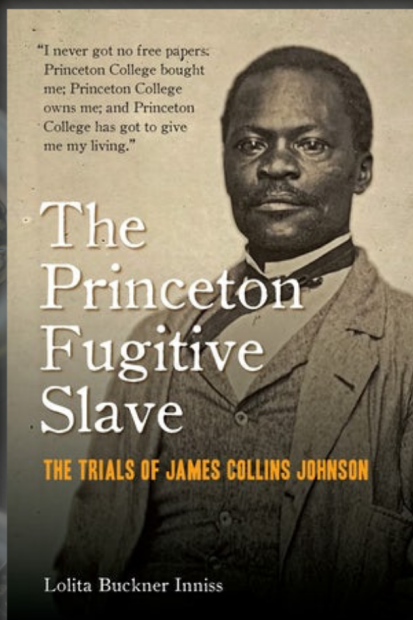


# THE 30TH ANNUAL IRA C. ROTHGERBER CONFERENCE

April 8, 2022 | 9:00am - 4:30 pm | University of Colorado Law School | Boulder, CO

## LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD: Exploring the Legacy of U.S. Slavery

Featuring *The Princeton Fugitive Slave: The Trials of James Collins Johnson* Written by Colorado Law Dean Lolita Buckner Inniss



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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO LAW SCHOOL

CU Boulder's Center for African  
& African American Studies  
(CAAAS)

# Schedule

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- 9:00 - 9:10am

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**Opening Remarks**  
*Professor Suzette Malveaux*
- 9:10 - 9:45am

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**Book Chat**  
*Dean Lolita Buckner Inniss & Professor Hilary Green*
- 9:45 - 9:55am

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**Break**
- 9:55 - 11:25am

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**Roundtable: The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre  
The Quest for Accountability**  
*Moderator: Professor Suzette Malveaux*  
*Panelists: Professor Eric Miller, Professor Emerita Adjoa Ayietoro, Reverend Robert Turner, Damario Solomon-Simmons, Esq.*
- 11:25 - 11:30am

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**Break**
- 11:30 - 12:30pm

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**Panel 1: Institutional Complicity in US Slavery  
The Role of the Judiciary and Higher Education**  
*Moderator: Erin Vanek*  
*Panelists: Professor Michael Higginbotham, Professor Brian Mitchell, Professor Christopher Mathis*
- 12:30 - 1:30pm

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**Lunch Break**  
*Food Provided*
- 1:30 - 3:00pm

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**Panel 2: Vestiges of Slavery in the Criminal  
Justice System**  
*Moderator: Professor Ben Levin*  
*Panelists: Professor Jack Chin, Professor Sunita Patel, Professor Monica Bell, Robert Saleem Holbrook*
- 3:00 - 3:10pm

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**Break**
- 3:10 - 4:10pm

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**Panel 3: How Slavery Impacts Property and Land  
Ownership in Colorado Today**  
*Moderator: Sam McCarthy*  
*Panelists: Professor Tom Romero, Councilwoman Candi CdeBaca, Rita R. Lewis*
- 4:10pm

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**Closing Remarks**  
*Professor Suzette Malveaux and Professor Reiland Rabaka*

# Speaker Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## **Lolita Buckner Inniss**

*Dean | University of Colorado Law School*



Lolita Buckner Inniss is the dean of the University of Colorado Law School, and Provost's Professor of Law. Before coming to Colorado Law she served as Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and a Professor of Law at SMU Dedman School of Law. At SMU she was a University Distinguished Professor, an honor reserved for SMU faculty members who demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement. She was also a Robert G. Storey Distinguished Faculty Fellow. Dean Inniss previously held the Hamilton College Elihu Root Peace Fund Visiting Professorship in Women's Studies, a distinguished visiting chair, and was also a fellow of the New York University-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Memory Project in Paris, France.

