

**THE CENTER ON  
RACE  
INEQUALITY  
& THE LAW**  
NYU SCHOOL OF LAW

The End of  
Roe v. Wade

# 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Lady in the Gold Dress, 2022  
Artist: Lamavis Comundoiwilla

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023<sup>1</sup>

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### LETTER FROM THE FACULTY DIRECTOR

December 2023

The last year has once again reminded us of the enduring nature of racism. It fosters and exacerbates inequality, and continues to serve as a powerful force with an undeniable hold over the laws, policies, practices, institutions, and systems that shape our lives. It undergirds the profound harms propagated by the criminal legal system at every stage, from arrest through re-entry. It informs the technological tools that target communities of color through prediction and surveillance in service of racial control. And it undermines economic and social justice at every turn, diminishing everything from educational opportunities to political power to the very landscape we traverse.



**VINCENT SOUTHERLAND**  
Faculty Director

In the face of these challenges, as you will see from our annual report, the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law has remained steadfast and unyielding in our commitment to advancing racial justice. Indeed, we remain hopeful about the future we are creating. We draw strength and inspiration from the communities we serve and from the resilience exemplified by those who have resisted with all their might in the face of unrelenting oppression and marginalization. The history of those struggles teaches us that while the arc of the moral universe is long, it does not bend toward justice on its own. Indeed, advancing the sort of racial justice we want requires collective action, a clarity of purpose, and the deployment of an array of tools. Our vision of racial justice demands that we eradicate the narrative of racial inferiority and superiority woven into the fabric of America by crafting, highlighting, and supporting narratives that respect racial equality and human dignity. Our vision of racial justice insists that we diagnose and eradicate harmful laws, policies, and practices—and the institutions that wield them—as we build more inclusive systems that allow all to thrive. Our vision of racial justice means that we must train and educate the next generation of changemakers. And our vision of racial justice means that we must work alongside and in support of communities as they build and deploy their power.

We are able to do all of this because of those who comprise the Center's staff. Our tremendous Executive Director, Jason Williamson, has deepened the Center's work, broadening our reach and strengthening our partnerships in service of our mission. Carolyn Schachtel, our excellent Administrative Coordinator, provides invaluable logistical support that allows us to do the work we do. Our two post-graduate fellows, Tasleemah Tolu Lawal and Ted Jack, returned to the Center last year after having served as student fellows while they were at NYU Law at the Center's inception. Tolu and Ted have been absolutely essential to our work in every way imaginable. Terrance Pitts, our incredible Senior Research & Advocacy Fellow, continues to drive our algorithmic justice work, fostering partnerships and leading efforts to eliminate the scourge of racism at the intersection

<sup>1</sup> This Annual Report covers the Center's activities from September 2022 through September 2023. Last year's Annual Report can be found [here](#).

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of technology and the criminal legal system. And the extraordinary founding Director of the Initiative for Community Power, Andrew Friedman, has provided invaluable training and support to students and advocates seeking to deploy organizing and advocacy to foster community power in service of building a more racially just society. We are all indebted to Professor Deborah Archer, who moved out of her faculty director role this year, a post she has held since early 2019. Professor Archer, through her pathbreaking scholarship, keen racial justice lens, razor sharp intellect, and invaluable contributions to our work, leaves an indelible mark on the Center and remains a partner and steadfast supporter as we continue to grow and evolve.

Beyond our staff, the Center continues to benefit from the support and collaboration of partners across NYU and beyond. The vital support of the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, and specifically Brad Karp, Valerie Radwaner, Alan Kornberg, and Danyale Price, has ensured that we have an annual cohort of law student fellows to contribute to our work. The 2022-2023 fellows, Patrick Archer, Yeabsira Asrat, Blair Childs-Biscoe, Olivia Fritz, Apurva Panse, and Eunice Park were instrumental to our research, advocacy, litigation, and public education efforts. Our 2023-2024 fellows, Zoe Chang, Maryum Elnasseh, Jennifer Fu, Fotoumata (Fatou) Kaba, Coleman Powell, and Soreti Teshome have already been as vital as their predecessors. And our 2023 summer interns, Janine Palmer, Kate Ross, and Djuna Schamus, ensured that the high quality and deep engagement of our work continued beyond the academic year.

Other partners such as the Meltzer Center on Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, the Zimroth Center on the Administration of Criminal Law, the Birnbaum Women's Leadership Center, the Guarini Center on Environmental, Energy, and Land Use Law, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, the Reiss Center on Law and Security, the Brennan Center for Justice, and a host of student organizations, law journals, and racial justice and civil rights organizations have, year after year, remained invaluable to our work. Racial justice centers at law schools nationwide have been incredible partners in struggle as new challenges arise and old challenges re-emerge. Meanwhile, stakeholders and advocacy stalwarts focused on the criminal legal system, technology, and economic and social justice spheres, have been absolutely crucial to our work.

None of what the Center does would be possible without your support—I thank you for it. I am more confident than ever that the Center is poised to meet any challenges the year ahead has in store. Our work is evidence of our capacity to change the world for the better, and leaves me with an unwavering faith that we are building the society that racial justice demands.

Sincerely,



Vincent M. Southerland

# 2. ABOUT THE CENTER ON RACE, INEQUALITY, AND THE LAW

## 2.1. STAFF, 2022-2023

### Faculty Director

Vincent M. Southerland

### Faculty Director Emeritus

Deborah N. Archer

### Executive Director

Jason D. Williamson

### Director of the Initiative for Community Power

Andrew Friedman

### Senior Research & Advocacy Fellow

Terrance Pitts

### Practitioner in Residence

Lorén Cox

### Legal Fellows

Ted Jack

Tolu Lawal

### Administrative Coordinator

Carolyn Schachtel

### 2022–2023 Paul Weiss Fellows

Patrick Archer ('24)

Yeabsira Asrat ('24)

Blair Childs-Biscoe ('24)

Olivia Fritz ('24)

Apurva Panse ('24)

Eunice Park ('24)

### 2023 Summer Legal Interns

Janine Palmer ('25)

Kate Ross ('24)

Djuna Schamus ('24)



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## 2.2. WHAT IS THE CENTER ON RACE, INEQUALITY, AND THE LAW?

Four centuries of racism and systemic discrimination have left an indelible mark on the architecture of American society. The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow remains with us, as racism continues to shape the way policies are developed and applied at all levels of government, and in the private sector. Indeed, the racism that permeates our present-day legal system has deep roots. It infiltrates our laws, institutions, and systems, resulting in enduring racial inequities throughout every domain and institution in this country—from the criminal legal system to housing, infrastructure development, technology, education, and the environment.

In this context, the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at New York University School of Law was created to confront the laws, policies, and practices that lead to the oppression and marginalization of people of color. By documenting the history of racism in America, elevating the stories of those affected by race-based inequality, supporting community-based efforts to fight back against discriminatory policies and practices, challenging unjust government action through litigation, and rigorously applying a racial lens to analyze unremitting disparities across multiple sectors of our society, we identify actionable, forward-looking solutions to address the injustices caused by racism.

