



Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities

Winter 2009

An Overview of 2008

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities Tackles Gang Violence

In October of 2008, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities visited the Council for Unity anti-gang program at Riverhead Correctional Facility in Suffolk County, New York. Council for Unity (CFU) is a not-for-profit that specializes in reducing violence and gang membership in schools and communities. The Council for Unity program at Riverhead Correctional Facility has over 30 members including corrections officers. During the program, we observed a former gang member trained by Council for Unity adroitly conduct a workshop about a young boy's quest



Chief Administrative Judge Ann Pfau



Participants at Conference

to "slay dragons" (dragons being synonymous with the obstacles that prevent positive choices, i.e. fear, drugs). Then each former gang member discussed what he needed to do to slay the dragons in his life and return to society with a new purpose.

As a result, the Commission decided to host a statewide conference on gang violence at the Judicial Institute. In an effort to further explore alternatives to the gang culture, on November 18, 2008, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities conducted a conference entitled, "Innovative Strategies to Nullify Gang Violence in Our Communities — Ensuring Safer Communities and Redeeming our Youth". The conference was attended by over 150 persons, including judges, employees of the

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Justice Sconiers Named to Lead Commission



Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, recently appointed Justice Rose H. Sconiers as the Chairperson of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities. Justice Sconiers is a Supreme Court Justice in the 8th Judicial District and has been a jurist for over 20 years. She is the third Judge to serve as Chairperson since it was established as a permanent Commission in 1991. She assumes the duties held by the previous chair, Hon. Lewis L. Douglass, who superbly guided the Commission for more than 17 years. Under Justice Sconiers' leadership, the Commission will continue to be a steward of justice and equality for the New York State Court system.

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GANG VIOLENCE



Dr. David Brotherton, Chair of Sociology Department, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

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court system, district attorney offices, public defender's offices and community organizations. The Chief Administrative Judge, the Honorable Ann Pfau, provided opening remarks and reiterated the courts commitment to working and providing programs for the youth. The keynote speaker was Dr. David Brotherton, chairperson of the Sociology Department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

In summary, Dr. Brotherton emphasized that in order to redeem our youth, we must view them as individuals and not marginalize them by labeling them as gang members. By focusing on the individual, we can re-direct that person's skills and talents to more productive pursuits and bring value to society. These young people must also be made to feel that they have a stake in the community around them and are responsible to those in the community.

The Council for Unity program founded by Bob DeSena, centers on providing an alternative family to the "family" of gangs. At the conference, Mr. DeSena explained the comprehensive approach used by Council for Unity to interact with young people at four different levels — through the schools, community programs (involving local businesses), correctional institutions and law enforcement. The conference included four break-out sessions that focused on the different levels of the Council for Unity comprehensive model.

There was also compelling testimony by two former gang members about the street gangs giving them a sense of family when their own home lives had failed them. Through the Council for Unity program, they developed self-esteem, coping mechanisms, and a "family" that enabled them to leave the "thug life" to become successful citizens. The conference was chaired by Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission members Justice Doris Ling-Cohan and Justice Rose Sconiers.



Bob Kunkis; Douglass Childs; Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan; Joyce Y. Hartsfield; Hon. Eduardo Padro; Hon. Lewis L. Douglass; Hon. yvonne lewis; Rene Myatt, Esq.; William Etheridge; Alice Chapman-Minutello



Robert DeSena, President, Council for Unity; Staff members, Council for Unity



Commission Members visit Riverhead Correctional Facility

GANG VIOLENCE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PROVIDES OUTREACH TO GANG MEMBERS

The November 18th conference on gang violence featured a distinguished panel of representatives from various district attorney offices. The panel members spoke of the integral part that the District Attorney's office plays in curbing gang violence through community outreach and programs to divert gang membership.