A highly regarded scholar with a prominent national and international voice in her fields, Dean Inniss is an elected member of the American Law Institute, and is the United States Special Rapporteur to the International Academy of Comparative Law on the topic of contemporary slavery. The Center for Compassionate Leadership named her book "The Princeton Fugitive Slave: The Trials of James Collins Johnson" (Fordham University Press, 2020) as one of five books white leaders should read on systemic racism. She is also the co-author of a book in progress, "Talking About Black Lives Matter and #MeToo" (with Bridget Crawford) (University of California Press, 2023). She has in addition published scores of journal articles, essays, book chapters and blog articles in publications in the United States and beyond. Dean Inniss has taught across the law school curriculum, including property law, comparative racism and the law, real estate transactions, and immigration clinical practice.

# Speaker Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## **Suzette Malveaux**

*Moses Lasky Professor & Director of the  
Byron R. White Center | University of Colorado  
Law School*



Suzette Malveaux is a member of the American Law Institute and Chair of the American Association of Law Schools Civil Procedure Section. She has taught in the areas of Civil Procedure, Complex Litigation, Employment Discrimination, Civil Rights, and Constitutional Law for almost two decades. Her scholarship explores the intersection of civil rights and civil procedure, and access to justice issues. She is co-editor of *A Guide to Civil Procedure; Integrating Critical Legal Perspectives* (NYU Press, forthcoming 2022) and co-author of *Class Actions and Other Multi-Party Litigation; Cases and Materials* (West, 2006, 2012).

Prior to academia, Malveaux was a class action specialist and civil rights attorney. For six years, Malveaux served as pro bono counsel for the plaintiffs in *Alexander v. State of Oklahoma*, a constitutional lawsuit filed against Tulsa by victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. As co-counsel, she represented the victims before the U.S. federal courts, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Organization of American States) and the U.S. House of Representatives. Malveaux also represented over 1.5 million women alleging gender discrimination against Wal-Mart, the largest employment discrimination case to date.

Professor Malveaux graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University. She earned her J.D. from NYU School of Law, where she was a Root-Tilden Scholar, Associate Editor of the Law Review and Center for International Law Fellow.

# Speaker Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Reiland Rabaka

*Professor of African, African American, and Caribbean Studies & Director of the Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS) | University of Colorado Boulder*



Reiland Rabaka is Professor of African, African American, and Caribbean Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Founding Director of the Center for African & African American Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is also a Research Fellow in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Rabaka has published sixteen books and more than seventy-five scholarly articles, book chapters, and essays. Rabaka has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Science Foundation, the National Museum of African American History & Culture, the National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian Institution, the Eugene M. Kayden Book Award, the Cheikh Anta Diop Book Award, and the National Council for Black Studies' Distinguished Career Award.

He has conducted archival research and lectured extensively both nationally and internationally, and he has been the recipient of several community service citations, distinguished teaching awards, and research fellowships. His cultural criticism, social commentary, and political analysis has been featured in print, radio, television, and online media venues such as NPR, PBS, BBC, CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, MTV, BET, VH1, The Guardian, and USA Today, among others.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## Adjoa Aiyetoro

*Professor Emerita of Law |*

*William H. Bowen School of Law*



Adjoa A. Aiyetoro is Professor of Law Emerita at the University of Arkansas Little Rock in the William H. Bowen School of Law. She is an activist attorney with extensive experience working domestically and internationally to obtain remedies for historic and present day wrongs to people of color, women, prisoners and other oppressed groups. She is a lifetime member of the National Conference of Black Lawyers and has served as co-chairperson of its Board and as its national director. Aiyetoro, as co-chair of NCBL, was a founding member of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA) and served as its first woman co-chair. NCBL was one of the three founding organizations of NCOBRA, including the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) and the New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO). She also served as chair of N'COBRA's Legal Strategies Commission and as a legal consultant to the organization. Aiyetoro represented N'COBRA and NCBL on the Reparations Coordinating Committee, co-chaired by Charles Ogletree and Randall Robinson, and served as co-counsel on the landmark reparations case filed by the Committee seeking reparations for the survivors and their descendants of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre - *Alexander v. State of Oklahoma*. Currently, she serves on a legal team representing descendants of enslaved Africans sold in 1838 by the Society of Jesus to save Georgetown University from bankruptcy - Legacy of the GU272 Alliance.

