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“I am standing on the shoulders of my own role models, generations of americans who never had anything close to this kind of opportunity but who got up every day and went to work believing in the promise of america, showing others **through their determination and, yes, their perseverance that good, good things can be done in this great country.**”

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SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

TODAY'S PROGRAM

WELCOMING REMARKS

W. Neil Eggleston

Branton Chair, Washington Lawyers'
Committee

INTRODUCTION OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Claudia A. Withers

Board Co-Chair, Washington Lawyers'
Committee

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jamie S. Gardner

Board Co-Chair, Washington Lawyers'
Committee

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS

Joanne Lin

Executive Director, Washington Lawyers'
Committee

INTRODUCTION OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Joanne Lin

SPECIAL APPEAL

W. Neil Eggleston

LUNCH

INTRODUCTION OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Jonathan M. Smith

Senior Special Counsel, Washington
Lawyers' Committee

ALFRED MCKENZIE AWARD

2801 15th St. NW Unidos

Meridian Heights Tenant Association

Presented By

Catherine Cone

*Supervising Housing Counsel, Washington
Lawyers' Committee*

INTRODUCTION OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Jamie S. Gardner

WILEY A. BRANTON AWARD

Lewis S. Wiener

Partner, Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP

Presented By

Nicholas Christakos

Partner, Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP

CLOSING REMARKS

Claudia A. Withers



WILEY A. BRANTON

Wiley A. Branton was a tireless advocate for civil rights and equal justice throughout his entire career — as a private practitioner in Arkansas, a leader of federal agencies in Washington, and a Dean of the Howard University School of Law. The Wiley A. Branton Award is annually bestowed upon members of the legal community whose careers embody a deep and abiding commitment to civil rights and economic justice advocacy.

Dean Branton started his career in private practice in Arkansas in the 1950's, representing African-American criminal defendants in often racially charged prosecutions. Working with Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP, he took on some of the most significant civil rights cases in the South. He represented the Freedom Riders in Mississippi, who were arrested for desegregating public transportation and public accommodations.

Among his most notable cases was the litigation that desegregated the Little Rock public schools. It was Dean Branton's injunction that led to President Eisenhower calling out federal troops to escort African-American students to school. From 1962 to 1965, he led the Voter Education Project in Atlanta. During the three years, he was at the helm the project registered more than 600,000 African Americans to vote.

President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Dean Branton to lead the President's Council on Equal Opportunity and then to work on the implementation of the Civil Rights Act as special assistant to the United States Attorney General. In 1967, he became executive director of the United Planning Organization, the District of Columbia's antipoverty agency. Two years later, he directed the social action program of the Alliance for Labor Action.

From 1978 to 1983, Mr. Branton was dean of Howard University Law School. During his tenure at Howard, he dedicated himself to the training of the next generation of civil rights advocates.

Following Dean Branton's death in 1988, his friend Justice Thurgood Marshall remembered him as follows: "He was a great guy, a warm person who believed in people and believed in what was right."

Wiley Branton was an inspiration to everyone who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. He personified the legal profession's ideal of pro bono service that is at the heart of the Washington Lawyers' Committee's mission.



LEWIS S. WIENER

Lewis S. Wiener has defended clients in litigation across the nation with more than three decades of trial and counseling experience. While at the Department of Justice, Lew was selected by the Attorney General to serve as lead government counsel in the largest class action ever filed against the United States. As a partner at Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP, Lew has taken on a number of civil rights pro bono matters, particularly on behalf of persons with disabilities. In one such class action with the Washington Lawyers' Committee, Lew represented blind and visually impaired federal government contractors who sued the U.S. government alleging that the inaccessibility of SAM.gov, the website utilized by federal contractors, violated the Americans with Disabilities Act. The resulting consent decree required the government to make changes to ensure the website was accessible to individuals using screen readers and other assistive devices that allow blind/visually impaired individuals to access and read web pages.

