17TH ANNUAL WILEY A. BRANTON SYMPOSIUM

AN ENVIRONMENT OF JUSTICE: DEVELOPMENTS & CHALLENGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Howard Law Journal
Sponsored by Sidley Austin LLP and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Oct 8, 2020 | 9:30 AM - 4 PM  Zoom
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is our honor and pleasure to welcome you to the Seventeenth Annual Wiley A. Branton/Howard Law Journal Symposium. We take this time to honor and continue the legacy of our beloved former dean and civil rights hero, Wiley A. Branton. For the past seventeen years, the Symposium has served as a conduit for students, scholars, and advocates to engage in debate and discussion in an effort to further the ongoing fight for social justice. This year, we are excited to present An Environment of Justice: Developments & Challenges in Environmental Law.

Marginalized communities are now fighting several pandemics: police brutality, COVID-19, and global warming. Considering our ongoing global climate and health crises, we have chosen to focus this year’s symposium on the current state of Environmental Justice. We would like to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, the phenomenon of climate gentrification, and the role of environmental justice litigation. It is increasingly important for our communities to have equal access to a healthy environment to live, learn, and work. Moreover, in light of the upcoming November presidential election, it is critical that we are all informed of the interconnection of environmental issues and inequality, and are empowered to use our votes accordingly.

We join today to explore the developments and challenges in demanding a safe, clean community and environment. We have assembled a terrific group of speakers who will offer unique views on confronting and reducing environmental, health, and racial disparities. We are so pleased that they are able to join us in this extremely timely and interesting discussion.

We look forward to your participation and encourage you to follow us on Twitter and Instagram @HULawJournal. To engage in conversation, use the 2020 Branton hashtags, #Branton2020 and #HUSLGoesGreen, to voice your thoughts on today’s discussions.

Finally, we would like to thank our sponsors Sidley Austin LLP and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP for their generosity and support in helping make the Wiley A. Branton/Howard Law Journal Symposium an annual success. Today is a result of a year’s worth of work from dedicated members of the Howard Law Journal and members of the Law School community. To all who have contributed to the success of today in large and small ways, thank you!

Sincerely,

Katherine Sawczyn
Executive Solicitations & Submissions Editor
Howard Law Journal
Co-Chair, Branton Planning Committee

Briana Adams-Seaton
Editor-in-Chief
Howard Law Journal
Co-Chair, Branton Planning Committee
Symposium Schedule

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  Welcome Remarks
Danielle Holley-Walker | Dean, Howard University School of Law
Branton Family Representative
Jeffrey Green | Partner, Sidley Austin LLP
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP Representative
Katherine Sawczyn | Executive Solicitations & Submissions Editor, Howard Law Journal

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  Panel 1: COVID-19 and Environmental Justice in Marginalized Communities: Air/Water/Energy/Food Impacts
Shalanda H. Baker | Professor of Law, Public Policy & Urban Affairs, Northeastern University
Dr. Tom I. Romero, II | Interim Vice Chancellor Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Associate Professor of Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law
Laura Pulido | Professor, University of Oregon
Moderator: Danielle Holley-Walker | Dean, Howard University School of Law

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  Panel 2: Climate Gentrification: Shifting the Burden of Risk
Ruqaiijah Yearby | Professor of Law and Executive Director of the Institute for Healing Justice and Equity, Saint Louis University
Emily Hammond | Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law, George Washington University
Nadia Ahmad | Associate Professor of Law, Barry University School of Law
Melissa Bryan | Law Student, Barry University School of Law
Carmen G. Gonzalez | Morris I. Leibman Professor of Law, Loyola University Chicago School of Law
Moderator: Carlton Waterhouse | Professor of Law, Howard University School of Law

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.  Award Presentation
2020 Branton Award Presentation by Sidley Austin LLP: John Ford

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  Keynote Address by Vernice Miller-Travis
Vernice Travis-Miller | Executive Vice President of Metropolitan Group

2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Panel 3: The Future of Environmental Justice Legislation, Litigation, and Transformation
Dr. Sacoby Wilson | Associate Professor and Director, Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health, School of Public Health, University of Maryland-College Park
Patience Crowder | Associate Professor of Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law
Catherine Smith | Professor of Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law
Sarah A. Matsumoto | Clinical Fellow, University of Denver Sturm College of Law
Maxine Burkett | Professor of Law, William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai'i
Moderator: Darin Johnson | Professor of Law, Howard University School of Law

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  Closing Remarks
Danielle Holley-Walker | Dean, Howard University School of Law
Briana Adams-Seaton | Editor in Chief, Howard Law Journal
Wiley A. Branton

A prominent attorney and noted civil rights activist, Wiley Austin Branton was a strong advocate of voting rights for all Americans. Born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas on December 13, 1923, he received his elementary, junior high, and high school education in Pine Bluff schools.

