



MARYLAND CAREY LAW

GIBSON-BANKS CENTER FOR RACE AND THE LAW

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS FALL 2025

Two years ago, on September 24, 2023, the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law launched the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law. Named after Professors Emeriti Larry S. Gibson and Taunya Lovell Banks, the first Black man and woman to become tenured professors at the law school, the Center works in collaboration with community members, nonprofit organizations, and government officials to examine and address persistent racial inequalities in institutions and systems at the local, state, and federal levels. Through education and engagement, advocacy, and research, the Center clarifies and protects the civil rights of racially marginalized groups in the following focus areas: criminal and youth legal systems, economic justice, employment, education, housing, health, technology, transportation, voting, and emerging issues.

Our work to advance racial equality and justice comes in a moment when efforts are underway at the federal level to limit civil rights protections through executive orders, lawsuits, and various demands. In addition to confronting these federal efforts, the Center's growing staff of student and community fellows have spent the past two years working to maintain and expand laws and policies at the local and state levels to ensure Marylanders have equal access to opportunities without regard to race.

This report summarizes some of the Center's activities and accomplishments over the past two years. As we reflect on the Center's work, we are thankful to have the support of community partners and generous and engaged donors and alumni. We welcome your continued support as we boldly stand up for racial equality and justice.

Sincerely,



Monique Dixon '96
Inaugural Executive Director



Professor Michael Pinard
*The Honorable William H. Murphy, Jr. Faculty Director;
Francis & Harriet Iglehart Professor of Law;
Director of the Clinical Law Program*

MEET THE CENTER'S FELLOWS AND STAFF

Deeply connected to the Gibson-Banks Center's identity and work is our commitment to training and mobilizing an outstanding team of student and community fellows and staff who not only further the Center's work, but also gain the skills and networks to continue the work throughout their careers.



ERIKA LEWIS '26

*2025-2026 Ereik L. Barron Student Fellow**

Erika is a third-year law student who began her service at the Center during the spring 2025 semester as a student fellow. She has returned this academic year and serves as the Ereik L. Barron Student Fellow. Erika also serves as the notes & comments editor of the *Maryland Law Review*, and is a peer advisor and a member of BLSA. This past summer, Erika worked as a summer associate at Miles & Stockbridge in Baltimore.



RASHAD HAWKINS

Community Fellow

Rashad serves as a community fellow at the Center where he coordinates the Youth Justice Project, which seeks to advance laws, policies, and programs that will reduce the number of young people involved in the youth and adult criminal legal systems. Rashad conducts community outreach to young adults who have had contact with the youth or adult criminal legal system to build awareness, interest, and participation in the project. Rashad is a community organizer and founder of BMore Awesome Inc.



TERESA CHRISTIAN

Paralegal

Teresa provides paralegal services and programmatic support to the Center. Her interest focuses on health equity, which addresses the systemic barriers that create disparities in health outcomes for underserved populations. Common identified barriers include poverty, discrimination, lack of quality education and jobs, poor transportation, unsafe environments, and inadequate health insurance coverage and healthcare.

FORMER STUDENT FELLOWS

BRANDON MILLER '25

*Inaugural Ereik L. Barron Fellow, 2023-2025**

As the inaugural Ereik L. Barron Fellow, Brandon conducted policy and legal research, and contributed richly to the Center's advocacy, education, and engagement activities. Highlights of Brandon's work include his written and oral testimony presented to the Maryland General Assembly during the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions, advocating for bills related to the Center's work, including our criminal legal system reform work. Brandon graduated *magna cum laude* in May 2025, was inducted into the Order of the Coif, and received the Elizabeth Maxwell Carroll Chesnut Prize in recognition for his tremendous accomplishments as a law student. Brandon has launched his career as a criminal appeals attorney with the Legal Aid Society of New York City.



QUIANA SNOWDEN '26

2025 Summer Research Fellow

Quiana served as the Center's 2025 Summer Research Fellow. Quiana is a highly engaged third-year law student. She served as vice president of BLSA, and is a member of the BLSA Alternative Dispute Resolution Team. She is also the notes & comments editor for the *Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class*. In addition to her third-year classes, Quiana serves as a student attorney in the law school's Decarceration Initiative Clinic, and she is a Rose Zetzer Fellow through the Women, Leadership & Equality Program at Maryland Carey Law.



**The Honorable Ereik L. Barron & Family Fellowship Endowment was generously established in 2021 to provide endowed support for fellowships for students who show a commitment to and demonstrated interest in addressing historical and systemic racial inequality and injustice.*



Pictured left to right: Executive Director Monique Dixon '96, the Hon. Ereik L. Barron, Brandon Miller '25, and Professor Michael Pinard celebrate Brandon's graduation from Maryland Carey Law in May 2025.

MEET THE CENTER'S AFFILIATED FACULTY

The Center's affiliated faculty comprise legal scholars whose teaching, research, and advocacy amplify and advance the Center's mission. They are experts in a variety of subject areas, including law and technology, constitutional law, public international law, international human rights, global public health, education law, antidiscrimination law, criminal law, critical race theory, youth law, civil rights, and post-conflict and transitional justice.