In a landmark disability rights case, Lew served as lead counsel representing seven deaf and hearing-impaired individuals who were denied access to sign language interpreter services at Laurel Regional Hospital in Maryland. The Department of Justice adopted the resulting consent decree, which was referred to as the gold standard for defining "effective communication" in a hospital setting. Reflecting on this case, Lew remarked "Working with pro bono clients who are deaf reinforced the best advice I ever received: learn to speak your client's language; don't expect them to speak yours."

Lew is also actively involved with local and national organizations including serving as a board member of the Washington Lawyers' Committee since 2004 and as co-chair from 2013 – 2015. He currently serves as the Vice President of the University at Albany Foundation, as two-time president of the United States Court of Federal Claims Bar Association, and as the judicially appointed chair of the Court of Federal Claims Advisory Council (2016 – present). Lew has also served as vice-chair of the Board of Trustees of the Norwood School (2011 - 2017), is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Holton-Arms School (2016 – present) and is the President of the Washington Hebrew Congregation Board.



ALFRED MCKENZIE

The Alfred McKenzie Award was established in 1994 to recognize Committee clients whose dedication and courage have produced civil rights victories of particular significance. It takes its name from a man whose efforts as a Committee plaintiff helped to change an institution.

During World War II, Alfred McKenzie left his entry-level position in the Government Printing Office (GPO) to join the Army Air Corps, where he served with distinction as one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. When he returned to the GPO in 1946, he was assigned to the same low-level position he had held before his military service. He then began a career-long struggle to win equal treatment for himself and his fellow African-American GPO employees.

In 1972, represented by Committee staff and the firm of Hogan and Hartson, Mr. McKenzie initiated a class action lawsuit to challenge racial discrimination against African-American pressmen at the GPO. Fifteen years later, his determination led to a landmark victory that secured a record \$2.4 million payment to hundreds of African-American workers and, more importantly, a fundamental restructuring of personnel policies that opened the door of equal opportunity to countless minority workers.



2801 15TH ST. NW UNIDOS

For years, the members of 2801 15th St. NW Unidos have fiercely advocated for life-altering change in their community. As the tenants association for Meridian Heights Apartments in the District's Columbia Heights neighborhood, they have witnessed years of extreme neglect by the owners and property management which has led to unhealthy, unconscionable, and unlawful conditions for the mostly Latinx community.

The Tenants Association's relentless advocacy has spread across a wide range of DC housing justice issues including the movement to cancel the rent amid the COVID-19 pandemic. 2801 15th St. NW Unidos continues to fight for justice through their lawsuit filed on April 5, 2022 to demand repairs and damages for the continuous harm of their unconscionable living conditions.

When the lawsuit was filed, Estela Rosales, President of the Tenant Association, noted in her native language, Spanish: "We are filing this complaint because we have dealt with horrible conditions in our housing for too long, even after repeatedly requesting repairs from the landlord. Ultimately, the landlord doesn't care how we live. We deal with cockroaches, mice, bedbugs, and mold. It is us and our children who suffer.

We, the tenants, can't take it anymore, and because of the situation we find ourselves in, we are seeking justice for the harm we have suffered and calling for immediate repairs."

At the Washington Lawyers' Committee, we are honored to recognize the dedicated team of organizers and advocates at 2801 15th St. NW Unidos. We look forward to continuing the fight for housing justice together.

FOR EXCEPTIONAL COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

ARNOLD & PORTER | ACLU OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Costa et al. v. Bazron et al.