An Army veteran of World War II, Branton spent time during the post-war period teaching Black voters how to mark an election ballot. His efforts resulted in his being convicted of a misdemeanor for “teaching the mechanics of voting.” Branton attended Arkansas A.M. & N. College (now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) where he received the Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1950. He received his law degree in 1952 from the University of Arkansas School of Law at Fayetteville.

Branton achieved national prominence when he served as the chief counsel for the Black plaintiffs in the 1957 Little Rock Desegregation Case. However, during his long distinguished legal career, he made significant contributions in the voting rights arena as both a public officer and private citizen. In 1962, the major American civil rights leaders, which included Roy Wilkins, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Whitney Young, Jr., unanimously approved the selection of Branton as the first executive director of the Southern Regional Council’s Voter Education Project, based in Atlanta, Georgia. The Project was a cooperative effort that successfully registered over 600,000 Black voters in eleven states and helped create the momentum for the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

In 1965, Branton moved to Washington where he was appointed by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey as the executive secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Council on Equal Opportunity. As a chief aide to Humphrey and Johnson, Branton traveled throughout the South encouraging Black communities to register under the 1965 Voting Rights Act. From 1972 to 1974, Branton served as head of the Voter Registration Fund, a non-partisan organization created to provide funding to tax exempt organizations in support of voter registration activities.

Wiley Austin Branton served as dean of the Howard University School of Law from January 1, 1978 to September 2, 1983.
Panel 1: COVID-19 and Environmental Justice in Marginalized Communities: Air/Water/Energy/Food Impacts

Shalanda H. Baker

Shalanda H. Baker is a Professor of Law, Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Northeastern University. She has spent over a decade conducting research on the equity dimensions of the global transition away from fossil fuel energy to cleaner energy resources. Shalanda teaches courses on renewable energy development, energy justice, and environmental law and, in 2015, she was awarded a 2016-17 Fulbright-García Robles grant to explore Mexico’s energy reform, climate change, and indigenous rights.

Before joining Northeastern’s faculty, Shalanda spent three years as an associate professor of law at the William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai‘i, where she was the founding director of the Energy Justice Program. Prior to that, she served on the faculty at University of San Francisco School of Law. Shalanda holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from the United States Air Force Academy, a Juris Doctor from Northeastern University School of Law, and an LLM from the University of Wisconsin School of Law, where she also served as a William H. Hastie Fellow. Immediately after law school, before working as a corporate and project finance attorney in both the Boston and Tokyo offices of the law firm of Bingham McCutchen, Professor Baker clerked for Associate Justice Roderick Ireland of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Shalanda is also a veteran and former Air Force officer who fought to end the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.

She is the author of over a dozen articles, book chapters, and essays on renewable energy law, policy, and development. Her book, Revolutionary Power: An Activist’s Guide to the Energy Transition will be published in January 2021 (Island Press). She is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Initiative for Energy Justice (www.iejusa.org), an organization committed to providing technical law and policy support to communities on the frontlines of climate change. She also serves on the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board, the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act Implementation Advisory Committee Climate Justice Working Group, the Board of The Solutions Project, and the Board of the Clean Energy Group.
Panel 1: COVID-19 and Environmental Justice in Marginalized Communities: Air/Water/Energy/Food Impacts

Dr. Tom I. Romero, II

Dr. Romero is an Associate Professor of Law and is Affiliated Faculty with the Department of History. The author of numerous articles, book chapters, and essays, Dr. Romero teaches and researches in the areas of the legal history of the American West, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between race and immigration law, school desegregation, property, land use, water law, urban development, and local government in the United States.