The Center envisions a world in which laws, policies, and legal practices are applied fairly and equitably to all people. This will be achieved as:

- Communities of color transform racial narratives and are active contributors in the movement toward racial justice in the legal system;
- Understanding the law through the lens of race and inequality becomes a fundamental component of legal education in the United States;
- Legal practitioners, policymakers, teachers, advocates, and the public are catalyzed to combat

institutional racism and work to create a fair and just legal system; and

- Unjust laws, policies, and practices are challenged, reformed, or abolished as a result of legal action, advocacy, organizing, public education, research, and/or training.

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## 2.3. HOW WE WORK

The Center works in four key ways:

### *Driving the narrative*

The Center leverages its expertise to produce content that addresses the historical, empirical, and pervasive character of racial bias in the legal system. We conduct research on the nuances that drive racial disparities in the law—from in-depth historical reporting, to rigorous legal examinations, to complex data analysis. We publish original materials and promote the work of others in the field to enrich the discourse and present actionable solutions for system actors and policymakers to draw upon. We provide space for people and communities of color to tell their stories of oppression and resistance at the intersection of race and the law.

### *Challenging current policy and practice through research, litigation, and advocacy*

We challenge institutions and systems that perpetuate racial injustice by taking legal action. As a key part of our strategy, we use our expertise, research, and advocacy to support legal actions that provide individual redress and build momentum for scalable reform.

### *Providing education and training*

We provide education and training to actors at all levels—from law students to practicing attorneys to the general public—on the history of racism and its impact on the contemporary legal system. We infuse law school curricula with principles of racial justice, and work to ensure that legal education is informed by an understanding of the history of race and white supremacy in America. We produce original training materials to support the continuing education of

practitioners, and actively support them to become leaders who will advance racial justice. We work with a robust network of partners in universities across the country to share lessons learned, collaborate on curriculum development, and host joint meetings.

### *Convening*

We convene community and civic leaders, advocates, practicing attorneys, academics, formerly incarcerated people and their families, and the broader public to facilitate productive discourse about racial disparities in the law. We host roundtable discussions and community conversations to gather input and explore solutions that will reduce racial disparities and improve just outcomes for all. We invite experts to speak about their emerging research, and host a variety of public events, such as film screenings and moderated conversations centered on urgent issues of racial justice.

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## 2.4. THEMATIC PRIORITIES IN 2022-2023

The Center's thematic priorities fall within the following areas:

- Criminal Legal System
- Technology
- Social and Economic Justice
- Legal Education



*NYU Law students join Professor Alexis Hoag-Fordjour, Professor Aren Adjoian, and Faculty Director Vincent Southerland for a Latham & Watkins Forum, "The State of the Death Penalty: Fifty Years After Furman."*



## 3. CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

The Center’s work at the intersection of race and the criminal legal system focuses on addressing the racially biased exercise of discretion in the system and confronting the taint of racial inequality that drives injustice and unfairness at every stage of the criminal prosecution process. Our work includes advocacy to advance parole justice and to push back against the harmful use of technology in the criminal legal system; litigation to challenge the denial of competent counsel for indigent defendants across the country; and public education—through workshops, symposia, panels, speaking engagements, trainings, and other events—to bring attention to the systemic inequality that continues to permeate the system.

### 3.1. PAROLE JUSTICE

The parole system provides a particularly stubborn example of the ways in which discretion invites biased decision-making and drives mass incarceration. As a member of the Steering Committee for the [People’s Campaign for Parole Justice](#) (PCPJ), the Center works to significantly reduce the number of people in prisons across the state of New York by advocating for legislation that would prioritize the release of aging prisoners and make the parole hearing process fairer and more

humane. The Center’s Executive Director also serves on the PCPJ Commissioner Subcommittee, which focuses on identifying and advocating on behalf of candidates to fill vacant seats on the Parole Board. In particular, the Subcommittee works to encourage the governor to appoint more underrepresented community members and formerly incarcerated individuals to serve on the Board going forward.

The Center also works to diagnose and address the causes of racial disparities in parole hearing releases through rigorous data analysis and research. By unpacking the root causes of disparate outcomes that result from the current process, we aim to shape viable solutions that address racial disparities in the decision-making process and, ultimately, reduce the prison population in New York State and beyond.

Over the last year, the Center continued its work in the parole justice space, partnering with local organizations such as the [Release Aging People in Parole \(RAPP\) Campaign](#) and a host of organizations working in coalition through PCPJ to advance reforms throughout New York. Policy proposals that the Center supported include an expansion of parole eligibility for elderly incarcerated individuals (the Elder Parole bill) and a reworking of parole release standards to better account for the growth that a person may have undergone while incarcerated (the Fair and Timely Parole bill). The Center pushed

forward our legislative priorities at the New York State Capitol over the 2023 legislative session, supporting numerous PCPJ advocacy day efforts to engage parole system actors and policymakers.

In partnership with the [Parole Preparation Project](#), the Center also continued to expand the scope of our parole hearing preparation services.

Additional parole-centered work included:

- On October 27, 2022, the Center partnered with RAPP to host a [Parole Justice Teach-In](#) at NYU Law. The event spotlighted the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills and featured a screening of “The Interview,” a short documentary film focused on parole in New York state and the toll our current system takes on incarcerated people and their families. The event was moderated by TeAna Taylor of RAPP, and included panelists Steve Zeidman, New York State Assemblymember Maritza Davila Jose Saldana, Nawanna Swipe, and New York State Senator Brad Hoylman.
- The Center was a key force behind planning and executing Advocacy Days at the New York State capital in Albany to push for the passage of the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Bills throughout the 2022-2023 cycle. With the help of the Center’s strategic visioning, funding, and the provision of resources and materials, PCPJ was able to bring hundreds of people to Albany this year to center the call from formerly incarcerated New Yorkers, family members, and community organizations to create meaningful parole opportunities to bring our elders (and all others languishing in prison) home.
- In June 2023, the Center released an [addendum](#) to our [2021 Problem with Parole Report](#) which revealed that the racial disparities for parole release rates had worsened between 2021 and 2023.

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## 3.2 STATE COURTS ADVOCACY

This year, the Center became heavily involved in state and nationwide efforts to organize around and counter the right wing capture of the judiciary. In the fall of 2022, the Center joined over 120 signatories and became a key partner in the [Court New York Deserves Campaign](#) – a coalition of organizations who successfully demanded Governor Kathy Hochul nominate to the New York Court of Appeals a Chief Judge with a purposeful commitment to the needs of marginalized communities. This campaign led to the defeat of then-candidate Justice Hector LaSalle and the appointment of Chief Judge Rowan Wilson, the first Black Chief Judge of the state’s highest court.



