. But it has been a part of my life experience, and I have refused to close my eyes to it

Having said that, I don't think that racism is the only issue we need to be concerned about. Issues of class are so important. And quite frankly I see those two things as inextricably bound together. People of color are disproportionately poor, and the poor in this country are disproportionately people of color. Even as I talk about issues of race in the criminal justice system, I always qualify that to say that it's often very hard, if not impossible, to determine whether it's issues of class or issues of race that account for so many of the disparities and problems in the criminal justice system. I make that clear in my writings, and I try to make that clear when I talk to people all the time.

Certainly a lot of students arrive at law school with a view that crime has to be looked at in a vacuum, and that a person who commits a crime is a criminal—A bad person, a sinful person, or an immoral person. And that it's wrong to inject these larger questions of history, racism, sexism, class, into our analysis in criminal law. So how do you engage with that perspective?

It's impossible to teach my courses without talking about issues of race and class. I try to teach students what all students who've studied criminology know, which is the connection between poverty and crime. And I think most of our students really do understand that. I think most of our students understand how issues of race play a role as well. But I think more see the issues of class than they do race. And I try to teach that as much as I can.

I'm so glad you raised that, because it reminds me of when I was teaching the *Bernard Goetz* case. Goetz said, "If I had more bullets, I would have shot more. I'd been mugged before and I'd shoot again" – the whole vigilante mentality. The case always generates a very tense discussion in class. And it's interesting because I'm always the first one to mention that the four boys were Black. Nobody wants to say it! And I always go through this scenario where the students say "Well they could have been four White guys." And it makes people uncomfortable but we always have an intense discussion. I always feel as if there's no closure to the discussion and that there's never enough time in the class to talk about it.

So what I was thinking is that next year I might want to do something I've tentatively call the "Race Project," where anyone in the WCL community informally gathers once a month in a non-classroom setting because that's always a problem, when you have a classroom dynamic with a Black professor, talking about race, and students not always feeling comfortable to say what they feel for fear of other students judging them. It would be great to have a space where anyone in our community—students, staff, faculty—can come together to talk about issues of race, in a non-threatening environment, to talk through some of these issues. Race is such an important issue, but it's one of the issues that I think most people feel uncomfortable talking about in any context, and certainly in the classroom. It shouldn't be that way. So I think we have to try to create space, particularly as professors, for students to feel comfortable talking about those issues no matter what your experience may be.

EFFECTING CHANGE—ONE ISSUE AT A TIME

Tell us about your book.

I'm very excited about it. The title I'm currently working with is *Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor*. It's all about prosecutorial discretion and power—how the ordinary everyday exercise of prosecutorial power and discretion, which we as a society tend to accept, what a great influence it has on the disparities we see in the criminal justice system. And about how prosecutors are unique in our society in that they're the only public officials, in my view, that we really don't hold accountable.

Our whole system of democracy is about transparency and accountability through the democratic process. However, prosecutors, who have more power than anyone else in the criminal justice system in my view, are the most powerful but the least accountable. Most judges around the country are elected, and even those that are appointed go through a cycle and have to be

reappointed. Judges can be impeached. And of course, defense attorneys have no power. Most people would respond by saying that prosecutors are accountable because they are elected officials or appointed through the appointments process. But what I say to them is that the democratic process doesn't really hold prosecutors accountable. If you ask most people what their elected prosecutors do, they will not be able to tell you. Prosecutors run for office, and there is this democratic process, but no one knows what they do. There's absolutely no transparency in prosecutors' offices so people don't know what they do. They don't know anything about prosecutors' charging powers or plea bargaining power or policies. They don't even know what those things are.

When prosecutors run for office, they don't tell people about these important responsibilities, but they are the most important powers prosecutors have, and they have such a fundamental impact on people. Prosecutors make the charging decision single-handedly, and it's almost impossible to challenge either the charging decision or the failure to charge. How can people hold prosecutors accountable if they don't know what they do and how they exercise their immense power and discretion?

Do you want to retain that power and deploy it for positive purposes, or do you want to reduce that power and figure out how to really rein them in?