Aiyetoro represented the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2000-2001, at the World Conference Against Racism, serving as a leader of the African and African Descendants Caucus. She also represented WILPF at the Hague Appeal for Peace in 1997. In 1995 she coordinated the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law's delegation to the United Nations' Conference on Women in Beijing and also represented the organization at the 2000 Beijing Plus 5.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## Monica Bell

*Professor of Law | Yale Law School*



Monica Bell is a Professor of Law at Yale Law School and an Associate Professor of Sociology at Yale University. Her areas of expertise include criminal justice, welfare law, housing, race and the law, qualitative research methods, and law and sociology. Some of her recent work has been published in the *Yale Law Journal*, *Law & Society Review*, *Social Service Review*, and the *Annual Review of Law & Social Science*. She has also published work in popular outlets such as the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and the *Washington Post*.

Before joining the Yale Law School faculty, Bell was a Climenko Fellow & Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School. She previously served as a Liman Fellow at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, where she worked on matters related to cash assistance to families and disabled adults, child support, unemployment insurance, homeless services, healthcare, and other legal and policy issues affecting low-income women and families. Bell clerked for the Honorable Cameron McGowan Currie of the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina. A first-generation college graduate from South Carolina's Upcountry, Bell holds degrees from Furman University (Truman Scholar), University College Dublin (Mitchell Scholar), Yale Law School, and Harvard University.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## Candi CdeBaca

*Councilwoman | Denver District 9*



Candi CdeBaca is a proud fifth-generation native of northeast Denver, Colorado, and a graduate of Manual High School and the University of Denver. She lives in the same home in the Swansea neighborhood that her great-grandmother lived in nearly 80 years ago. Raised by a single mother and grandparents, Candi understands the importance of tight-knit communities and stepping up for neighbors in need.

Candi is also the first LGBTQ Latina and first Democratic Socialist to serve on Denver City Council. She has proven that Latinas whose “radical” politics are rooted in their lived experience can still fight for and win a seat at the table, even when a corrupt political system stacks the odds against them.

Candi is a fearless leader, prominent voice, and community champion in Denver on social justice issues. As a member of City Council, Candi successfully led the charge to force the city of Denver to divest from halfway houses run by private prison companies that terrorize and brutalize immigrants across the country. She secured an additional \$1 million for housing and rental supports for people experiencing homelessness in Denver. And she has continued to be a fierce advocate against the criminalization of poverty, environmental racism, and the displacement of Denver’s Black and brown communities. Looking forward, she will continue to fight for community every day, and infuse city government with policy expertise, a lens for justice, and ancestral wisdom.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## **Gabriel (Jack) Chin**

*Professor of Law | UC Davis School of Law*



Jack Chin is Edward L. Barrett Jr. Chair and Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Law at UC Davis School of Law. Regularly appearing on lists of the most cited legal scholars, he writes about criminal procedure, immigration, and Asian Pacific American legal history. His Cornell Law Review article "Effective Assistance of Counsel and the Consequences of Guilty Pleas," co-authored with a student, was cited in *Padilla v. Kentucky*, 130 S. Ct. 1473 (2010), and *Chaidez v. United States*, 133 S. Ct. 1103 (2013). Justice Sotomayor cited his University of Pennsylvania Law Review article "The New Civil Death" in her dissent in *Utah v. Streiff*, 136 S. Ct. 2056 (2016).

His legal work with students includes persuading the Ohio legislature to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment; Kansas, New Mexico, and Wyoming to repeal anti-Asian alien land laws, and the California Supreme Court to posthumously admit an attorney to the bar after he was excluded because of his race (*In re Chang*, 334 P.3d 288 (Cal. 2015)). A graduate of Wesleyan and the Michigan and Yale Law schools, before entering teaching he clerked for U.S. District Judge Richard P. Matsch in Denver and practiced with the Legal Aid Society of New York, and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. He currently serves pro bono as a Deputy County Attorney in Tucson, Arizona where he works on innocence and excessive sentence cases with UC Davis clinic students.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Hilary Green

*Associate Professor of History | University of Alabama*



Hilary N. Green is an Associate Professor in the Department of Gender and Race Studies at the University of Alabama. She earned her B.A. in History with minors in Africana Studies and Pre-Healing Arts, M.A. in History from Tufts University and her Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She is the author of *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Fordham University Press, 2016) as well as articles, book chapters and other scholarly publications. In 2015, she also created the Hallowed Grounds Project for exploring the history of slavery, the lives of enslaved campus laborers and their legacy at the University of Alabama through an alternate campus tour, publications, public lectures and courses.