During multiple crises, the District of Columbia and Saint Elizabeths Hospital subjected patients to unconstitutional conditions and failed to adequately prepare for emergencies. Patients at St. Elizabeths, who are majority Black, with limited resources, and all of whom have disabilities and depend on the District for their care, were exposed to inhumane conditions as a result of the District's mismanagement of these crises. When water to the Hospital was shut off in 2019 because of a bacterial contamination, the District terminated critical treatment for many patients, and left patients in unconscionable conditions, with limited or no access to showers, other basic hygiene, and hot food for more than 30 days. When the COVID pandemic hit, the District failed to put into place basic infection control measures, resulting in a mortality rate that was forty-times that of the general population. Arnold & Porter, the ACLU of DC, and the Committee filed suit against the District and secured an injunction which brought transmission under control and the rate of illness dropped dramatically. In February 2023, patients entered a settlement with the Hospital and the District which requires the City to implement new emergency preparedness procedures to ensure patients are cared for during public health crises.

ARNOLD & PORTER | ACLU OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

Black Lives Matter DC v. Trump

On June 1, 2020, Black Lives Matters Demonstrators were violently removed from Lafayette Park by District and federal law enforcement. These civil rights protesters were unconstitutionally and brutally attacked outside the White House with tear gas and other military-grade weapons. The ACLU of DC, the

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Arnold & Porter, and the Washington Lawyers' Committee are counsel in Black Lives Matter DC v. Trump, one of four cases seeking injunctive relief and damages for that incident. In 2022, we settled the injunctive relief portion of the case with significant new federal policies that protect First Amendment activity. To prevent future attacks and to settle all four cases, changes to policing policies will include measures to help to protect demonstrators and the right to demonstrate, promote accountability, prohibit discriminatory policing, and reduce the opportunity for guilt-by-association policing.

BDO

Pro Bono Services Across Workers' Rights and Racial Discrimination Cases

BDO, a full-service accounting firm who is also a member of the Washington Lawyers' Committee's Corporate Advisory Board (CAB), takes its role as a responsible corporate citizen to heart and has been providing crucial pro bono services in Committee litigation to address racial discrimination against Black and Latinx police officers, as well as wage theft by unscrupulous employers. For example, BDO's analysis was critical to our successful lawsuit on behalf of three Black Pocomoke City Police officers. They provided the financial analysis of future earnings including promotions, overtime, pensions, Social Security and more to support a \$1.2 million settlement. BDO also offered expert assistance and services in a litigation on behalf of officers of color who were subjected to discrimination by the Prince George's County Police Department – assistance which was key to securing a \$2.3 million settlement and broad injunctive relief. In addition, BDO played a role in a case fighting for workers who had been terminated without notice by Gali Services Industries, Inc., in which the court issued a default judgment of more than \$700,000 in unpaid wages, overtime, and other damages.

HAYNES AND BOONE, LLP

Expanding Job Opportunities and Providing Second Chances at First Transit .

In February 2023, Haynes and Boone, LLP, the Washington Lawyers' Committee, and First Transit Inc.—a global leader in transportation services—announced that First Transit will further develop their equal opportunity hiring process. The enhanced process will increase its diversity, equity and inclusion objectives and create economic opportunity in the communities in which First Transit operates. Importantly, it will uncover individuals with skills that can help drive success for First Transit and public transportation but who have potentially been underutilized in the transportation industry.

Like many major employers, First Transit conducts background checks to screen whether prospective employees have criminal records as a part of its hiring process. Following discussions with Haynes and Boone,

the Committee, and an expert consultant, First Transit has thoughtfully renewed and refreshed its background check policies. The new policy relies on rigorous recidivism research to continue to ensure that qualified persons have the opportunity to work and succeed, without being unnecessarily excluded from employment due to prior criminal records that data supports have no impact on their ability to safely do their job. Haynes and Boone, the Committee, and First Transit recognize that overly broad policies can result in the exclusion of qualified applicants of color.

