

**STRENGTHENED BONDS: ABOLISHING THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
AND RE-ENVISIONING CHILD WELL-BEING**

**Columbia Law School
Columbia Journal of Race and Law
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DAY TWO

June 18, 2021

11:00 am to 6:00 pm EDT

- **Panel 3: An Abolitionist Approach to Reimagine Child Welfare (2:15 pm – 3:45 pm)**
 - **Ashley Albert, Tiheba Bain, Elizabeth Brico, Bishop Marcia Dinkins, Kelis Houston, Joyce McMillan, Vonya Quarles, Lisa Sangoi, Erin Miles Cloud and Adina Marx-Arpadi**, Impacted Mothers, Community Organizers, People of Faith, and Allied Advocates, *Ending the Family Death Penalty; Building a World We Deserve*
 - **Josh Gupta-Kagan**, Professor, University of South Carolina School of Law, **Brianna Harvey**, MSW, PhD student, UCLA School of Education, Urban Schooling Division, Program Director Bruin Guardian Scholars Program, **Christopher E. Church**, Judicial Consultant, Fostering Court Improvement, *Reimagining Schools' Role Outside the Family Regulation System*
 - **Clara Presler**, Supervising Attorney, Family Defense Practice, The Bronx Defenders, *Mutual Deference Between Hospitals and Courts: How Mandated Reporting from Medical Providers Harms Families*
 - **Ashley Albert**, Parent Partner/Birth Parent Advocate and **Amy Mulzer**, Senior Attorney for Law and Appeals, Brooklyn Defender Services, Family Defense Practice, *Adoption Cannot Be Reformed*
 - Moderator, **Ann Shalleck**, Professor of Law and Carrington Shields Scholar, American University, Washington College of Law
- **“Coffee Break” (3:45-4:00 pm) (Breakout rooms available to meet with panelists and attendees)**

Note: If you wish to assign yourself to one of the many breakout rooms, you must have Zoom Desktop client or mobile app version 5.3.0 or higher or ChromeOS version 5.0.0 (4241.1207) or higher.

Panelist Biographies



Ashley Albert is a parent advocate in Washington State. She was the first parent in Washington to legally enforce and modify an open adoption agreement after her child was taken away by CPS. Her work focuses on the needs of women and children with incarcerated loved ones.



Tiheba Bain is Founder and Executive Director of Women Against Mass Incarceration, an organization empowering justice involved women and girls. Recently Ms. Bain was inducted into the Connecticut Hall of Change for her exemplary work. She is a Yale Access to Law School Fellow and a Connecticut public speaker. She sits on Connecticut's Lt. Governor Women's Commission of Health and Safety and the African American sub commission of Connecticut's General Assembly Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity. Tiheba co-hosted the first three #FreeHer conferences and is the former Coalitions Director of the National Council for Incarcerated and formally Incarcerated Women.



Elizabeth Brico is a freelance writer and journalist from the Pacific Northwest and a parent directly impacted by the foster industrial complex. She was a 2019 Reimagining Communities fellow with the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, where she researched the use of predictive analytics in child services decision making. She was also a 2019-2021 TalkPoverty journalism fellow. Her work on the drug war, child services, and other social justice issues has appeared in a variety of outlets including VICE, Vox, Filter Mag, TalkPoverty, Columbia Journalism Review, Politico, OZY, The Fix, and others. When she isn't working to dismantle these systems of harm, she can usually be found reading, writing, or watching speculative fiction. Read her work on eb-writes.com and follow her on Twitter @elizabethbrico



Christopher E. Church is a Senior Director for Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs. Prior to joining Casey Family Programs, he was the Staff Attorney at the University of South Carolina School of Law CHAMPS Clinic, a pediatric medical-legal partnership. He also served as a child welfare consultant with organizations such as Casey Family Programs, the Children's Bureau, the ABA, NCSC, and NCJFCJ. He began his career working for Georgia's CIP. He holds an MS in Mathematics from the University of North Texas and a JD from Gonzaga University. He completed his BA at Concordia College in New York.



Erin Miles Cloud is the Co-Director and Co-Founder for Movement for Family Power.



Bishop Marcia Dinkins is the founder and Executive Director for Black Women Rising, a multi-issue grassroots organization that centers the voices of Black and Brown women on the issues that impact them, and Blaque Strategies for Change, a policy think tank in Dayton, Ohio. Bishop Marcia Dinkins is the founder and Prelate of Forever Changed Ministries, a non-denominational without walls ministry whose primary purpose is to build and stand with the least of these in our communities. Marcia currently consults with Ohio IPL and Healthcare for America Now. Prior to this position, Marcia was the Executive Director for the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative in Warren, Ohio. Marcia has been organizing for several years on issues related to domestic violence, healthcare, reproductive health and rights, social safety, education, jobs and criminal justice reform. She has taught social justice workshops at Case Western University, Bowling Green State University and at the American Baptist Churches Leadership Academy. She holds three degrees, an Associate of Arts from Oakland Community College; Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary and Women and Gender Studies from the University of Toledo; and a Masters of Arts in Criminal Justice Administration and Policy. She is currently a Ph.D candidate at the Union Institute & University studying Public Policy & Social Change with a specialization in Women & Gender Studies. She has certifications in Cultural Competency, Forgiveness Therapy, Restorative Justice Trainer, Trauma Informed Approach Trainer, Executive Management Leadership and multiple certifications regarding child welfare.