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

Dr. Romero established DU’s Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (In)Equality (IRISE) and serves as the interim Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the university. He received his Ph.D. and J.D. from the University of Michigan.
Laura Pulido is the Collins Professor of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies and Geography at the University of Oregon where she studies race, environmental justice, and cultural memory. She has written numerous books, including Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest (University of Arizona, 1996); Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles (University of California, 2006); A People’s Guide to Los Angeles (with Laura Barraclough and Wendy Cheng) (University of California, 2012). She has received numerous honors, including the Presidential Achievement Award from the Association of American Geographers and Ford and Guggenheim fellowships.
Panel 2: Climate Gentrification: Shifting the Burden of Risk

Ruqaiijah Yearby, J.D., M.P.H.

Ruqaiijah Yearby, J.D., M.P.H., is a Professor of Law and member of the Center for Health Law Studies at Saint Louis University. She is also co-founder and Executive Director of SLU’s Institute for Healing Justice and Equity as well as Co-Principal Investigator of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant entitled, “Are Cities and Counties Ready to Use Racial Equity Tools to Influence Policy?” Using empirical data, her research explores the ways in which discrimination prevents racial minorities, women, and the economically disadvantaged from attaining equal access to quality health care, resulting in health disparities.

Her work has been cited in The Oxford Handbook of Public Health (2019) and Mark Hall, et al, Health Care Law and Ethics, (9th ed 2018). She earned her B.S. in Honors Biology from the University of Michigan, M.P.H. from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.
Panel 2: Climate Gentrification: Shifting the Burden of Risk

Emily Hammond

Emily Hammond is Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Glen Earl Weston Research Professor of Law at the George Washington University. Dean Hammond is a nationally recognized expert in energy law, environmental law, and administrative law. A former environmental engineer, Dean Hammond brings technical fluency to cutting-edge issues at the intersection of law, science, and policy. Their scholarship focuses on public participation in the regulatory process, the responses of various legal institutions to scientific uncertainty, and the relationships among protest movements, environmental justice, and federal energy and environmental law.

Dean Hammond’s articles have appeared in numerous journals, including the Columbia Law Review, the Duke Law Journal, the Michigan Law Review, and the Vanderbilt Law Review. They are a co-author of one of the nation’s leading energy law texts, Energy, Economics and the Environment, and the environmental law text Environmental Protection: Law and Policy, in addition to a variety of book chapters and shorter works. Dean Hammond’s current work includes a book project that explores how federal energy and environmental laws have enabled, shaped, and hindered grassroots resistance movements in Central Appalachia.
Panel 2: Climate Gentrification: Shifting the Burden of Risk

Nadia B. Ahmad

Nadia B. Ahmad is an Associate Professor at Barry University School of Law and the Coordinator of the Environmental and Earth Law Certificate Program. Professor Ahmad’s over 40 scholarly publications focus on the intersections of energy siting, the environment, and sustainable development and draw on international investment law and corporate social responsibility. In 2016, she was recognized by the Orlando Business Journal as a 40 Under 40 honoree for her leadership and community involvement. She has presented her research on the law and policy of advanced biofuels in Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Cambridge, Doha, Denver, New York, and San Francisco. She is a co-author of the third edition of the textbook, “Environmental Justice: Law, Policy, and Regulation,” (Carolina Academic Press).

Over the past 15 years, Professor Ahmad has held various leadership positions with the American Bar Association and The Florida Bar. In 2020, she was appointed to the Council of the ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice, the Advisory Board of the ABA Center for Human Rights’ Dignity Rights Initiative, and The Florida Bar Journal/News Editorial Board. Professor Ahmad earned an undergraduate degree in Comparative Literature the University of California at Berkeley with high honors; law degree (J.D.) from the University of Florida Levin College of Law; and a masters of law (LL.M.) in Environmental and Natural Resources Law from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.
Melissa Bryan

Melissa Bryan is a 3L international student from Portmore, Jamaica at the Barry University Dwayne O Andreas School of Law. She is a student advocate for the Immigration Law Clinic at Barry. She is in the top 15% of her class, and she received the book award for legal research and writing I, and the Bluebook competition participant and judge. She is a Dean’s Study Fellow, the Managing Editor of the Child and Family Law Journal, Managing Editor for the Volume XV of the Southern Journal of Policy & Justice, Senior Student Ambassador for the Law Admissions Office, the President of the Caribbean Law Students Association, President of Barry Federal Bar Association, Alumni Chair of the Black Law Students Association, and a Barbri Ambassador. She is involved in various other organizations on campus, several bar associations in Florida, and she has volunteered for the Volunteer Income Tax Program as a Certified Tax Preparer and volunteered for several other organizations.