On the panel were the following persons; District Attorney P. David Soares from Albany County; Suzanne E. Miles, Esq. and Patrick P. Moore, Esq., from the Westchester County District Attorney's Office;

Detective Bradford D. Waterman from Bronx County District Attorney's Office and Meg Reiss, Esq. from the Nassau County District Attorney's Office. District

Attorney Soares summarized Albany County's approach to gang membership as "Hard on Crime and Smart on Prevention". His office utilizes a restorative justice model through their Community Accountability Board. The Community Accountability Board consists of members of faith based organizations and citizens in the community who adjudicate the cases of non-violent offenders. The offender must discuss and acknowledge how their crime has harmed the community and strategies to make it up to the community. Thus far, the program has a 8% recidivism rate.

Patrick P. Moore, Esq. discussed the success of Westchester County's Intel Center which allows for intelligence sharing and evidence gathering from different precincts to pool information about gangs. As a result, rather than random arrests, there is better coordination and the correct individuals are identified and arrested. Mr. Moore stated that "to be more selective, makes you more effective and fairer to the community." Suzanne Miles, Esq. discussed Westchester county's "MAVERICK" program — Mothers Against Violence Encouraging Responsibility in Community Kids. MAVERICK educates mothers about gang culture so that they can assess whether their child is involved in a gang and then connects the mothers to programs in their community for greater assistance. This program will be expanded to educate school personnel about gang culture as well.

Detective Waterman from the Bronx County District Attorney's Office spoke of the Gang Resistance Education Training Program ("GREAT"). The GREAT program prepares students with the skills for success and enables them to say no to gang membership. Although a relatively new program, Detective Waterman shared the story of a young man who expressed gratitude for the program because it gave him the strength to say no to one of the gangs in his community who had been pressuring him to join.

Megg Reiss, Esq. of Suffolk County reiterated that the most effective gang prevention programs included community partnering in order to build trust and accountability. Suffolk County has a Youth Court which includes Hofstra Law School and New York State Family and Child Services. The Youth Court allows non-violent student offenders to have a jury of their peers (upper class High School students). The offender must express a positive area of interest and efforts are made to encourage development in that area. The Youth court also provides an opportunity to connect to the family of the student and provide access to community programs if necessary.



Joyce Y. Hartsfield; Detective Bradford Waterman; Suzanne E. Miles, Esq.; Patrick P. Moore, Esq.; District Attorney David Soares; Meg Reiss, Esq.

COUNCIL FOR UNITY COMPREHENSIVE MODEL

SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Principal of Riverhead High School, David Zimble and Theresa Drozd VPS from Eastern Suffolk BOCES provided participants with the history, expansion, and academic success of the CFU in the Riverhead Schools. They also discussed the principles that CFU is based on and how it relates to the curriculum that the students use.

CORRECTIONS INITIATIVES

Sergeant Noreen Fisher, Advisor at the Riverhead Correctional Facility, shared the creation of a CFU Chapter at the Riverhead Correctional Facility and their success since the inception. Incarcerated members learn that once they are released there is a new "family" waiting for them.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Officers Chris Parkin and Jill Wickland discussed the partnership between school and law enforcement. The officers shared how this new partnership has created an understanding of the duties of law enforcement to the students and how this has created a new respect for them.

COMMUNITY

Liz Stokes, chairperson of the CFU Adult Family Partnerships shared the birth and history of the Riverhead Adult Family Partnership. Also highlighted were some of the special projects that were completed including an annual community induction dinner.

New York LEO Reception

On June 18, 2008, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities with the New York State Judicial Institute and the New York County Lawyers' Association hosted a reception for the second year for the New York State Legal Education Opportunity Program ("NY LEO"). The reception was held at the New York County Lawyers' Association. The NY LEO program prepares minority low income college graduates for their first year of law school with an intensive six-week summer program at the New York Judicial Institute in White Plains, New York. The students are also paired with judges that volunteer to act as mentors for the first year. Joy Beane, Executive Assistant for Education and Training at the Judicial Institute, oversees the program and interacts regularly with the students.