In addition to several short publications, she is currently at work on a second book manuscript. Tentatively titled, "Unforgettable Sacrifice," this book examines how everyday African Americans remembered and commemorated the Civil War from 1863 to the present. She is also co-editing with Andrew L. Slap an edited volume of essays titled "The Civil War and the Summer of 2020: Race, Violence, Resistance and Memory in the United States" (under review Fordham University Press).

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## Michael Higginbotham

***Professor of Law | University of Baltimore  
School of Law***



Higginbotham is the author of "Race Law" published by Carolina Academic Press in 2001. Now in its fifth edition, the book is widely used in colleges and law schools throughout the United States. His latest book, "Ghosts of Jim Crow," was published by NYU Press in 2013.

Higginbotham has published numerous articles in journals including the Yale Law and Policy Review, the Harvard Black Letter Law Journal, and the New York University Law Review. He has published numerous editorials in newspapers including the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and the Baltimore Sun.

Before joining the University of Baltimore in 1988, Higginbotham was a law clerk to United States Court of Appeals Judge Cecil Poole, an associate with Davis Polk, and a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania.

Higginbotham graduated from Beverly Hills High School in 1975, received a Bachelor of Arts degree magna cum laude from Brown University in 1979, a Juris Doctor degree from Yale University in 1982, and a Master of Laws degree with honors from Cambridge University in 1985 where he was a Rotary Scholar.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## Robert Saleem Holbrook

***Executive Director | Abolition Law Center,  
Penn Law***



Robert Saleem Holbrook is the Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center, a law project dedicated to ending race and class based discrimination in the criminal justice system and all forms of state violence.

Prior to being named Executive Director of ALC, he was its Director of Community Organizing responsible for expanding ALC into Philadelphia. He also led ALC's campaigns against Death By Incarceration (Life Without Parole), Solitary Confinement, and State Violence. He has worked with the Center for Constitutional Rights to end Death By Incarceration sentences in the United States and the National Unlock The Box Campaign to End Solitary Confinement.

He is a co-founder of the Human Rights Coalition, an organization with chapters in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh that is composed of family members of prisoners. HRC advocates on behalf of the civil and human rights of prisoners. He is also a co-founder of the Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania, an advocacy group fighting to end Life without Parole Sentences. He sits on the advisory boards of the Amistad Law Project and Youth Arts and Empowerment Project.

While incarcerated, Saleem wrote extensively on prison abuse, social injustice, state violence, and juveniles charged and sentenced as adults. His writings were featured in Truthout, The Appeal, San Francisco Bay View, and Solitary Watch. He was released from prison in 2018 after spending over two decades incarcerated for an offense he was convicted of as a child offender.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Rita R. Lewis

***Attorney | Law Offices of Rita R. Lewis  
Former Executive Director | Denver Metro Fair  
Housing Center***



Rita Lewis is a proud Denver native, 3rd generation member of New Hope Baptist Church, a graduate of George Washington High School, Spelman College (Atlanta, GA), the University of Colorado Law School, and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her professional time is spent as an attorney, a small business owner, and a volunteer in the community. Ms. Lewis is the Former President of the Denver Branch of the NAACP, former Vice President and Board Member of the Denver Metro Fair Housing Center (DMFHC), former General Counsel, and most recently the former Executive Director of Denver Metro Fair Housing Center (DMFHC). Commissioner Lewis was recognized as an Honoree of the Denver Urban Spectrum's (DUS) "2014 African Americans Who Make A Difference," as well as one of the 2014 Honorees of the Colorado Black Women For Political Action's (CBWPA) 3rd Annual "Women Making History." Additionally, she was a featured panelist for the 2014 El Paso County Bar Association's Law Day Luncheon (American Democracy and the Rule of Law: Why Every Vote Counts), as well as a panelist for History Colorado's 2014 discussion on Race, Economics and Healthcare which focused on health, housing and social justice.