*The Center’s teach-in on the New York Chief Judge vacancy featured New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, Alice Fontier, and Professor Noah Rosenblum, and was moderated by Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal.*

The Center’s work surrounding state courts advocacy included:

- On November 2, 2022, the Center co-hosted a teach-in on the then-vacancy for Chief Judge of New York with the Center for Community Alternatives. The teach-in was led by New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, Alice Fontier, and Noah Rosenblum, and moderated by Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal.
- On December 8, 2022, the Court New York Deserves Campaign released a press release

calling on Governor Hochul to select one of three outstanding New York Chief Judge candidates and reject three candidates with unacceptable records. Executive Director Jason Williamson was quoted in the press release, expressing the importance of selecting a Chief Judge who has demonstrated a deep commitment to confronting and correcting the ongoing injustices that continue to marginalize communities of color and which infect our legal system.

- In January 2023, Center Faculty Director Vincent Southerland and Center Executive Director Jason Williamson authored an article entitled, [“Opinion: Justice LaSalle blessed skin color discrimination in jury selection. That’s disqualifying.”](#) published in the *Queens Daily Eagle*. The article opposed Governor Hochul’s nomination of Justice LaSalle for New York Chief Judge.
- In August 2023, the Center co-hosted the State Courts Organizing Network Convening with the Center for Community Alternatives and the People’s Parity Project, pulling together organizations from across the country focused on progressive state court advocacy to share strategies and best practices.



*Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal, in conversation with Alice Fontier, Managing Director of Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem.*

### 3.3. PUBLIC DEFENSE REFORM

While prosecutors and judges may wield the most power within the criminal legal system, the Center believes that the role of public defenders is too often overlooked, despite the outsized impact they can have on the process. Indeed, the vast majority of people accused of crimes across the country cannot afford to hire a private attorney and, as a result, must rely on public defenders to represent their interests and shepherd them through what is often a harrowing and stressful experience. And yet, public defense systems throughout the United States are routinely underfunded and under-resourced, often leaving poor—and disproportionately Black and Latinx—people to fend for themselves, without the legal representation to which they are entitled under the Constitution. The Center seeks to reverse this longstanding trend by working with impacted people, communities, and system stakeholders in specific jurisdictions to address the issue through public education efforts, policy advocacy, and litigation.

#### 3.3.1 Litigation

- In May 2022, the Center joined the Oregon Justice Resource Center and the law firm of Levi Merrithew Horst PC, in filing a class action lawsuit challenging the state’s failure to provide counsel to hundreds of indigent criminal defendants across Oregon. Due to the state’s ongoing shortage of defense attorneys tasked with representing poor people accused of crimes, many accused have been left without access to a lawyer for months at a time—sometimes while sitting in pretrial detention. To make matters worse, Black and brown people caught up in the criminal system have been disproportionately impacted by the public defense crisis, just as they are by every other failing of the criminal legal system. As such, the Center filed suit on behalf of four named plaintiffs, representing the class of indigent accused awaiting counsel and alleging state constitutional violations of both their right to counsel and their right to equal protection under the law. Within days of filing the civil case, the named plaintiffs were provided with attorneys in their individual criminal cases. The original

lawsuit was later voluntarily dismissed and re-filed with a new set of plaintiffs. The case is currently on appeal.

- In September 2022, the Center joined Winston & Strawn LLP, Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to file a class action lawsuit against state officials in Wisconsin for their consistent failure to provide lawyers to the criminally accused within a reasonable time after initial appearances have occurred. Wisconsin's ongoing crises around attorney shortages, inadequate budget allocation, attorney pay, attorney attrition, and various other issues have all contributed to this current constitutional emergency where hundreds, if not thousands, of people languish in legal limbo, or in jail, without legal representation. The Center filed suit on behalf of eighteen named plaintiffs, representing people accused of crimes from across the state who have not been assigned counsel within 14 days of their initial appearance. The case is currently pending.

### 3.3.2 Working Group

In the spring of 2022, Executive Director Jason Williamson joined a coalition of public defense reform advocates from around the country to identify and take action in jurisdictions that are particularly lacking in their provision of public defense services. Led by the Raben Group, the coalition's work began with a Public Defense Reform Advocacy Roundtable, held on May 24, 2022, bringing together advocates from a range of organizations, including the ACLU; the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center at SMU Law School; the Sixth Amendment Center; the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL); the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NALA); Gideon's Promise; the Southern Poverty Law Center; and the Brennan Center for Justice, among others. Since the initial convening, the coalition has continued to meet on a monthly basis to discuss our respective advocacy efforts and the implementation of newly-developed national standards for public defense services.

### 3.3.3. In the Media

- *Washington Square News*, NYU's Independent Student Newspaper, published a piece on the Center's lawsuit in Oregon titled "[NYU Law sues Oregon over access to legal representation](#)" featuring Legal Fellow Ted Jack.
- Executive Director Jason Williamson discussed the ongoing public defense crisis in an article titled "[The Cases That Most Affected Access To Justice in 2022](#)," published in *Law 360*.
- *The Albany Democrat-Herald* published an article about the Center's lawsuit in Oregon titled "[New legal action over Oregon public defense crisis seeks case dismissals, attorney withdrawals](#)," featuring Executive Director Jason Williamson.

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## 3.4. TRAINING ACTORS IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

The Center values the importance of training as a means to help actors in the criminal legal system exercise their discretion in ways that confront and account for racial bias. Since its launch, the Center has provided direct training to legal actors and facilitated trainings in partnership with organizations working at the intersection of race and criminal justice.

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## 3.5 PUBLICATIONS

### 3.5.1. Memo of Support: Challenging Wrongful Convictions Act

On March 8, 2023, the Center released a Memo of Support for the Challenging Wrongful Convictions Act detailing the pervasive nature of wrongful convictions in New York and the profound challenges which wrongfully convicted people face. The memo highlighted three bill provisions: to allow innocent people who plead guilty to vacate their convictions; to entitle people applying for post-conviction relief to review the evidence used to convict them; and to grant the right to an attorney for people applying to vacate their convictions.

## 3.6 PUBLIC EDUCATION

### 3.6.1. Public Conversations

- On November 17th, 2022, the Center co-hosted an event at NYU Law entitled, "[Public Justice & Private Harmony: An Evening with Eric Holder and Dr. Sharon Malone.](#)" The conversation was hosted by the Birnbaum Women's Leadership Center (BWLC) at NYU Law and co-sponsored by the John Brademas Center at NYU, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, and the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at NYU Law. BWLN's Executive Director, Jennifer Weiss-Wolf, moderated the discussion, which prompted AG Holder and Dr. Malone to reflect on their respective accomplishments and family life.
- On February 1st, 2023, the Center co-hosted a Latham & Watkins Forum with NYU School of Law entitled, "[The State of the Death Penalty: Fifty Years After Furman.](#)" featuring panelists Professor Alexis Hoag-Fordjour, Co-Director of the Center for Criminal Justice at Brooklyn Law School, and Professor Aren Adjoian, Supervisory Assistant Federal Defender of the Capital Habeas Unit of



Faculty Director Vincent Southerland moderated a conversation between Professor Alexis Hoag-Fordjour and Professor Aren Adjoian for the NYU Law Latham & Watkins Forum, "The State of the Death Penalty: Fifty Years After Furman."