Both. I want the power to be reined in, in the sense that I want them to be held accountable to the people. I want the democratic process and the mechanisms of accountability that are there in theory now to actually work in practice. But in the meantime, and if that happens, I want prosecutors to maintain discretion. I think the federal sentencing guidelines proved that totally eliminating discretion is a bad idea. At the same time, when you have discretion and it's totally unrestrained, and when there's no accountability for the exercise of that discretion, you're gonna end up with unfairness and discrimination. Kenneth Davis, who writes about discretion in the criminal justice system, talks about how the power to have discretion is the power to discriminate. So I want the prosecutors to be reined in and held accountable, and as they continue to exercise that discretion, I want them to use that discretion in ways that can further justice. The Supreme Court said "the role of the prosecutor is not to seek convictions but to do justice." A paraphrased version of that quote is actually inscribed over the entrance to the Justice Department. But in fact the reality is that most prosecutors are very political and they're all about getting convictions and running for office.. And it's fine to fight crime, but they use crime in political ways, instead of keeping their eyes on what justice is all about. It's complicated. It's not an "either or"—it's both.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

Ok, looking forward—you've just finished a book, that's a huge accomplishment. Where do you see your research

going? Are you going to step outside of the criminal law and procedure at any point?

I don't see myself stepping out. I'm actually working on another book now, with Michael Tigar, in Foundation Press' Stories series. It's called Trial Advocacy Stories. We'll include essays about famous or significant civil and criminal trials and about the trial strategies of the prosecution or plaintiff and the defense. The essays will discuss the trial strategies and significant aspects of the advocacy in the trials. Some will also discuss the social or historical significance of the cases. I also teach trial advocacy and a criminal defense course here. I love teaching students how to be trial lawyers. It's a wonderful skill, and I think so few lawyers have that skill. Trial advocacy is definitely something that I want to explore more -- both as a teacher and a scholar. But no, I do not see myself stepping outside of criminal

law or procedure because there is so, so much more to do there. There are many other projects I'm working on, but I'll only mention one. The Vera Institute of Justice, a non-profit institute in New York, does significant work to improve the criminal justice system. They now have a project called the "Prosecution and Racial Justice Project," in which they have convinced three chief prosecutors across the country—Michael McCann in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Peter Gilchrist in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Paul Morrison in Johnson County, Kansas—to allow Vera's staff to come in and gather statistics to try to determine whether or not the exercise of discretion in their offices is having a racial effect. I serve on the Project's Advisory Board. I am really excited about this project because I proposed something similar in one of my first law review articles – *Prosecution and Race: The Power and Privilege of Discretion*.



* Professor Angela J. Davis graduated *summa cum laude* in 1978 from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and continued onto Harvard Law School, graduating in 1981. After graduating from law school, Professor Davis worked for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia.

As a Staff Attorney in 1982, Professor Davis represented indigent defendants in the Criminal Division and juvenile respondents in delinquency proceedings in the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Later, she became Deputy Director and continued as the Executive Director of the Public Defender Service from 1991 to 1994. In this capacity, Professor Davis represented indigent adults and juveniles charged with serious felony offenses in the District of Columbia.

Professor Davis' first teaching appointment was at the Public Defender Service Training Program. Since then, Professor Davis has taught at various prestigious institutions including Harvard Law School, Georgetown University Law Center, and George Washington University Law School. Her expertise includes trial advocacy and racism in the criminal justice system. Currently, she is a professor of criminal law, criminal procedure, and criminal defense at the Washington College of Law at American University.

During her law career, Professor Davis has continuously been recognized for her outstanding achievements. From 1993 to 1994, she was a Morris Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow at

Harvard Law School. In 1997, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency awarded Professor Davis with the New American Community Award. In 2000, the Washington College of Law at American University recognized Professor Davis as a Pauline Ruyle Moore Scholar for her scholarly contribution in the area of public law. Two years later, American University again recognized Professor Davis for her outstanding teaching. More recently, Professor Davis was recognized as a Soros Senior Justice Fellow commissioned to write a book on prosecutorial discretion and power. Earlier this year, she was awarded the Northstar Award at the 10th Annual Sylvania Woods Conference on African Americans and the Law for her contributions to the African-American community.

In addition to her teaching duties, Professor Davis actively writes on the American criminal system. She has co-authored two books, *Basic Criminal Procedure* and *Trial Advocacy Stories*, to be released in 2007. Her current publication, *Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor*, will be released later this year. She has also written a chapter entitled "Incarceration and the Imbalance of Power," published in *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment*. Additionally, she has written editorials on criminal justice for the *Washington Post*, *The Legal Times*, and *Criminal Justice*.