HOGAN LOVELLS, PATRICIA A. BRANNAN

Representing Lena Ferguson Against the Daughters of the American Revolution

From 1980 to 1984, Lena Santos Ferguson, a Black woman and DC resident, was denied membership to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) because she was Black. Patricia A. Brannan, Hogan Lovells, and the Committee represented Ms. Ferguson to reach an agreement to desegregate the DAR by changing its membership practices, conducting historical research to identify Black Revolutionary War soldiers, and funding a scholarship in her name. Ms. Ferguson has since passed and her nephew and daughter have taken up the torch to ensure lasting change in her honor. It took 40 years of pro bono work by Patricia Brannan, Hogan Lovells, and the Committee to finally get Ms. Ferguson the recognition she deserved. In 2022, the DAR contacted Ms. Ferguson's family announcing that they would post a tribute to Lena Ferguson on their webpage, place a plaque to her in their garden, double the scholarship fund, and hold a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington Cemetery in her honor.

JONES DAY

Gianna Wheeler v. American University et al.

In October 2022, Ms. Wheeler, a student at American University, resolved her claims against American University and Metropolitan Police Department officers. American University has declared their commitment to the safety, security, and well-being of all students and the entire university community. To that end, the University has retained a third-party consultant to assist with its regular periodic review of its policies and procedures regarding its responses to reports of situations involving students having social, emotional, behavioral, or medical difficulties which may involve wellness checks and involuntary hospitalizations. Jones Day and Washington Lawyers' Committee are proud to have represented Ms. Wheeler on this matter.

KAISERDILLON PLLC

Representing Galen Baughman

Galen Baughman was working as a Soros Justice Fellow at the Washington Lawyers' Committee on issues related to the collateral consequences of sex offenses when he was suddenly yanked back into prison for a technical violation of his probation. His probation officer chose to not charge him with this technicality for several months. It was only after his vocal advocacy against Virginia's criminal legal system, which utilizes a screening tool that has an explicit bias against gay men and young offenders, that he was charged. At the end of his sentence, the Commonwealth of Virginia attempted, for a second time, to indefinitely commit Mr. Baughman as a violent sex offender. The Committee referred KaiserDillon LLP to this important case in which the Commonwealth's own expert reviewed Mr. Baughman and concluded that he did not meet the criteria. The attorney general's office chose to go outside of the law to ignore these findings and hired a second expert who reached a different opinion, without ever interviewing Mr. Baughman. The Virginia Courts did not allow the defense to use either expert and the case was appealed. Thanks to KaiserDillon's dedication and more than a decade of fighting for his freedom, Galen Baughman won an impactful decision in the Virginia Supreme Court proving that the petition to indefinitely detain him was illegal.

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP, LEVY FIRESTONE MUSE LLP, AND UPTOWN PEOPLE'S LAW CENTER

Investigating and Challenging Conditions at USP Thomson

The Federal Bureau of Prisons is relocating people imprisoned in the Special Management Unit and Reintegration Unit at the United States Penitentiary Thomson (USP Thomson). Latham & Watkins LLP, Uptown People's Law Center, and the Committee represent more than 100 individuals regarding their treatment at the prison. In the course of our representation, we investigated reports of abuse and conducted interviews of more than 50 individuals imprisoned there. These interviews revealed excessive periods of isolation, dangerous and prolonged restraint, unnecessary and excessive force, retaliation and threats of retaliation, and failure of internal systems to detect and prevent abuse. For example, interviews found days-long use of four-point restraint in the supine position. Restraints were used so frequently and for such prolonged periods that people referred to the scarring on their wrists, ankles, and stomachs as the "Thomson tattoo." The team at Levy Firestone and Muse LLP took on the representation of two prisoners who witnessed a brutal beating by guards and the possible murder of another prisoner. The firm put in hundreds of hours to ensure they were transferred and represented before the grand jury. Those

who have been transferred out are profoundly relieved to be out of USP Thomson, thanks to the extensive investigation and work by all of these groups. This change would not have been possible without the bravery of the individuals incarcerated in these units at USP Thomson who came forward to report the abuse despite fear of retaliation.