Josh Gupta-Kagan is a professor of law at the University of South Carolina School of Law. As a practitioner and law school clinician, he has represented parents, kinship caregivers, and children in a range of family court cases in multiple states. He has published over 20 academic articles focused on improving the legal system for families and children, including *America's Hidden Foster Care System*, *The New Permanency*, *The Strange Life of Stanley v. Illinois: A Case Study in Parent Representation and Law Reform*, and *Towards a Public Health Legal Structure for Child Welfare*.



Brianna Harvey is a PhD student at UCLA in the School of Education, Urban Schooling Division. Her research focuses on the educational experiences of foster youth, specifically interrogating the collusive relationship between schools and the family policing system for Black youth in K-12. She is a Ford Foundation Predoctoral fellow whose scholarship is informed by her extensive experience as a community based social worker. She has worked in the field of social services for over 10 years providing support and advocacy for communities experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, substance use issues, and interactions with the family policing system and criminal punishment system. Brianna is a first generation college student who received her Masters in Social Work from USC and her Bachelors in Sociology from the University of La Verne.



Kelis Houston is Founder of Village Arms, a Christ-centered organization that aids and supports African American families impacted by child protection. Village Arms' focus is family preservation and reunification through parental coaching, in-home visits, resource acquisition and advocacy with a cultural base. Village Arms was created in direct response to the over representation and disparate treatment of African Americans across the child welfare service continuum. Kelis' personal mission is to address and help eradicate these disparities through legislative action, family advocacy, policy/practice reform and community engagement. She wrote and is advocating for the MN African American Family Preservation Act to stop the arbitrary removal of Black children from their families and community. She serves as cultural consultant, trainer and group facilitator to child welfare staff, students and service providers. Her training is designed to bring a new level of cultural awareness to those working for and within the African American community, in an effort to achieve clearer lines of communication and a sensitivity to culture. Kelis began her career in social services over a decade ago and has since been a voice for marginalized communities.



Adina Marx-Arpadi is a second year law student at CUNY School of Law. Prior to law school, Adina supported decarceration efforts in New Orleans with the Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition (OPPRC). She is a doula and lactation counselor, and a member of the Birthmark Doula Collective.



Joyce McMillan is a thought leader, advocate, activist, community organizer, and educator. Her mission is to remove systemic barriers in communities of color by bringing awareness of the racial disparities in systems where people of color are disproportionately affected. Joyce believes before change occurs, the conversation about systemic oppression that creates poverty and feeds people of color into systems must happen on all levels consistently.



Amy Mulzer is a senior staff attorney for law and appeals in the Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. She has represented parents in family court and on appeal for over twelve years, working with Brooklyn Defender Services, the Bronx Defenders, and the Family Defense Clinic at NYU Law School. She has also worked as a clinical professor and staff attorney in the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic at Brooklyn Law School, which focuses on protecting and advancing the civil rights of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and as a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society's Homeless Rights Project. Amy has authored amicus briefs for submission in state appellate courts across the country, addressing the constitutionality of termination of parental rights statutes, alternatives to termination of parental rights, the applicability of the Americans with Disabilities Act to family regulation proceedings, and discrimination against parents with intellectual disabilities. Her publications include *However Kindly Intentioned: Structural Racism and Volunteer CASA Programs*, 20 CUNY L. Rev. 23 (2017).



Clara Presler is a supervising attorney in the Family Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders. Since 2013, she has represented parents in Family Court who face possible removal of their children and termination of their parental rights. In addition, she regularly gives trainings on family defense to medical professionals at various New York City hospitals and hosts physicians at Family Court. Before joining the Bronx Defenders, Clara was a law clerk to the Honorable Sarah Netburn in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and an Associate at Human Rights Watch. Clara received her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 2012 and her B.A. from Carleton College in 2004.



Vonya Quarles, a California native with southern roots, is a 3rd generation formerly incarcerated woman with lived experiences related to Child Protective Services, adoptions, and foster care. She is the co-founder and director of Starting Over Inc., a reentry service provider and civic engagement apparatus. She is a Women Organizing for Justice Fellow 2010, Women's Policy Institute fellow 2012/2013, J. Irwin Award recipient 2013, Eleanor Jean Grier Leadership fellow 2014, WKKF Fellow 2015, Rosenberg Fellow 2019. Vonya is a licensed and practicing attorney who blends her formal training with community advocacy, organizing, engagement, and action. A mother and grandmother, Vonya is grateful to the warrior women and men, the strategists, the doers, that have given so much to the fight for freedom. She recognizes that if it weren't for them, she would not have the examples to follow, or the shoulders to stand on. Because of them, she is, and because of them, we can and must WIN.



Lisa Sangoi is the Co-Director and Co-Founder for Movement for Family Power.



Ann Shalleck is Professor of Law and Carrington Shields Scholar American University, Washington College of Law and directs the Women and the Law Program. She teaches the Gender Justice Clinic, Feminist Jurisprudence, Family Law, and Theories of Pedagogy. The Women and the Law Program offers specialized courses on gender and the law and ensures the integration of gender and LGBTI issues throughout the curriculum; organizes workshops for scholars and advocates; and supports student advocacy and the development of professional identities. The Program offers an LL.M. in Gender, International and Comparative Law. She writes about gender and the law, clinical theory and practice, narrative theory, and family law.