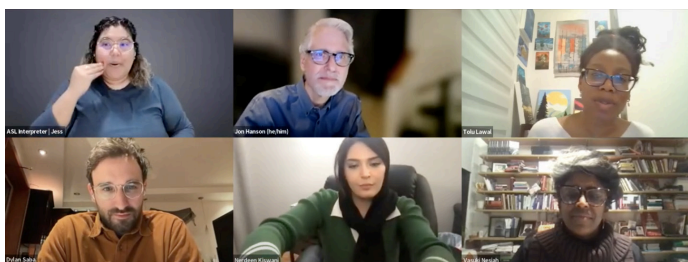
the Federal Community Defender Office of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Moderated by Center Faculty Director Vincent Southerland, the forum explored the evolution of US litigation and policy around capital punishment following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Furman v. Georgia*.

- On March 7 and 8, 2023, the Center co-sponsored the NYU Review of Law and Social Change's 2023 colloquium, "[Criminalizing Dissent: Historical & Contemporary Repression of U.S. Resistance Movements.](#)" The colloquium featured organizers, legal practitioners, activists, and scholars who discussed the ways in which the state and other institutions suppress radical justice movements and exchanged strategies for resisting this repression. This event was hosted in partnership with the following NYU Law organizations, along with 20+ additional co-sponsoring student organizations: Black Allied Law Students Association (BALSA); Coalition on Law & Representation (CoLR); Immigrant Rights Project; Law Students for Justice in Palestine at NYU Law (LSPJ); National Lawyers Guild (NLG); OUTLaw; South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA); Suspension Representation Project (SRP); and Women of Color Collective (WoCC).

### 3.6.2. Presentations by Center Staff

- On September 23, 2022, Faculty Director Vincent Southerland moderated a conversation between Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Brag; New York State Senator Zellnor Myrie; Steven Wu, Chief of Appeals for the Manhattan DA's Office; and Aimee Carlisle of the Bronx Public Defenders about the racial justice implications of gun law enforcement. The conversation was part of the [Gun Rights and Regulation after Bruen Symposium](#), hosted by the Duke Center for Firearms Law.
- On October 6, 2022, Executive Director Jason Williamson moderated a conversation with Bill Keller titled, "[What's Prison For?](#)" hosted by the Brennan Center for Justice.

- On November 4, 2022, Executive Director Jason Williamson delivered the presentation, "[The Role of Judges in the Administration of Public Defense Services](#)," at the Yale Law School Conference, "Managerial Judges @ 40."
- On March 7, 2023, Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal was featured in a panel entitled "[Stifling Campus Activism](#)" as part of the 2023 colloquium, "Criminalizing Dissent: Historical & Contemporary Repression of U.S. Resistance Movements."



As part of the NYU Review of Law and Social Change's 2023 colloquium, "Criminalizing Dissent," Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal served as a panelist to discuss the stifling of campus activism.

- In March 2023, Faculty Director Vincent Southerland participated in a panel discussing strategies for decarceration as part of a [symposium](#) commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Maryland Carey Law Clinical Law Program. The symposium was co-hosted by the *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender & Class*. On April 20, 2023, Faculty Director Vincent Southerland moderated a panel discussion hosted by the New York City Bar Association titled, "[The Path Ahead for Rikers: Crisis, Challenges, and the Path to Closure](#)."
- On May 18, 2023, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Cannabis Justice Initiative hosted a conversation entitled "Marijuana Justice as Social Justice" featuring Executive Director Jason Williamson and Mayor Randall Woodfin.

### 3.6.3 In the Media

- On [WHYY Radio](#), Faculty Director Vincent Southerland discussed the Sixth Amendment and the ways in which under-resourced and

incompetent counsel can foster wrongful convictions.

- Faculty Director Vincent Southerland published an op-ed in the *Gotham Gazette* titled, "[Now is New York's Time to Pass The Clean Slate Act](#)," advocating for the passage of the Clean Slate Act by citing the challenges that a conviction can pose for individuals seeking to reintegrate into society following involvement with the criminal legal system.
- Faculty Director Vincent Southerland discussed the indictment of former President Donald Trump in an *ABC News* article titled, "[What does indictment mean with Donald Trump facing federal and state charges](#)."

## 3.7 AMICUS BRIEFS

### 3.7.1 Amos Wells. v. Director

In January 2023, the Center submitted an amicus brief in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, along with the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality, in support of a petition for a writ of habeas filed by Mr. Amos Wells, who was sentenced to death after his own trial attorney argued to jurors that, as a Black man, Mr. Wells was predisposed to violence. Citing the sordid history of eugenics and the now-discredited pseudoscientific theories that helped to fuel racist policies and practices in this country, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court's 2017 decision in *Buck v. Davis*, amici urged the court to reject these dangerous arguments on their face and grant Mr. Wells the opportunity to be judged and sentenced on the basis of his individual circumstances.

### 3.7.2 Rowe v. Raoul

In February 2023, the Center joined over 400 other organizations and individuals from around the country in the submission of an amicus brief in the Illinois Supreme Court in support of the state's effort to eliminate monetary bail. The court below ruled that, by eliminating money bail, the state's Pretrial

Fairness Act violated the Illinois Constitution’s Crime Victim’s Rights Amendment and Separation of Powers Clause. In response, amici provided the Illinois Supreme Court with detailed data and other evidence reinforcing the argument that the elimination of money bail will improve public safety rather than threaten it. Further, amici questioned the effectiveness of money bail in achieving the stated goals of the bail system in any event and urged the Court to reverse the lower court’s fundamentally flawed decision.

### *3.7.3 Mosby v. Riverside County*

In the summer of 2023, the Center joined a coalition of race centers and law professors from around the country in an amicus brief to the California Court of Appeals challenging the lower court’s rejection of the petitioner’s reliance on statistical evidence to prevail on a claim of racially disparate treatment, as expressly permitted by the California Racial Justice Act. Amici argue that the requirement that the petitioner present evidence establishing that no non-racial factor explains his disparate treatment flies in the face of the plain language of the CRJA and the clear intent of the California Legislature.

### *3.7.4 US v. Estrella*

In August 2023, the Center joined the ACLU of Northern California, along with several other ACLU affiliates in the region, in an amicus brief to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in support of the appellant’s petition for en banc and panel rehearing in a case challenging the district court’s imposition of a new “probable cause” standard for suspicionless searches of individuals believed to be on parole. Under this dangerous new rule, law enforcement officials would be permitted to conduct a suspicionless search—which is already meant to be a rare exception under the Fourth Amendment—merely based on probable cause to believe that a person is on parole, rather than requiring actual knowledge of the person’s status. Amici argued that this rule not only impermissibly expands the circumstances under which police can conduct suspicionless searches, but that it will also cause disproportionate harm to people and communities of color. Unfortunately, the petition for en banc and rehearing was denied in November 2023.

