

PROGRESS OR REGRESS WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



Your Other Partner

Pennsylvania Bar Association

32nd Minority Attorney Conference

Oct. 5–6, 2023

Hilton Harrisburg

One N. 2nd St., | Harrisburg, PA 17101



The Minority Attorney Conference has a long history of bringing together attorneys who practice in areas of the law that tend to affect people of color in disparate ways. This year offers another exciting opportunity to mingle with colleagues while listening to and engaging with esteemed panelists who will explore recurring topics from the perspective of whether progress is being made, regression is happening and what paths forward are suggested.

Whether you practice in, or have an interest in, voting rights, freedom of speech and admissions practices facing universities, criminal law, environmental law, marijuana law or prison reform; want to learn more about pathways to the bench; or want to hear tips from trailblazers in the three branches of Pennsylvania government, please join the Minority Bar Committee as it hosts the PBA's 32nd Minority Attorney Conference.

Over one and one-half days, you will have the opportunity to earn **9.0 CLE credits**, including **one ethics** credit, spread throughout all of the sessions. The conference will feature a networking reception, two lunches, a keynote address by Jacqueline Romero, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the presentation of the A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award to two noted jurists, Allegheny County President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark and Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge Charles Hayden.

A special thanks to our sponsors



Sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Bridget Gillespie at Bridget.Gillespie@pabar.org or 1-800-932-0311, ext. 2300.



The Pennsylvania Bar Institute is approved by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Continuing Legal Education Board as an accredited CLE provider. The PBA Minority Attorney Conference has been approved by the Pennsylvania CLE Board for up to 9 CLE Credits (8 hours of substantive and 1 hour of ethics). Questions concerning the CLE credits can be directed to the PBI Customer Service Department at 1-800-247-4724.

Thursday, Oct. 5

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8 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Registration

8:45 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Welcoming Remarks

9 a.m. – 10 a.m.

(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

Structural Racism to Include Cash Bail and Other Issues That Affect the Wealth of Low Income Individuals

Once locked up, many people must pay cash bail to be released from detention. The amount of bail is determined by the court. Research suggests racial bias against Black and Brown defendants plays a part in the level of bail set by the court. Furthermore, almost half a million people, which constitutes nearly three-quarters of the total number of people in jails, have not been convicted of a crime. Of these individuals, up to 90 percent are Black and Brown, are members of the lowest economic statuses of Americans with the fewest resources and remain in pretrial incarceration because they cannot afford bail. This panel will discuss how the cash bail system disproportionately impacts people of color, fuels a pervasive problem of structural racism in our criminal justice system and compounds underlying disparities that have led to worse outcomes for people of color. The panel will also discuss alternatives to the cash bail system.

Moderator: Wesley R. Payne IV, Esq., White & Williams

Panelists:

- Paul Heaton, PhD, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, Philadelphia
- Shawn K. Page, Esq., Mincey Fitzpatrick Ross, Philadelphia

10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

The Revival of Voting Rights Litigation

With the recent Supreme Court decision on the *Milligan* case in Alabama and on the *Moore v. Harper* case in North Carolina, the Supreme Court has signaled that the attacks on minority voting rights may not be tolerated, despite the setbacks by the *Shelby v. Holder* decision in 2013. Is the pendulum shifting toward voting rights protection under

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, despite the failure of Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting rights Advancement Act?

Moderator: Tsiwen M. Law, Esq., Law & Associates, Philadelphia

Panelists:

- Kahlil C. Williams, Esq., Ballard Spahr LLP, Philadelphia

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 a.m.

(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

The Demise of Affirmative Action

With the Supreme Court's recent decisions *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. U. North Carolina*, what remains of efforts to diversify higher education? Will SFFA and other organizations who have threatened lawsuits against schools, stifle efforts at diversity and inclusion? Will there be alternatives available under state constitutions or laws? Will legacy challenges make any difference in admissions? How have other institutions which were forced to engage in race-blind admissions fared?

Moderator: Tsiwen M. Law, Esq., Law & Associates, Philadelphia

Panelists:

- Barbara E. Ransom, Esq., Law Offices of Barbara E. Ransom, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey
- Danielle M. Conway, dean and Donald J. Farage Professor of Law, Penn State Dickinson School of Law, Carlisle

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

State Social Equity Programs in the Cannabis Industry – Do They Work?

This program will explore the progress (or lack of progress) of social equity programs in the cannabis industry, which were established to right the wrongs caused by the war on drugs. We will focus on programs currently in place in the medical and recreational cannabis industries in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

Moderator: Carlton L. Johnson, Esq., Archer & Greiner, Philadelphia

(Speakers are subject to change)

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Panelists:

- Natalie M. Brennan, Esq., Archer & Greiner, Voorhees, New Jersey
- Cherron Perry–Thomas, director of Social Impact, Diasporic Alliance for Cannabis Opportunities (DACO), Philadelphia
- Tauhid Chappell, executive director, Cannabis Training Academy, New Jersey Dept. of State, Trenton
- Rep. Joanne E. McClinton, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Harrisburg

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Break

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Hot Topics and Current Events in Environmental Law – The Insider’s View
(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

Current events such as the Ohio train derailment, the Canadian wildfires and the latex chemical spill on the Delaware River in Philadelphia have affected the daily lives of many Pennsylvanians. Executives from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission will give their insiders’ views of these events as well as their perspectives regarding environmental and energy issues impacting minority communities.