Chaz Arnett

*Jacob A. France
Professor of Law*



Leigh Goodmark

*Associate Dean for Research
and Faculty Development and
Marjorie Cook Professor of Law*



Guha Krishnamurthi

Professor of Law



Christopher Mathis

Assistant Professor of Law



Matiangai Sirleaf

Nathan Patz Professor of Law



Omavi Shukur

Assistant Professor of Law



Tiffany Yang

Assistant Professor of Law

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CENTER'S WORK (2023-2025)

Race and the Criminal and Youth Legal Systems

➤ Addressing racial disparities in Maryland's incarcerated populations and federal death row

In the past decade, Maryland's criminal and youth legal systems have seen a steady decline in arrests, incarceration, and community supervision, yet racial disparities persist. Black Marylanders comprise only 30% of the state's population and yet 51% of arrests, 59% of the jail population, and 71% of the prison and parole populations.

In October 2023, the Gibson-Banks Center accepted an invitation to become a member organization of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative (MEJC), a joint initiative between the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and the Maryland Office of the Public Defender focused on examining and addressing mass incarceration of Black people and other racially marginalized groups in Maryland's prisons and jails. In September 2024, the Center hosted an anchor event that featured Attorney General Anthony Brown and Public Defender Natasha Dartigue, who discussed the work of MEJC with the Maryland Carey Law community.



Pictured from left to right: Erek L. Barron Fellow Brandon Miller '25; Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown; Maryland Public Defender Natasha Dartigue; Executive Director Monique Dixon '96; and Professor Michael Pinard at the September 2024 Maryland Carey Law anchor event Addressing Mass Incarceration in Maryland.

The work of MEJC resulted in a report released in March 2025, [*Breaking the 71%: A Path Toward Racial Equity in the Criminal Legal System*](#). The report made 18 policy recommendations on how to reduce racial disparities in Maryland's criminal and youth legal systems from arrests to reentry. The Gibson-Banks Center issued a dissent to one of the recommendations to limit the automatic charging of children in adult criminal court, because research shows that the practice is ineffective and therefore should be eliminated altogether.

During the 2025 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Center supported several bills that would advance the recommendations in the report, including the [Second Look Act](#), which allows certain individuals who have been incarcerated for at least 20 years in Maryland prison to file a court motion seeking to reduce their sentences. The Maryland General Assembly passed the bill and Maryland's Governor [signed](#) it into law.

In December 2024, the Center joined the ACLU, Amnesty International, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., Southern Poverty Law Center, and more than 100 civil liberties, civil rights, faith-based, and academic organizations in sending [a letter](#) to then President Joseph Biden urging him to commute the sentences of individuals on federal death row. The letter noted that of the 40 individuals on federal death row, Black people are disproportionately represented when compared to their percentage in the general population. It explained how the death penalty in the United States is rooted in racial discrimination. President Biden subsequently [commuted the sentences](#) of 37 individuals on federal death row from execution to life without the possibility of parole.



Photo Credit: David McNew, Getty Images News

➤ **Advancing Racial Equality and Justice in Baltimore's Public Safety and Health System**



Photo Credit: Win McNamee/Getty Images News

In April 2025, the Center and the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs co-sponsored an event commemorating the 10th anniversary of the police-involved death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old Black man who sustained fatal injuries throughout the process of his arrest. Gray's death sparked weeks of unrest in Baltimore; a U.S. Department of Justice investigative report, which found that the Baltimore Police Department engaged in a pattern of unconstitutional and racially discriminatory policing and led to a federal court consent decree; and ongoing advocacy for police accountability.

The event, Still Rising 10 Years After Freddie Gray's Death, included conversations with community advocates, clergy, and attorneys who worked to hear and respond to Baltimore residents' demand for fair and accountable policing. William H. "Billy" Murphy, Jr. '69, who served as the attorney for Freddie Gray's family, was a featured speaker. Panels of community activists and advocates discussed state and local advocacy for fair and accountable policing in Baltimore, lessons learned, and the work ahead.



Top left (left to right): Professor Michael Pinard and the Honorable William H. Murphy, Jr. '69 | Top right: Executive Director Monique Dixon '96 | Lower left (left to right): Erika Lewis '26 and Brandon Miller '25 | Lower right: Rev. S. Todd Yeary '19, senior pastor, Douglas Memorial Community Church, Baltimore, MD

August 26, 2025

The Honorable Zeke Cohen
Baltimore City Council President
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Members of the Committee of the Whole
Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: **Written Comments for the August 27, 2025 Baltimore City Council Committee of the Whole Public Hearing on Baltimore City's Crisis Response**

Dear President Cohen and Members of the Committee of the Whole:

On behalf of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law (Gibson-Banks Center or Center) at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law,¹ we appreciate the opportunity to submit written comments on Baltimore City's behavioral health² crisis response system (crisis response system) for the August 27, 2025 Baltimore City Council Committee of the Whole Public Legislative Oversight Hearing on the topic. We applaud you for creating a public forum for Baltimore residents to provide feedback on the city's crisis response system in the wake of the June 2025 police-involved in-custody death of Dontae Melton, Jr., a 31-year-old Black man,³ and the police fatal shooting of Pytorcarcha Brooks, a Black 70-year-old senior citizen.⁴ Both Mr. Melton and Ms. Brooks reportedly were experiencing behavioral health crises during their interactions with police.⁵ Against this backdrop, we urge Baltimore city officials to invest more resources in crisis response systems that do not involve police and take steps to

In August 2025, the Center submitted [a letter](#) to the Baltimore City Council for its public oversight hearing about the city's behavioral health crisis response systems. The hearing occurred in the wake of the June 2025 police-involved in-custody death of Dontae Melton, Jr., a 31-year-old Black man, and the police fatal shooting of Pytorcarcha Brooks, a Black 70-year-old senior citizen. Both Mr. Melton and Ms. Brooks reportedly were experiencing behavioral health crises during their interactions with police. In our letter, we urged Baltimore officials to invest more resources in crisis response systems that do not involve police and take steps to ensure that Baltimore residents in crisis who need behavioral health services have equal access to these services without regard to race.

Race and Emerging Issues

➤ Race, Gender, and the Federal Judiciary

In February 2025, the Center co-hosted a conversation with the Honorable Nancy G. Abudu of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and the Honorable Andre Davis '78, Maryland Carey Law's Distinguished Jurist-in-Residence. Judge Abudu is an experienced civil rights attorney who joined the Court in May 2023 as the first Black woman to serve as a judge in the Eleventh Circuit. During their conversation, the two jurists shared with students their experience with writing decisions and collaborating with fellow judges.



Left (left to right): Executive Director Monique Dixon '96; Judge Nancy Abudu; Erika Lewis '26, Erik L. Barron Student Fellow | Right (left to right): Executive Director Monique Dixon '96; Judge Andre Davis '78, Judge Nancy Abudu; Judge Alexander Williams, Jr.; Professor Paula L. Monopoli, Distinguished University Professor, Sol & Caryln Hubert Professor of Law, and founding director of the Women, Leadership & Equality Program at Maryland Carey Law

➤ Protecting birthright citizenship

In April 2025, the Center joined 80+ Asian American organizations and law centers in submitting an [amicus brief](#) to the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in opposition to the federal administration's executive order seeking to limit birthright citizenship, a right enshrined in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Also, in August 2025, Prof. Michael Pinard and Director Monique Dixon were featured on WPFW Pacifica's *What's At Stake* podcast hosted by Judge Robert Gordon '82, Adjunct Law Professor at Maryland Carey Law. We discussed, among other things, the amicus brief the Center joined challenging the federal administration's birthright citizenship executive order. You may listen to the podcast here <https://bit.ly/4mq84rb>.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

STATE OF WASHINGTON, ET AL.,

Plaintiffs-Appellees,

v.

DONALD TRUMP, ET AL.,

Defendants-Appellants.

On Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Western District of Washington
Hon. John C. Coughenour, No. 2:25-cv-00127

**BRIEF OF AMICUS CURIAE THE FRED T. KOREMATSU CENTER FOR
LAW AND EQUALITY, THE ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND
EDUCATION FUND, THE CENTER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND
CRITICAL JUSTICE, AND 82 ADDITIONAL NONPROFIT AND
GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS AND RACE AND LAW CENTERS IN
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS-APPELLEES**

Robert S. Chang
Susan McMahon

Jonathan D. Hacker
Counsel of Record

➤ Race and national security

In November 2023, the Center co-hosted a conference commemorating the release of the book, *Race and National Security*, edited by Matiangai Sirleaf, Nathan Patz Professor of Law at Maryland Carey Law and affiliated faculty of the Gibson-Banks Center. The book surfaces, excavates, analyzes, and amplifies race in the contexts of national security and foreign relations law.

“The Gibson-Banks Center is a vital addition to our law school, our profession, and our community. In just two years, the depth and breadth of the Center’s work have been remarkable. Most importantly, the Center contributes to our deeply held mission of educating and preparing the next generation of lawyers and leaders to advance justice and address the most pressing issues of our times.”

*Renée Hutchins Laurent
Dean and Professor of Law*



THANK YOU

The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law is grateful to have received a generous and transformational gift from the Honorable William H. Murphy, Jr. '69, to support the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law. Since its launch in 2023, over one hundred alumni and other individuals have also given generously in support of the Center's critical mission and work. We thank you for your commitment.

CONTACT US

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Seated (left to right): Emeritus Professor Larry S. Gibson; Emeritus Professor Taunya Lovell Banks | Standing (left to right): Executive Director Monique Dixon '96; Dean Renée Hutchins Laurent; Professor Michael Pinard

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT
THE GIBSON-BANKS CENTER