MURPHY ANDERSON PLLC | PUBLIC JUSTICE

BookHolders, LLC v. Riley DeHority, Anna Pletch, and Hannah Steincamp

Three Virginia Tech students, Riley DeHority, Hannah Steincamp, and Anna Pletch, were sued by their employer, BookHolders, LLC, a retailer of college textbooks, in an attempt to deter their complaints of wage theft. After the students filed complaints with the Virginia Department of Labor reporting that BookHolders had paid them below the Virginia minimum wage of \$11/hour, BookHolders' CEO sent the students letters threatening to take legal action against them if they did not drop their complaints. The students had been required to sign arbitration agreements as a condition of their employment at the store, and the CEO falsely claimed that these arbitration agreements prohibited the students from reporting wage theft to government agencies. When the students refused to succumb to BookHolders' intimidation and pressed forward with their complaints, the CEO sued them in Maryland state court.

In response, Public Justice, Murphy Anderson PLLC, and the Committee filed a motion to dismiss BookHolders' lawsuit, arguing that the students' reports to government agencies are not a breach of their arbitration agreements, and that the lawsuits were brought to deter them from engaging in protected activity. The legal team argued that Bookholders' actions ran afoul of Maryland's anti-SLAPP law, which protects against baseless lawsuits that are filed with the purpose of intimidating people from First Amendment Activity. In January 2023, the motion to dismiss was granted and the case against the students was dismissed. The Maryland District Court found that BookHolders' had sued the students in bad faith and wanted to inhibit the students' complaints to the government. Murphy Anderson and the Committee continue to advocate on behalf of Virginia Tech students to hold BookHolders accountable for its widespread practices of paying student workers less than minimum wage.

SHEPPARD MULLIN

Kennedy et al. v. Nesbitt et al.

One of the most effective tools to slow the spread of COVID-19 is testing. Yet, DC Health's at-home testing program, which provided COVID-19 tests for free to District residents, was inaccessible to blind and low-vision individuals. This inaccessible public health program was both a disability rights and a racial justice issue. Despite being less than half of the District population, Black residents make up seventy-five percent of the persons with disabilities and are disproportionately impacted by diseases related to vision loss, including diabetes. Moreover, Black residents are more than twice as likely to sicken and die from COVID-19 as white residents. In response to this discrimination, Sheppard Mullin and the Committee filed suit in June 2022 on behalf of blind DC residents and the DC Council of the Blind. In November 2022, the District agreed to maintain an accessible Test Yourself DC program that includes in-home testing assistance, screen reader accessible online instructions, and outreach to the District's disability community about the availability of assistance for at-home COVID testing.

WILEY REIN LLP, THEODORE A. HOWARD

Doe v. Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center Commission

Our clients, a class of unaccompanied immigrant children, were forced to leave their homes, primarily in Mexico and Central America, to escape violence and other harmful experiences. On their way to the U.S. they also experienced unimaginable trauma. Instead of receiving treatment and services when they immigrated to the U.S., they were confined at the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center, a secure detention facility in Virginia, where they were subjected to inhumane treatment. Since 2017, Theodore A. Howard, Wiley Rein LLP, and the Committee have fought the pattern of excessive force, unnecessary and punitive seclusion, and deprivation of adequate mental health care at Shenandoah. In January 2021, the Fourth Circuit ruled that a facility caring for unaccompanied children must take into account the needs of these young people and provide services consistent with professional standards regarding mental health care. This year, the immigrant detention unit at Shenandoah was shuttered and immigrant children are no longer being held there.



Setting change in motion

Eversheds Sutherland is proud to support the **Washington Lawyers' Committee** and the **Wiley A. Branton Awards Luncheon**.

We join in celebrating this year's honorees and in particular our partner **Lewis S. Wiener**, recipient of the **2023 Wiley A. Branton Award**, for his extraordinary commitment to the cause of equal justice for all.

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*“Injustice anywhere
is a threat to justice
everywhere.”*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

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We applaud the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
and Urban Affairs for its efforts to protect civil rights, fight
poverty and work for equality.