Commissioner Lewis was appointed by former Governor John Hickenlooper in 2015 to serve a four-year term on the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. In late 2016, she was selected by the Colorado Democrats and the El Paso County Democrats as an attorney to work in Colorado Springs as an Election Watcher for the Presidential Election. In 2018, Commissioner Lewis was recognized for her work in the community by the Colorado Black Roundtable during the "Gaining Ground in the Black Community Summit Weekend." Most recently, Commissioner Lewis won the 2022 African Chamber of Commerce "Women Owned Business" Award (RLImmigration and the Law Firm of Rita R. Lewis).

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Christopher Mathis

*Visiting Assistant Professor of Law | University of Iowa College of Law*



Dr. Christopher L. Mathis is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa College of Law. His scholarship explores critical race theory, access and equity within higher education, and the philosophical assumptions within legal education. More pointedly, he studies the framework and incentive structures within higher education's environments to identify factors contributing to inequality in our nation's colleges and universities. His research on these topics spans several legal topics, including constitutional and tort law, education law and policy, and ethics. He primarily uses an empirical design incorporating critical lenses, statistical analysis, and qualitative methodologies. The Washington and Lee Law Review, Rutgers University Law Review, Journal of College Student Development, Education Sciences, and Journal of Ethnicity and Education are some journals in which he has published. The American Bar Foundation, Southern Education Foundation, AccessLex, Southern Educational Board, and numerous other funding sources have awarded him research grants.

Before joining the Iowa Law faculty in fall 2021, Professor Mathis was an American Bar Foundation/AccessLex Institute Fellow in Chicago, IL, where he remains affiliated with the American Bar Foundation, one of the world's leading research studies institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law.

He holds a freshly minted Ph.D. from the University of Virginia School of Education with a focus on higher education. He also received his B.S. in Mathematics Education from Oakwood University and his J.D. from the University of South Carolina.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*



## **Eric Miller**

***Professor of Law | Loyola Law School***

Eric J. Miller is a professor and Leo J. O'Brien Fellow at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, where he teaches and writes in the areas of legal theory, reparations, and policing.



Professor Miller is an internationally recognized expert on reparations for Black people in the United States. He has testified before the House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Continuing Injustice: The Centennial of the Tulsa-Greenwood Race Massacre in 2021; on HR40 and the Path to Restorative Justice in 2019; and on the Legacy of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in America in 2007. In addition, he has provided testimony before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on Reparation for Slavery and Other Forms of Structural Racial Discrimination in the United States, Washington, D.C., September 24, 2019.

Professor Miller was a member of the Reparations Coordinating Committee, and took a leading role in drafting the complaint in the pathbreaking federal reparations lawsuit on behalf of the survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, *Alexander v. State of Oklahoma*. He is currently a member of Lawyers for Justice for Greenwood, and again took a lead role in drafting and arguing a reparations public nuisance lawsuit, *Randle v. City of Tulsa*.

Professor Miller received an LL.B. from the University of Edinburgh, and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School, where he was also a Charles Hamilton Houston Fellow. He clerked for the Hon. Myron H. Thompson in the Middle District of Alabama and the Hon. Stephen Reinhardt of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► **Brian Mitchell**

**Professor of History | *University of Arkansas at Little Rock***



Brian Keith Mitchell is a native of New Orleans and a resident of North Little Rock, Arkansas, Mitchell identifies himself as a "Transplanted New Orleanian" who is forever thankful to the State of Arkansas for welcoming him during the chaotic aftermath of the hurricane. Mitchell is currently an Associate Professor of History at the University of Arkansas Little Rock and an Associate Faculty Member at the Anderson Institute on Race and Ethnicity.

A graduate of the University of New Orleans, Mitchell is the winner of the 2021 Phyllis Wheatley Award for Monumental: Oscar Dunn and his Radical Fight in Reconstruction Louisiana and was Louisiana's selection for the Library of Congress' "Great Reads from Great Places."