Bottom Music, 2019  
Artist: Corey Devon Arthur



## 4. TECHNOLOGY

The Center engages in advocacy, research, and public education to mitigate the harm of algorithmic tools in criminal and civil domains. The Center's work in this area seeks to apply a racial justice lens to the development, design, implementation, and oversight of technological tools that analyze datasets to identify patterns that are used to inform forecasts about people or places. The Center is a member of several coalitions and has participated in a host of public-facing events to advance racial justice in this area.

Highlights from the Center's work throughout the past year related to race, technology and algorithmic justice included:

- The Center served as an organizational Steering Committee Member for the "[Ban the Scan](#)" campaign addressing the threat of facial recognition technology in New York City and New York State, a coalition effort led by the Surveillance, Technology, and Oversight Project.
- On a biweekly basis, the Center produced an Algorithmic & Surveillance Justice News Updates report.
- The Center developed a beta version of a legislative tracker of federal, state, and local bills focused on AI-driven technology in collaboration with the Samuelson Law, Technology, and Public Policy Clinic at Berkeley Law and a Northwestern University Ph.D. candidate in computer science.
- In July 2023, the Center drafted and organized a coalition sign-on letter, in partnership with the Innocence Project, to urge the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), US Department of Justice (DOJ), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fully implement Sections 12 (d) and (e) of the Biden Administration's Executive Order on Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety.
- The Center, in partnership with the Surveillance, Tech & Immigration Policing Project at the Immigrant Defense Project, produced and submitted a [comment](#) in response to the Federal Trade Commission's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking highlighting the myriad ways in which commercial algorithmic tools powered by AI and data mining exacerbate inequality.

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## 4.1. TECHNOLOGY AND RACIAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Across the country, the proliferation and use of emergent technology, surveillance tools, artificial intelligence, and risk assessment instruments deployed in the criminal legal system are having harmful and racially disparate impacts in communities of color. In many ways, the age of mass incarceration has begun to morph into the age of surveillance and criminalization. While the racially disparate impact of some of these tools, like facial recognition technology, is becoming more widely known, much of the new technology lacks data about its efficacy with little transparency about the technology used to develop them.

Given the host of civil liberties, civil rights, privacy, and racial justice concerns posed by biometric and predictive technologies in the criminal legal system, this year the Center sought to better understand how a diverse group of researchers and advocates are addressing the challenges these advanced technologies pose. To do so, we spoke with researchers and advocates across the country to identify the specific challenges they are facing in their work and the resources and learning opportunities they need to strengthen their collective impact. This fact gathering and discovering process builds upon the Center's convening of a diverse planning team of 11 experts in 2022 to inform our understanding of the potential for greater collaboration among advocacy and research partners working to address the harms of technology in the criminal legal system.

As a result of our discovery and planning process, the Center is poised to launch the Technology and Racial Justice Collaborative in 2024, a new learning community that aims to: 1) cultivate a cohesive community of practitioners addressing the harms from advanced technologies deployed by law enforcement agencies; 2) develop specialized capacity-building resources for these practitioners; and 3) develop customized trainings for advocacy partners. Our conversations highlighted the value that would flow from supporting a collaborative

network dedicated to connecting the array of academic experts, policy advocates, litigators, and community members impacted by surveillance and predictive technologies to build collective power.

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## 4.2. PUBLICATIONS

*4.2.1 "The Master's Tools and a Mission: Using Community Control and Oversight Laws to Resist and Abolish Police Surveillance Technologies"* Faculty Director Vincent Southerland's article, "[The Master's Tools and a Mission: Using Community Control and Oversight Laws to Resist and Abolish Police Surveillance Technologies](#)" was published in the UCLA Law Review in June 2023. Throughout the article, Southerland grapples with the tension between laws designed to provide public oversight of police surveillance tools, called Community Control Over Police Surveillance ("CCOPS") laws and abolitionist efforts to eliminate police surveillance technologies altogether. In doing so, Southerland theorizes about how CCOPS laws and their community control mechanisms can be deployed as a suite of tools with abolitionist aims, and how these tools can be leveraged to achieve abolitionist ends.

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## 4.3. PUBLIC EDUCATION

### 4.3.1 Public Conversations

- On December 13, 2022, the Center hosted a [virtual training](#) on initiating and navigating records requests from the federal government using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The event was co-sponsored by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and led by EFF Investigative Researcher, Beryl Lipton.
- The Center co-hosted the NYU Journal of Legislation and Public Policy's Spring Symposium on April 12, 2023. The event was titled, "[The Surveillance State: How America Spies on its Most Vulnerable Persons](#)," and featured two panels, "Poor and Monitored," and "The Surveillance Attack on Reproductive Rights Post-Dobbs," along with a keynote address from Hamid



Senior Research and Advocacy Fellow Terrance Pitts helped lead a virtual Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) virtual training session, in partnership with the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Khan, a Coordinator at the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition. Additional co-sponsors included NYU Law’s Birnbaum Women’s Leadership Center; the Brennan Center for Justice; the Center for Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law; and NYU student groups OUTLaw and Law Women.

- On September 13, 2023, the Center hosted a virtual event titled, [“Race, Tech, and Justice Salon: How Can Artificial Intelligence Be Used for Good in the Criminal Legal System?”](#) The



Senior Research and Advocacy Fellow Terrance Pitts leads the Center’s race and technology work.

event featured panelists Kristen Bell, Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon School of Law; Keith Wattle, Founder and Executive Director of UnCommon Law; Jake Searcy, Assistant Research Professor of Data Science at the University of Oregon; and AJ Alvero, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Florida, who discussed how AI-informed decision-making can be used to advocate for justice. The conversation explored how some scholars and advocates are employing machine learning to identify patterns of systemic bias and errors in human decision-making while reviewing and evaluating thousands of California parole transcripts.

#### 4.3.2. In the Media

- Faculty Director Vincent Southerland discussed the flaws of bail reform efforts which rely on risk assessment tools in, [“Flawed Assessments: The dark side of bail reform,”](#) an article published in *The Baffler*.
- Faculty Director Vincent Southerland spoke to the *CMG Washington News Bureau* about the dangers of employing facial recognition technology in airports, as featured in an article titled [“New TSA security tech raises concern about the potential of misidentifying minority travelers.”](#)
- On May 3, 2023, the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project released a [statement](#) calling on the City Council to limit biometric surveillance and facial recognition use in New York. Executive Director Jason Williamson was quoted in the press release citing the disproportionate impact of surveillance technology on BIPOC communities.



No Forest No Peace, 2023.  
Artist: Corey Devon Arthur

## 5. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Race shapes the social and economic well being of communities in countless ways. The racial composition of a community impacts the education that children receive, the homes in which residents live, the level of pollution to which people are exposed, and more. People of color are often disadvantaged by racial dynamics and public policies that have created hostile environments around them and perpetuated the legacy of slavery and white supremacy in this country. The Center works to challenge racial inequality and advance distributive justice and equal opportunity in housing, education, transportation, and various sectors of civil life to ensure that all people can enjoy just and equitable living conditions in their communities. The Center advances its work in this space through a dynamic, multifaceted approach to advocacy and public education.