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Among the many annual activities that this group engages in is the Associates Campaign, which raises funds from individuals at area law firms to support the work we do together to advance civil rights, fight poverty, and advocate for equity and justice.

We had another successful campaign this year! Our Associate Trustees and Campaign Coordinators' hard work meant we raised \$350,000. For the first time ever, we saw 29 firms involved. Nine of those are either new or returning after a brief time off. Another fifteen broke their existing fundraising records! Simply phenomenal.

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WELCOMING OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOANNE LIN

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs is honored to welcome Joanne Lin as our new Executive Director as of April 10, 2023. Ms. Lin brings 25 years of experience in advancing civil and human rights at every level of government – from the local to the national to the international arenas. She started her career in San Francisco representing women and children in family law, restraining orders, and immigration matters. She later joined one of the nation's premier immigration firms where she handled complex immigration cases, including appeals in the federal courts. Ms. Lin later moved to Washington, D.C. where she has led policy advocacy on women's rights, civil rights, immigrants' rights, and international refugee protection, at several leading human rights organizations including Amnesty International USA and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Ms. Lin succeeds Jonathan M. Smith as only the third Executive Director in the organization's nearly 55-year history. She is the first person of color, as well as the first woman, to lead the Washington Lawyers' Committee.

OUR WORK

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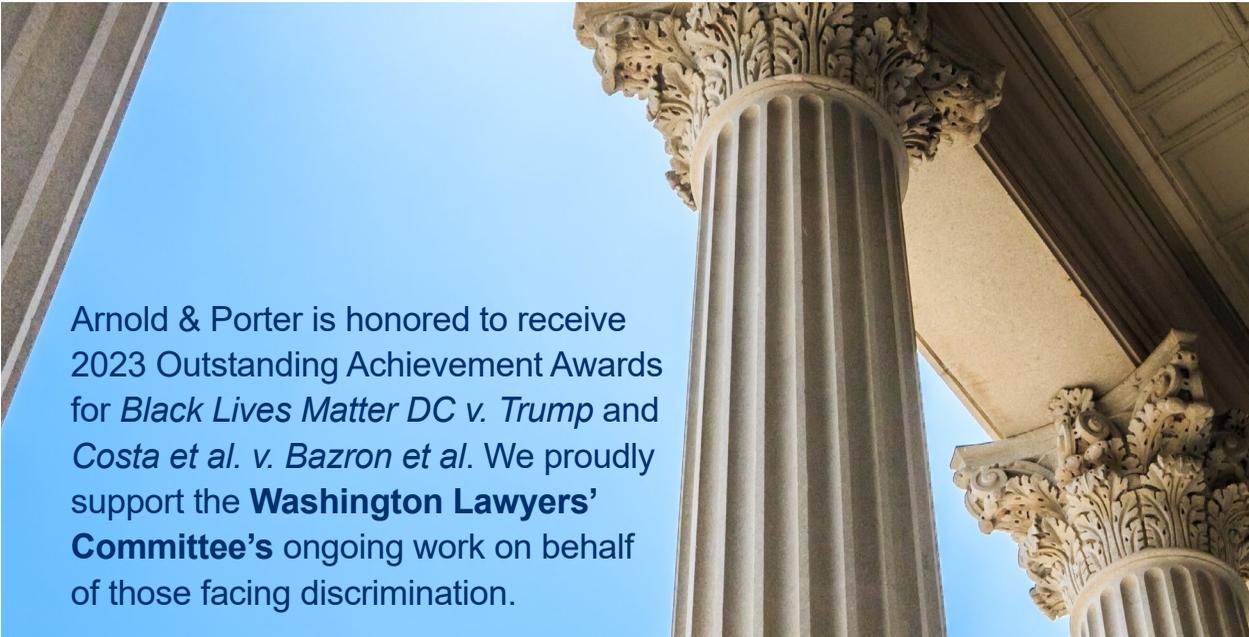


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