He is the author of numerous papers, book chapters, and books, and is nationally recognized for his public history and digital humanities projects which often explore difficult and forgotten histories. His research has been covered by CNN, Atlas Obscura, the New York Post, the Guardian, National Public Radio, New York Times, and the Associated Press.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► **Sunita Patel**

***Assistant Professor of Law | UCLA Law School***

Sunita Patel is an Assistant Professor of Law and the founding Faculty Director of the UCLA Veterans Legal Clinic. Her current scholarship examines how policing embeds itself into healthcare and other areas of care work. More generally, her research and teaching interests lie in police litigation, social movements, and structural inequality. Her 2020 article "Jumping Hurdles to Sue Police," received the AALS Civil Rights Section Junior Scholar award. She received the UCLA Community and Service Praxis Award—a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion honor for faculty with innovative community approaches to service, teaching, and scholarship. She serves as a core faculty member for the Critical Race Studies and Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy, and an affiliated faculty member of the UCLA Law School Promise Institute for Human Rights and the Criminal Justice Program.



Prior to joining UCLA, Professor Patel held clinical teaching positions at American University and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. An experienced litigator, she has appeared before administrative bodies; state, federal, and appellate courts; and human rights tribunals. She has also provided legal counsel to numerous grassroots social justice organizations.

Professor Patel served as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Ivan L. R. Lemelle in the Eastern District of Louisiana and was previously awarded a prestigious Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowship. Professor Patel's influential cases included *Floyd v. City of New York*, a watershed successful class action lawsuit against the New York City Police Department's discriminatory stop and frisk practices and *Turkmen v. Ashcroft* (*Ziegler v. Ashcroft* before the U.S. Supreme Court) a class action Bivens suit on behalf of Muslim and Arab men challenging senior officials in the U.S. government for their roles in the post-9/11 round-ups and punitive treatment in federal prison. She has served as a board member for the U.S. Human Rights Network and Families for Freedom. Prof. Patel graduated law school magna cum laude (order of the coif).

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Tom Romero

*Associate Professor of Law | University of Denver  
Sturm College of Law*



Dr. Romero is an Associate Professor of Law and is Affiliated Faculty with the Department of History at DU. The author of numerous articles, book chapters, and essays, Dr. Romero teaches and researches in the areas of the legal history of the American West, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between race and water law, school desegregation, property, land use, and urban development and local government. He received his Ph.D and J.D. from the University of Michigan and is an undergraduate alum of the University of Denver.

Currently, Dr. Romero is revising a book manuscript on the legal history of race and law in post-World War II Denver, Colorado. He is also working on several projects related to the past history and current challenges of immigration, racial inequity, and water law and policy. Those projects include a book chapter that examines the intersection between developments in water and immigration law in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and a community based participatory research project on water access and water quality issues impacting a Latinx neighborhood in Denver, Colorado.

Dr. Romero has served as the interim Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Associate Provost of DEI Research and Curricular Initiatives for the university during the last eight years. He also directs all activities associated with DU's Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (In)Equality (IRISE).

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► **Damario Solomon-Simmons, Esq.** *Solomon Simmons Law*



"Law is his Ministry and Justice is his Passion!"  
best sums up Damario Solomon-Simmons.

Growing up in a single-mom household, Damario struggled for years to "find himself" as a Black man in America. He graduated at the bottom of his high school class and was a college dropout before becoming a University of Oklahoma football letterman, graduating with honors with his Bachelor's Degree in African & African-American Studies, Masters in Adult & Higher Education, and becoming University of Oklahoma's College of Law's 1st African-American recipient of the Joel Jankowsky Award for most outstanding law graduate.

He has been a practicing attorney for almost 17 years and currently is the Managing Partner of Solomon Simmons Law, an Oklahoma-based law firm where he specializes in Civil and Human Rights, Wrongful Death, Employment Discrimination, Public Policy, and Sports Law.

He has a nationwide practice and has represented dozens of high-profile clients and causes, including advocating for reparations for the survivors of the 1921 Greenwood Massacre, citizenship rights of Black Creek Indians, and managing the business and legal affairs for several NFL and Olympic athletes.