### 5.1. INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY POWER

The Initiative for Community Power (“The Initiative”), housed in the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law, combines scholarship, field-building, experiential education, convenings, and field placements to study and challenge inequality and anti-democracy. The Initiative works closely with non-profit, academic, and government partners to reimagine the parameters of the possible, and to

transform its vision of dynamic democracy, rooted in racial and economic justice, into reality. Combining the weight and assets of a global academic institution with deep community partnerships and decades of high-impact community organizing and power-building work, the Initiative catalyzes analysis, innovation, and project work to create a more equitable, democratic, and racially just society. The Initiative’s work includes partnering with the public sector and power-building organizations to confront endemic inequality of political voice, engagement and power; funding, placing, and helping to supervise and support student fellows to work in organizations and on academic projects supporting democracy and challenging inequality; developing course offerings such as seminars and clinics focused on inequality and on recent anti-democratic trends, in the US and abroad; hosting domestic and international scholars, elected officials, organizers, activists, organizational leaders, and others with expertise on issues and disciplines related to inequality, racial justice, political economy, policy, power, and social change as a resource for faculty, students, and the broader advocacy, governance, social justice, and policy fields; convening meetings and partnerships with key organizational leaders and leaders at other schools of law and public affairs; providing student fellows, as well as other interested students and faculty, with training on key equality and democracy issues, the ideological underpinnings of these issues, and on crucial organizing, policy and governance



*Andrew Friedman serves as the Executive Director of the Initiative for Community Power.*

approaches to advancing equity and strengthening democratic engagement; promoting faculty and student partnerships with pro-democracy and social and racial justice organizations to help conduct and publish research necessary to advance their work; hosting Organizers-In-Residence Fellowships at NYU for social change leaders and organizers to engage in reflection, writing, study, and exchanges with the community that emerges from the Initiative; and creating a fund to give small grants to promising student-led projects related to equity, justice and democratic engagement.

This year, the Initiative collaborated with NYU Law centers and social justice organizations to organize a range of convenings, student events, and film screenings:

- In November 2022, the Initiative co-hosted the annual "[Countervailing Oligarchic Power Convening](#)," which gathers organizers, lawyers, policy advocates, journalists, funders, and scholars from across the country to develop innovative ways to use policy and policy enforcement to help build mass-membership organizations that countervail oligarchic power.

The convening was hosted in partnership with the Action Lab, 22nd Century Initiative, Social and Economic Justice Leaders, the Forge, and the American Prospect.

- On December 1, 2022, the Initiative co-hosted "[Dismantling Racial Capitalism](#)," a convening which conducted a deeply-rooted examination of how racial capitalism drives inequality, exploitation, and destruction, and how to catalyze change. The convening brought together more than 100 academics, organizers, policy-makers, and students, and was co-organized by the Urban Democracy Lab and the Action Lab.



*NYU Law hosted students, scholars, and community members for the "Dismantling Racial Capitalism" symposium.*

- On March 30 and March 31, 2023, the Initiative partnered with the Housing Justice for All Coalition, the Urban Democracy Lab, the Action Lab, and the NYU chapter of the Law and Political Economy Project to host "[From Crisis to Horizon: Fighting for Social Housing Series](#)."
- On April 7, 2023, the Initiative co-organized the "[Convening on Law and Power Building](#)," a full-day conference hosted in partnership with the Yale and NYU chapters of the Law and Political Economy Project and the Action Lab. The convening explored the extent to which lawyers invested in progressive change can effectively deploy their skills and capacities, and the law itself, in service of organizing for social, economic, and racial justice.

- In May 2023, the Initiative partnered with the Action Lab and the Law and Political Economy Project to host more than forty students from a variety of law schools at the “[Law and Organizing Academy on Law Organizing](#).” The Academy focused on law and political economy and organizing frameworks in the areas of housing justice, workers rights, and decarceration and abolition.
- Over the course of the year, the Initiative co-organized a virtual social justice film series, The Freedom Forward Films, which brought together social impact storytellers, social justice practitioners, and artists dedicated to imagining a world with freedom, justice, and well-being for all people.

State Farm Fire & Casualty Company for engaging in race discrimination in the housing insurance market, in violation of the Fair Housing Act. The named plaintiffs in the case—Black homeowners who were forced to endure more delays, submit more paperwork, and interact more often with claims adjusters in the processing of their insurance claims than their similarly situated white counterparts—cite data from State Farm itself to allege that the company relies on racially-biased machine learning algorithms and other artificial intelligence tools in order to screen out potentially fraudulent claims. The lawsuit drew on a 2021 study conducted by Fairmark that highlighted the racial disparities among Black and white State Farm customers in Illinois and surrounding states seeking compensation for damage to their homes.

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## 5.2 OPPOSING COP CITY

On June 5, 2023, the City Council of Atlanta, Georgia, voted to approve \$67 million in public funding for the construction of a militarized police training center commonly known as “Cop City,” ignoring years of vocal opposition from Atlantans across age, race, class, and neighborhood. On June 8, the Center published an [open letter](#) on behalf of academics across the country condemning the construction of Cop City, the destruction of the 85 acres of forested land upon which it will sit, and the state repression of activists protesting its development. The Center also joined the [Vote to Stop Cop City Coalition](#), a collection of individuals and organizations calling for a referendum that puts the question of Cop City to Atlanta voters. Despite the Coalition successfully collecting over 116,000 petition signatures—more than double the legal requirement—the City of Atlanta continues to fight the referendum process.

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## 5.3 LITIGATION

### 5.3.1 *Huskey v. State Farm*

In December 2022, the Center, along with co-counsel at Fairmark Partners LLC, filed a first-of-its-kind class action lawsuit in Illinois federal district court against

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## 5.4. PUBLIC EDUCATION

### 5.4.1. *Public Conversations*

- On October 6, 2022, the Center co-sponsored “[Reproductive Justice After Roe](#)” as part of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging speaker series. The event featured Professor Loretta Ross, activist, scholar, co-founder of SisterSong, and co-creator of the term “reproductive justice,” who discussed the reproductive justice movement in the wake of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. The conversation was moderated by Professor Kenji Yoshino, Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law and director of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and co-sponsored by the Birnbaum Women’s Leadership Center at NYU Law.
- On October 28, 2022, the Center co-sponsored an event to launch U.N. Special Rapporteur on Racism E. Tendayi Achiume’s final report on environmental racism and climate justice. The event, “[Environmental Racism and Climate \(In\)Justice](#),” was the first presentation of the Special Rapporteur’s report, which analyzed climate (in)justice as rooted in colonial histories and the persistent impacts of extractivism and



The Center co-hosted “Environmental Racism and Climate (In) Justice” in partnership with the Promise Institute and numerous organizations at NYU Law.

structural racism today. The event was hosted in partnership with the Global Justice Clinic at NYU Law; the Guarini Center on Environmental, Energy, and Land Use Law at NYU Law; the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU Law; and the Promise Institute.