At the reception, Shannon Taylor, Esq. was honored for his commitment to promoting equality in the courts and racial and ethnic understanding in society. Mr. Taylor is the founder of the *Not Just Blacks and Jews in Conversation* program that increases dialogue among peoples of different cultures, backgrounds and ethnicities.



Shannon Taylor, Esq.; Honorable Lewis L. Douglass



Joy Beane and New York LEO students 2008

COMMISSION FORUM ON HOW TO BECOME A CRIMINAL OR FAMILY COURT JUDGE IN NEW YORK CITY

ON APRIL 14TH, 2008, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities presented a forum entitled, How to Become a Criminal or Family Court Judge in New York City. The forum was held at the City Council Chamber at City Hall and was co-sponsored by various bar associations and judicial associations. The forum was the result of a previous Commission meeting with Mayor Bloomberg's Office regarding efforts to increase diversity on the bench. The program included Zachary W. Carter, Chair of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary and Desirée Kim, Executive Director of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary. Mr. Carter and Ms. Kim provided an overview of the interview process and provided key points on maximizing the potential to be appointed a criminal or family court judge. The program also included a panel of recently appointed Criminal and Family Court Judges who discussed their personal experience navigating the application process. The panel included the Honorable Joseph A. Zayas who discussed the application process and first interview and pointed out the importance of consistency throughout the application. The Honorable Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson, discussed the second interview. The

Honorable Gilbert C. Hong covered the interview with the Executive Committee and the Honorable Marc J. Whiten discussed the City Bar Process and the interview with the Mayor. In conjunction with the forum, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission will also provide judicial mentors to applicants to review the application prior to submitting it to the Mayor's Advisory Committee. The Forum was co-chaired by Commission Members, the Honorable Ariel Belen and the Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan.



Desirée Kim, Executive Director and Zachary W. Carter, Esq., Chair of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary



Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan, Hon. Joseph A. Zayas, Antonio Seda, Christopher Chen, Hon. Marc J. Whiten.



Hon. Ariel Belen, Hon. Gilbert C. Hong, Hon. Joseph A. Zayas, Hon. Marc J. Whiten, Hon. Edwina C. Richardson-Mendelson

20TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS

THE WASHINGTON STATE MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION hosted the 20th annual meeting of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts in Seattle, Washington. The conference occurred from April 29th to May 2, 2008 and the theme was “Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society: Ensuring Fairness in America’s State Courts.” The keynote speaker, Justice John Charles Thomas, former Judge of the Virginia Supreme Court, and partner at Hunton and Williams Law Firm, titled his presentation, “Diversity: What Difference Does it Make?”. He answered that question by showing that a diverse court is rich in human resources including a broad range of experience, background and perspective.

Also of highlight during the conference was a presentation by Professor Jerry Kang, J. D. of Harvard University. Dr. Kang discussed studies that showed the implicit bias that often exist towards people of color. He concluded that in order to change this implicit bias, we must change the structure of examples of who is good and who is bad (since often

times good works are associated with Caucasian people and bad works are associated with people of color). Dr. Kang stressed the importance of having actual examples of successful people of color in front of you to break the cycle of implicit bias. It was noted that having screen savers of successful people of color is one way to increase the association of positive behavior with people of color.

We also learned a great deal about the various Tribal Courts in that region. Judge Douglas W. Luna of the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska discussed how working with the tribal community has reduced the recidivism rate. This occurs because the offender must face their elders who they look up to and the offender does not want to bring shame on their family name.

The conference also featured Tom Ikesa, Executive Director of the Denshō Project. The Denshō Project is a video history of the survivors of the Japanese interment during World War II. Given that many of the survivors are elderly, this video history will preserve their personal accounts for future generations. At the conference closing dinner, the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission presented a posthumous award of Merit to Franklin H. Williams (chair of the original Judicial Commission on Minorities).