Moderator: Gina M. Thomas, Esq., assistant counsel, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Norristown

Panelists:

- Adam Ortiz, regional administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3, Philadelphia
- Secretary Richard Negrin, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Harrisburg
- Kimberly M. Barrow, Esq., chief of staff, Office of Public Utility Commissioner, Harrisburg

3:45 p.m. – 4 p.m. Break

4 p.m. – 5 p.m.
(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

Prison Reform and a Time of Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration is one of the most pressing civil rights issues currently. With over 80,000 people in Pennsylvania who are incarcerated in federal, state and county prisons and jails, the human and financial impact on our community is immense. However, much of what occurs behind bars remains invisible, imposing barriers to prison reform efforts. Join this panel, which will feature a variety of perspectives on this vital issue.

Moderator: Beverly H. Rampaul, Esq., assistant counsel, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Harrisburg

Panelists:

- Laura K. Williams, warden, George W. Hill Correctional Facility, Thornton
- Samuel G. Encarnacion, Esq., first assistant, Public Defender’s Office, Lancaster County
- Su Ming Yeh, Esq., executive director, PA Institutional Law Project, Philadelphia

5 p.m. – 6 p.m. Networking Reception

Friday, Oct. 6

8 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Continental Breakfast and Registration

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks

9 a.m. – 10 a.m. Freedom of Speech at Universities
(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

Many colleges and universities have struggled to preserve and protect the rights of students and faculty to express views on controversial subjects. Surveys suggest that both groups are reluctant to express their views and opinions publicly for fear of adverse employment or academic consequences. The panel will review the current legal landscape of First Amendment rights on campus, along with some of the strategies that schools are employing to navigate the competing concerns.

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Moderator: Thomas G. Wilkinson, Jr. Esq., Cozen O'Connor, Philadelphia

Panelists:

- Nancy Conrad, Esq., PBA president–elect, White & Williams, Allentown
- Shaakirrah R. Sanders, J.D., Penn State Dickinson Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Antiracism and Critical Pedagogy, Carlisle

10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Pathway to the Bench and Diversity: Judicial Elections v. Merit Selection
(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

This diverse panel of outstanding jurists will discuss their pathways to the bench and how they navigated challenges and pitfalls in their journeys to the bench. These judges will discuss the barriers they overcame and share their various views and experiences regarding the value of judicial elections versus judicial appointments in increasing diversity.

Moderator: Hon. Stephanie Domitrovich (Ret.), senior judge, Erie

Panelists:

- Hon. Cheryl L. Austin, senior judge, Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, Norristown
- Hon. Stella M. Tsai, Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia
- Hon. Royce L. Morris, Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas, Harrisburg
- Hon. Susan E. Schwab, magistrate judge, Middle District of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Tips from Legal Trailblazers in Every Branch of Pennsylvania Government
(1.0 substantive CLE credit)

In 1,000 years, these three panelists will be part of history, known for being the first African–American women to hold their positions as President Judge of Allegheny County, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and General Counsel to the Governor of Pennsylvania. Who are your role models when no one has gone before you? What led these attorneys to an untraveled road? How have their different

experiences informed their work? How did they deal with “road hazards?” This promises to be a fascinating conversation.

Moderator: Jessie L. Smith, Esq., Harrisburg

Panelists:

- Rep. Joanna E. McClinton, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Harrisburg
- President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas
- Denise J. Smyler, Esq., Chair, Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, Harrisburg

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Luncheon

Award Presentation

A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award

Introduction

Marisa H. Lattimore, Esq., co–chair, Conference Planning Subcommittee, Philadelphia

Recipients:

- President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas
- Judge Charles Hayden, Philadelphia Municipal Court

Keynote Address

Jacqueline Romero, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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REGISTRATION FEES

Two-day Registration, Thursday and Friday – includes 9 CLE credits & all meal functions

PBA members: \$325 Non-PBA members: \$425 Non-Attorneys: \$225

Thursday-only Registration – includes 6 CLE credits, continental breakfast, luncheon & reception

PBA members: \$215 Non-PBA members: \$275 Non-Attorneys: \$140

Friday-only Registration – includes 3 CLE credits, continental breakfast & keynote luncheon

PBA members: \$130 Non-PBA members: \$190 Non-Attorneys: \$ 90

Two-day Law Student Registration, Thursday and Friday – includes educational sessions & all meal functions - \$30

One-day Law Student Registration, Thursday or Friday (circle one) – includes educational sessions & meal functions for that day - \$20

Reception-only, Thursday

PBA members: \$65 Non-PBA members: \$75 Non-Attorneys: \$65

Luncheon-only, Friday

PBA members: \$55 Non-PBA members: \$65 Non-Attorneys: \$55

[REGISTER ONLINE HERE](#)

Link needed.

Registration Deadline: Friday, Sept. 22

Walk-in registrations will be accepted if space is available. Please call 800-932-0311, ext 2276 or 2245, to be sure.

Cancellation Policy:

Written cancellations must be received before the close of business on Sept. 22. Upon receipt, a refund will be issued, minus \$75 administrative fee. After Sept. 22, no refunds will be issued.

Hotel Accomodations

Hotel room reservations are on your own.



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