- On November 7, 2022, the Center partnered with the Center on Race, Law and Justice at Fordham Law School to co-host a webinar titled, “[Graphic Novels - Archiving Histories of Resistance, Revolts, and Revolution.](#)” The event invited graphic novelists and illustrators Richard Conygham, André Trantraal, and Dr. Rebecca Hall to discuss their respective works, *All Rise: Resistance and Rebellion in South Africa*, and *Wake: The Hidden History of Women Led Slave Revolts*, and the importance of using innovative media to tell stories of resistance against tyranny and oppression.
- On November 17, 2022, the Center hosted the 27th Annual Derrick Bell Lecture on Race in American Society in partnership with NYU Law’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations. For this year’s lecture, the Center was honored to host Khiara M. Bridges, Professor of Law at UC Berkeley School, to deliver her lecture, “*Dobbs and the Roberts Court’s Racial Common Sense.*”
- On February 21, 2023, the Center co-hosted the UN’s first Special Representative for Racial

Equity and Justice, Desirée Cormier Smith. This event, titled, “[Diplomacy and the Fight Against Injustice: Fireside Chat with Desirée Cormier Smith.](#)” featured a conversation between Special Representative Cormier Smith and Professor Catherine Powell prompting Special Representative Cormier Smith to share reflections from her experience as the inaugural Special Representative. The event was hosted in partnership with the Reiss Center on Law and Security at NYU Law.

- On April 5, 2023, the Center co-hosted an Environmental Law Journal Dinner Series event titled “[Introduction to Environmental Justice.](#)” The event featured Peggy Shepard, Executive Director and Co-Founder of WE ACT for Environmental Justice, who spoke about environmental racism and the past, present, and future of the environmental justice movement.
- On April 26, 2023, the Center partnered with the NYU Native American Law Students Association (NALSA) to host a day-long symposium entitled “[Law on Our Terms.](#)” The event included a keynote address from Marguerite Smith, a presentation from Curtis Zunigha on Lenape History and Future, and panels on the topics of “Tribal Jurisprudence” and “MMIWG2S.” The event was co-sponsored by NYU Law organizations Law Women, the Women of Color Collective, and the Law Students of Alumni Association.



The “Law on Our Terms” symposium featured speakers Amanda White Eagle, Steven McSloy, and Professor Matthew Fletcher.

- On May 17, 2023, the Center co-sponsored “[The End of Zero-Sum Politics](#)” as part of the Meltzer Center for Diversity Inclusion, and Belonging speaker series. The event featured Heather McGhee, policy expert and author of *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, who spoke about the fallacy of a zero-sum paradigm in working towards progressive policy change. The webinar was moderated by Professor Kenji Yoshino, Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law and director of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and co-sponsored by the Birnbaum Women’s Leadership Center at NYU Law.
- On June 5, 2023, the Center co-sponsored “[Haitian Migration in the Americas: Combating Anti-Blackness & Building Transnational Solidarity](#),” a webinar hosted by the NYU Law Global Justice Clinic. The webinar featured a panel of Haitian migrant rights advocates who discussed global anti-Blackness and the importance of transnational solidarity. The event was co-sponsored by Fundación Cónclave Investigativo de las Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales; Haitian Bridge Alliance; Kreyolo-Foli; the NYU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies; and the Hemispheric Institute at NYU, and featured simultaneous interpretation in English and Haitian Creole.

#### 5.4.2 Presentations by Center staff

- On October 21, 2022, Faculty Director Deborah Archer participated in an online Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program hosted by the National Lawyers Guild-New York City Chapter and the Society of American Law Teacher (SALT) entitled [SFFA v. Harvard/UNC: Defending Diversity on the 2022 Supreme Court Docket](#).
- On January 15, 2023, Faculty Director Deborah Archer was the keynote speaker at the [2023 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance](#) hosted by the First Unitarian Universalist Society.

- On February 16, 2023, the Rollins College Philosophy Department hosted Faculty Director Deborah Archer for a [Fireside Chat on Abortion & Other Civil Liberty Issues](#).
- On March 3, 2023, Faculty Director Deborah Archer delivered the keynote address at the [Georgetown Law Racial Justice Symposium](#).

#### 5.4.3 In the Media

- Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal was quoted in an article titled, “[These are the four ballot measures facing New York City this general election](#),” published by *Spectrum News 1*.
- Executive Director Jason Williamson was a guest on [Law and Disorder](#) radio and discussed the then-impending Supreme Court decision to outlaw affirmative action.
- In an episode of the *ACLU At Liberty* podcast titled, “[Reckoning with America’s Racial Residential Segregation](#),” Faculty Director Deborah Archer spoke about America’s long history of housing discrimination.
- On *NPR*, Legal Fellow Tolu Lawal spoke about the discriminatory nature of the character and fitness evaluation employed by the New York State Bar Association and its role in excluding prospective lawyers of color from the legal profession.



Faculty Director Vincent Southerland, speaking at the 2023 Race Center Convening.

- Faculty Director Deborah Archer was quoted in an article published by the *Financial Times* titled, “[Is this the end of the road for affirmative action?](#)”

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## 5.5. AMICUS BRIEFS

### 5.5.1. *Shen v. Simpson*

In June 2023, the Center joined a coalition of racial justice centers, affinity bar and professional associations, and civil rights advocacy organizations in submitting an amicus brief in the United States District Court for the District of Florida, in support of the plaintiffs’ motion for preliminary injunction to stop the implementation of Florida’s recently-enacted Conveyance to Foreign Entities Law (a.k.a. “Alien Land Law”), which erects new—and racially-motivated—barriers to property ownership by certain foreign nationals. In particular, the Law imposes severe restrictions on the property ownership rights of people of Chinese descent, including a burdensome registration requirement, under the guise of national security. Amici argue that the Law is unconstitutional and harkens back to prior attempts in U.S. history to curtail the property rights of Asian persons, thus facilitating the ongoing discrimination against Asian people and communities in this country. Following the district court’s denial of the plaintiffs’ motion, amici filed a similar brief in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

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## 5.6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

### 5.6.1. *New York State Public Service Commission Comment*

In response to the New York State Public Service Commission’s Notice Inviting Comment, the Center submitted a Comment opposing the National Grid’s Proposal to build two new liquefied natural gas vaporizers at its Greenpoint facility and recover the costs through the Demand Capacity Surcharge Mechanism. The Comment explains how the National Grid’s LNG Vaporizer Expansion Project perpetuates a racist legacy of disproportionately concentrating environmental hazards in low-income, Black and brown neighborhoods and highlights the public health and environmental risks associated with the project.