William Etheridge,
Tracy Pardo,
Honorable yvonne lewis,
Major Jewel Williams

Judicial Friends Welcomes New Board with Style and Grace

ON JANUARY 22, 2009, The Judicial Friends inducted their Board of Officers at the law firm of Chadbourne & Parke, LLP. The new president of the Judicial Friends is Judge Antonio Brandveen, a distinguished jurist with over thirty years of experience. Judge Brandveen started his career on the bench as a Judge in New York City Housing Court. Currently, he serves as a Court of Claims/Acting Supreme Court Justice in Nassau County.

The following is a list of the other officers inducted into Judicial Friends; 1st Vice President - Judge yvonne lewis, 2nd Vice President - Judge Sylvia Hinds-Radix, Treasurer - Judge Alfred Cooper and Secretary - Judge Geraldine Pickett. The Induction Oath was administered by the Honorable George Bundy Smith, Associate Judge, Court of Appeals (ret.), partner at the law firm of Chadbourne & Parke, LLP.

The following is a list of members of the Judicial Friends Board of Directors: Judge Sylvia Ash; Judge Cheryl Chambers; Judge Deborah Dowling; Judge Carol Edmead; Judge Cheryl Gonzales; Judge L. Priscilla Hall; Judge Theodore Jones; Judge Tanya Kennedy; Judge Ulysses Leverett; Judge Verna Saunders; Judge Robin Sheares; Judge George Bundy Smith; Judge Kenneth Thompson; Judge Paul Wooten and Judge Alvin Yearwood.

The following is a list of the members of the 501(3) Board of Directors: Bradley Backus, Esq.; Judge Laura Blackburne; Lloyd Brown, Esq.; Hugh Campbell, Esq.; Catherine Christian, Esq.; Judge Alfred Cooper; Judge Barry Cozier; Renaye Cuyler, Esq.; Darrell Gay, Esq.; Everette Hopkins, Esq.; Judge Daniel Joy; Cornett Lewers, Esq.; Denise Outram, Esq; Judge George Bundy Smith; Judge Willie Thompson and Gregory Watts, Esq.



Honorable George Bundy Smith administering oath to Judicial Friends' Officers

PROMOTIONS & RECOGNITION

Barry Clarke - Chief Clerk of the Criminal Term, Supreme Court, New York County

Regina Greene - Senior Court Clerk, Family Court Kings County

Rene Rudder - Deputy Clerk of the to Clerk of Court, Civil Court, New York County

Alia Razzaq - Deputy Clerk of Court, Civil Court, New York County

Lakisha Hicks - Associate Court Clerk, Bronx County



Barry Clarke

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Captain Ernest L. Owens - NYS Court Officer-Major II,
Supreme Court, Civil Term, Queens County

Diane Goulding - Court Clerk Specialist, Family Court,
New York County

George Cartagena - Case Management Coordinator,
Criminal Term, Supreme Court, New York
County

Phillip Hudson - Senior Court Clerk, Supreme Court,
Criminal Term, Kings County

Constance Washington - Senior Court Analyst, Supreme
Court, New York County

Linda Dunlap-Miller - Assistant Director of Personnel,
Office of Court Administration

Lisa Headley - Management Analyst, Criminal Court,
Queens County

Beverly Stanley - Senior Court Clerk, Family Court,
Kings County

James Smoot - Associate Court Clerk, Family Court,
Kings County

Lori Eley - Senior Court Clerk, Family Court,
Kings County

Tamara Broadus - Senior Court Clerk, Civil Term,
Supreme Court, Kings County

An Overview of 2008

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities

25 Beaver Street, Room 861

New York, New York 10004

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Lewis L. Douglass
Chair

Hon. Ariel E. Belen
Vice-Chair

William H. Etheridge
Felix C. Fernandez
Pamela D. Hayes, Esq.
Lenore Kramer, Esq.
Hon. yvonne lewis
Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan
Hon. Richard B. Lowe III
Rene Myatt, Esq.
Hon. Eduardo Padro
Dr. Maria Ramirez
Hon. Rose H. Sconiers
Hon. Charles J. Tejada
Hon. Troy K. Webber

Joyce Y. Hartsfield
Executive Director

Karlene Dennis
Associate Counsel