Professor Davis has made frequent presentations and participated in many collegiate and professional panels. Most recently, she spoke at the Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting and at the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section Fall Meeting. She has also made presentations at the American Bar Association and the L'Égalité devant la justice in Paris, France. Professor Davis' media appearances include ABC's Nightline, CNN, Fox Morning News, and the Koyo Nambdi Show on NPR.

Professor Davis is an active member of the Sentencing Project, Peter Cicchino Social Justice Foundation, Southern Center for Human Rights, Fredrick Douglas Jordan Scholarship Fund, Vera Institute of Justice Prosecution & Racial Justice Project, and American Bar Association.



** Professor Jamin Raskin graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in Government with a concentration in Political Theory from Harvard College. He received the Benjamin A. Trustman Traveling Fellowship. He had the honor of interviewing the late French philosopher-historian, Michel Foucault. Professor Raskin's achievements continued onto law school, graduating *magna cum laude* from Harvard Law School in 1987. During law school, Professor Raskin won the First Circuit Prize for an essay on the *Principles of Constitutional Federalism from Commission on the Bicentennial of the Constitution* and taught Political Theory at the Department of Government at Harvard University.

After law school, Professor Raskin worked as the Assistant Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He served a joint appointment in the Government and Executive Bureaus. After writing administrative comments opposing a Health and Human Services Regulation prohibiting abortion counseling at federally funded family planning clinics, Professor Raskin briefed a successful challenge to the regulation in federal court. He also effectively litigated two architectural access cases for the disabled in state appeals court.

After briefly working as General Counsel for the National Rainbow Coalition, Professor Raskin joined the law faculty at the Washington College of Law at American University. For more than sixteen years, Professor Raskin has taught courses in Constitutional law, the First Amendment, the Constitution and Public Education, and Law of the American Political Process. As part of law faculty, Professor Raskin has directed the LL.M

program and chaired both the Appointments and Speakers Committees. From 1994 to 1996, he served as the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

As part of the law faculty at American University, Professor Raskin's achievements have continued to be remarkable. In 2001, American University conferred its highest honor and named him its Scholar-Teacher of the Year. As a Visiting Professor at the Institut D'Etudes Sciences Politique in Paris, France, Professor Raskin lectured throughout the country for the United States Embassy. In 2005, he was named the Pauline Ruyle Moore Scholar for excellence in public law scholarship. In 1999, Professor Raskin began the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project at WCL and currently serves as its director. Organized with the widows of the Justices Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan, the Project uses law students to teach Constitutional Law to local public high school students. The Marshall-Brennan Project has spread to other universities including but not limited to Howard University Law, Rutgers Law School, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Law.

Professor Raskin is also an active civil rights and civil liberties attorney. He has represented Greenpeace, the Service Employees International Union, United Students Against Sweatshops, Global Exchange, and the National Voting Rights Institute. He is a member of the Board of FairVote, a leading electoral reform group, and the Public Justice Center. Backed by the ACLU, Professor Raskin defended the legality of vote trading under the First Amendment. Currently, Professor Raskin's tireless commitment to public issues has led him to run for the Maryland State Senate.

Professor Raskin's publications include, *We the Students: Supreme Court Cases for and about America's Students*, *Youth Justice in America*, *Overruling Democracy: The Supreme Court versus The American People*, and various articles, essays, and op-ed pieces for law journals, magazines, and newspapers. He is a frequent guest on local and national television shows, such as CBS News, NBS News, Larry King Live, Crossfire, and Diane Rehm Show on PBS.



*** Cynthia Jones holds expertise and teaches in the fields of criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence, and Race, Crime and Politics. She has made various presentations in the areas of ethnic and racial justice, racial profiling, and the juvenile death penalty. Professor Jones was an associate at the law firm of Dickstein, Shapiro and Morin from 1990 through 1992. She has served as an adjunct instructor at American University Washington College of Law, UDC, and George Washington University. Previously, she was staff attorney at D.C. Public Defender Service; deputy director of the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency and executive director of the D.C. Public Defender Service. She has lectured extensively on criminal law and sentencing issues.