## 6. LEGAL EDUCATION

### 6.1. RACE CENTER NETWORK

Three years after the inaugural 2019 Race Center Convening, thirty individuals representing nineteen law schools gathered at NYU School of Law on February 23 and 24 to reflect on the roles of race centers following the 2020 reckoning on racial injustice and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Convening opened with a Welcome Dinner on the evening of February 23 and programming began on February 24. Throughout the Convening, attendees discussed the obstacles of the current moment, shared strategies for growth, and compiled a set of action items to continue strengthening the Race Center network. The Center organized the convening in partnership with the Law and Racial Justice Center at Yale Law School, the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality at Seattle University School of Law, the Critical Race Studies Program at UCLA Law School, and the Center on Race, Law, and Justice at Fordham University School of Law.

Following the Convening, the Race Center Network formed an official Steering Committee, of which Executive Director Jason Williamson serves on.



*Executive Director Jason Williamson leads a breakout group discussion at the 2023 Race Center Convening.*

### 6.2. STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### *6.2.1. Fellowships, Internships, and Research Opportunities*

The Center [continued to engage students](#) at NYU School of Law through a summer internship program, a term-time fellowship program, and volunteer opportunities. In 2022-2023, the Center hosted six [Paul Weiss Student Fellows](#) during the academic year; three full-time interns over the summer; and a cadre of volunteers. Student fellows were involved in all facets of the Center's work, providing valuable research on race and inequality, strengthening the Center's social media presence, providing direct

support to incarcerated clients, and more. Volunteer opportunities and support positions were made available on an ongoing basis for undergraduate and graduate students who wish to deepen their understanding of the intersection of race, inequality, and the law.

### 6.2.2. Reading Groups

The Center staff hosted reading group sessions throughout the year, offering students and other members of the NYU community opportunities to discuss different aspects of race and inequality throughout society. Reading groups included:

- Race, Injustice, and the American Criminal Legal System: Led by NYU Law Professor Randy Hertz and Vincent Southerland, participating first-year law students explored the historical origins of racial identity, the underpinnings of institutional racism, and the ways in which race and inequality shape the law and outcomes for individuals. Additionally, participating first-year students reflected on the opportunities, challenges, and potential strategies associated with advancing racial justice, with a particular emphasis on concerns related to criminalization, incarceration, and the criminal legal system in America.

### 6.2.3. Career Support

- In July 2022, Center Co-Faculty Director Vincent Southerland and Center Executive Director Jason Williamson partnered with the Public Interest Law Center at NYU Law to engage with rising 8th and 9th graders from NYC public schools through the [College & Career Lab](#).



*Faculty Director Vincent Southerland in conversation with colleagues at the 2023 Race Center Convening.*



# 7. NYU INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the year, the Center continued to work closely with the law school's student affinity groups, faculty, and staff to provide training, guidance, and thought partnership on issues of race and inequality. As part of these efforts, the Center continued its annual training with the Lawyering faculty to equip them with approaches and techniques to manage conversations about race and difference in the classroom.

As a member of the [NYU Alliance for Public Interest Technology](#), the Center maintained a partnership with a dynamic and multidisciplinary group of NYU faculty to support the responsible, ethical, and racially equitable use of technology. Through the [Blueprints for Progressive Change in Juvenile Justice](#) initiative, the Center collaborated with NYU faculty to support progressive reform of the criminal legal system's treatment of children. In addition, the Center is part of the university-wide [Environmental & Racial Justice Network](#), in order to strengthen its ties with others in the NYU community focused on environmental justice.

Finally, the Center partnered with a wide array of NYU organizations, such as the [Center for Human Rights and Global Justice](#), the [Meltzer Center on Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#), and the [Peter L. Zimroth Center on the Administration of Criminal Law](#) to host events, engage in advocacy, and confront

racial injustice. By working with the [NYU Review of Law & Social Change](#) and the [NYU Environmental Law Journal](#) to organize public conversations, the Center also strengthened its relationship with the law school's student body.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Photography: Ted Jack*

*Layout: Kathryn Bowser Graphic Design*

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## ARTIST STATEMENTS

### LAMAVIS COMUNDOIWILLA

#### *Artist Bio*

Lamavis Comundoiwilla, 54, is a Compton, California native. He's currently incarcerated at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center. Lamavis has been incarcerated 29 years and is up for parole consideration in 2024. He was awarded a First Place Prize at the 2019 Marin County Fair. His work has been featured at the Marin Civic Center Bartolini Gallery, San Francisco Airport Terminal, San Francisco Opera House Museum, the Sacramento, California, Capitol Building, University of Derby, England, University of California, Berkeley, The Museum of the African Diaspora, and DreamCorp's National Empathy Day and Black Futures Weekend events.

Read more about him in *San Quentin News, A Journey into Afro-futurism*.

#### Contact Information:

Lamavis Comundoiwilla (#J78113)  
1 Main Street  
San Quentin State Prison  
San Quentin, CA 94974  
Email via [Getting Out App](#): California / San Quentin State Prison

### COREY DEVON ARTHUR

#### *Artist Bio*

Corey Devon Arthur is an incarcerated writer and artist. His writing has been published in venues including the Marshall Project and Writing Class Radio. In March of 2023, he exhibited his art show, *She Told Me Save The Flower*, at My Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. You can check out more of his work on Instagram and Medium.

#### Contact Information:

Corey Devon Arthur (#98A7146)  
Otisville Correctional Facility  
P.O. Box 8  
Otisville, NY 10963  
Email via [JPAY.com](#): Corey Arthur / New York

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## ARTWORK

### COVER

Name: Lamavis Comundoiwilla  
Title, Year: *The Lady in the Gold Dress*, 2022  
Medium: Mixed media on canvas board  
Photographer credit: Peter Merts  
Portfolio:  
<https://www.empowermentave.org/artist/lamavis-comundoiwilla>

### PAGE 6

Name: Corey Devon Arthur  
Title, Year: *Angela Davis*, 2022  
Medium: Composite, acrylic, colored pencil on Strathmore  
Photographer credit: Sasha Chavchavadze  
Portfolio:  
<https://www.empowermentave.org/artist/corey-arthur>

### PAGE 13

Name: Corey Devon Arthur  
Title, Year: *Bottom Music*, 2019  
Medium: Water color, ink and colored pencil on paper  
Photographer credit: Christine Lashaw  
Portfolio:  
<https://www.empowermentave.org/artist/corey-arthur>

### PAGE 16

Name: Corey Devon Arthur  
Title, Year: *No Forest No Peace*, 2023  
Medium: Composite, acrylic, colored pencil on Strathmore  
Portfolio:  
<https://www.empowermentave.org/artist/corey-arthur>

### PAGE 22

Name: Corey Devon Arthur  
Title, Year: *Self Portrait - Feminist*, 2022  
Medium: Composite, acrylic, colored pencil on paper  
Photographer credit: Sasha Chavchavadze  
Portfolio:  
<https://www.empowermentave.org/artist/corey-arthur>

**THE CENTER ON**

**RACE**

**INEQUALITY**

**& THE LAW**

**NYU SCHOOL OF LAW**