Damario is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Justice For Greenwood Foundation whose mission is to obtain justice and reparations for the victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre through innovative legal strategies, public education, and advocacy. He is also co-founder of the MVP Foundation whose mission is to inform, inspire, and empower 8th grade boys from single-mom households. He has been featured on such media outlets as CNN, The View, 60 Minutes, MSNBC, ESPN, The New York Times, The Root, and Roland Martin Show.

# Panelist Bios

*Bios provided by speakers.*

## ► Reverend Robert Turner

***Former Pastor | Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church***



Rev. Dr. Robert Richard Allen Turner is a millennial who is passionate about his calling to serve this “present age” by speaking truth to power, and by following the Word as printed in Isaiah 61 to “preach good tidings to the poor...heal the brokenhearted...proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” Currently, Dr. Turner is the pastor of Empowerment Temple AME in Baltimore, MD. Previously he served as Pastor of the historic Vernon A.M.E. Church, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which has the only edifice which survived the 1921 Race Massacre on Greenwood. Additionally, Dr. Turner is now the Academic Dean for Jackson Theological Seminary, in Little Rock Arkansas. He sits on the National African American Reparations Commission, Board of Trustees for the American Village, and the Advisory Board of the Blackburn Institute of the University of Alabama and the chairperson of the board for the Turner Ministry Association 501(c)3.

Dr. Turner has been featured on CBS’s 60 Minutes and Evening News, ABC, BBC, MSNBC (Chuck Todd, and Andrea Mitchell’s show), CNN, Good Morning America (twice), NPR Here and Now (twice), Euronews, Washington Post (as an op-ed writer and interviewee), LA Times, and New York Times, along with Politico, and several other national and international publications and news outlets.

A cum laude graduate from the Honors Program at the University of Alabama, he majored in Political Science with a minor in Spanish. Rev. Turner was the first Black Chief of Staff for the Student Government Association at the University of Alabama and was honored as the 2004 University of Alabama Most Outstanding Male Student.

Rev. Turner graduated with honors from the Interdenominational Theological Center’s Turner Seminary in Atlanta, GA, with a Masters in Divinity. He later received his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

# Moderator Bios

*Bios provided by moderators.*

## Panel 1: Erin Vanek

**Student | University of Colorado Law School**

Erin Vanek is a third-year law student and a fellow for the Byron R. White Center for the Study of American Constitutional Law. She previously graduated from American University with a degree in International Relations.

Erin is the former president of OUTLaw, a two-time Rothgerber Teaching Fellow, and the current vice president of the Colorado Disability Justice Alliance. She also sits on the Colorado LGBT Bar Association Board of Directors and the Colorado Women's Bar Association Public Policy Committee. After graduation, she intends to continue her work in plaintiff-side civil rights litigation.



## Panel 2: Benjamin Levin

**Associate Professor of Law | University of Colorado Law School**

Benjamin Levin studies criminal law and policy. His current research examines criminal justice reform and its relationship to other movements for social and economic change. His scholarship has appeared or is forthcoming in journals including the Columbia Law Review, the Michigan Law Review, the Fordham Law Review, and the Boston College Law Review. His writing for general audiences has appeared in Salon, Slate, and Time.



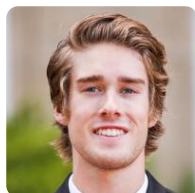
At Colorado Law, he teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure: Adjudicative Process, and Advanced Criminal Justice. In 2018, he received the Excellence in Teaching Award and the Outstanding New Faculty Member Award.

He earned his B.A., with distinction, from Yale University and his J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he received the Irving Oberman Memorial Award for law and social change and served as an Executive Editor of the Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review.

## Panel 3: Sam McCarthy

**Student | University of Colorado Law School**

Sam McCarthy is a second-year law student interested in energy and environmental law. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with degrees in journalism and political science. He is a Byron R. White Center Fellow of Constitutional Law and a student-attorney with the Natural Resources and Environmental Law Clinic. In his free time he enjoys mountain biking, snowboarding, and triathlons.



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# NOTES

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