She is also a Scholar for the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association, Paul C. Perkins Bar Association, and the Miami Dade Women’s Lawyer Association. Melissa is a research assistant for Professor Nadia Ahmad and has edited a 622-page casebook on Environmental Justice, which was published in April 2020 by Carolina Academic Press.

Melissa has a keen interest in international law, immigration law, environmental law, civil rights law, and criminal law. Her favorite motto is “Be that change you want to see in the world.” Her long-term goal is to play a key role to incite global equitable justice systems changes, not only in Jamaica and the United States but the world as a whole.

Melissa was a Speaker & Panelist: ACJS Conference in 2017 on her Thesis Paper: Causes of Crime and Approaches to Crime Prevention in the First (USA) and Third World (Jamaica) Countries. Melissa received several other awards and achievements at her undergraduate institution, Saint Leo University whereby she graduated Cum Laude with a BA in Criminal Justice: Criminalistics.
Panel 2: Climate Gentrification: Shifting the Burden of Risk

Carmen G. Gonzalez

Carmen G. Gonzalez is the Morris I. Leibman Professor of Law at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Professor Gonzalez is a prolific scholar in international environmental law, human rights and the environment, environmental justice, and food security. She has taught at prestigious academic institutions around the globe and participated in environmental law capacity-building projects in Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union. Gonzalez is co-editor of the critically acclaimed books Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia (Utah State University Press, 2012) and Presumed Incompetent II: Race, Class, Power, and Resistance of Women in Academia (Utah State University Press, 2020). Recent publications include International Environmental Law and the Global South (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Energy Justice: U.S. and International Perspectives (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018). Her latest book, The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development, will be published in early 2021. Professor Gonzalez holds a BA from Yale University and a JD from Harvard Law School.
John Ford

John Ford, though born in Slidell, Louisiana, spent the majority of his childhood between Fayetteville, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. At nineteen, after joining the United States Army Reserves as a combat medic, John received a full-tuition Army ROTC scholarship to attend Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). John graduated magna cum laude from VCU in 2018 with his Bachelor’s degree in Economics. After graduation, John worked as a budget analyst in New York City for one year before matriculating at Howard University School of Law in 2019. This past summer, John worked at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison in their litigation department. John currently serves as a Staff Editor for the Howard Human & Civil Rights Law Review.
Keynote Address

Vernice Miller-Travis

Vernice Miller-Travis is one of the nation’s leading experts, pioneers and most respected thought leaders on environmental justice, a deeply skilled practitioner in multicultural engagement and organizational development with significant expertise in clean air and water, regulatory systems and environmental and urban planning.

Vernice consults for federal and state agencies, foundations, and nonprofits. Prior to becoming a consultant, she established the environmental justice program for NRDC and initiated the environmental justice grantmaking portfolio for the Ford Foundation. Vernice has extensive experience working with communities that have undergone economic disinvestment and environmental degradation by facilitating community-based planning and implementing community revitalization and sustainable redevelopment initiatives and projects. She has the proven ability to bring unlikely partners and diverse stakeholders from all sectors together and to help find shared goals and solutions. She is trained in environmental conflict mediation, alternative dispute resolution, and how to navigate longstanding racial, cultural and economic conflicts.

Her projects have focused on sustainable community planning and design; environmental law; regulation and policy; sustainable land-use planning, brownfields revitalization and equitable redevelopment; Superfund and hazardous waste site remediation; toxic air emissions reduction; green space design and development; healthy indoor and outdoor school environments; and advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within the environmental sector.

Recent client work includes supporting the Environmental Protection Agency’s Urban Waters, Chesapeake Bay and Near-ports Capacity Building programs, as well as drafting national guidance to facilitate partnership building among state and federal agencies and local organizations, the Georgetown Climate Center, Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

Vernice has served on the EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and has served on numerous state and federal environmental advisory councils including the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (where she chaired the Environmental Justice Committee). She is a prolific author and frequent speaker at conferences and convenings and is often interviewed by the media related to issues of environmental justice.

Vernice is the co-founder of WeACT for Environmental Justice and serves on its board, as well as on the boards of Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund, Land Loss Prevention Project, Natural Resources Defense Council’s Action Fund, Patuxent Riverkeeper, and on the advisory boards of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Green Leadership Trust, Imani Energy and the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. She was recently awarded the Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award from the Sierra Club, which recognizes individuals who have done outstanding work in the area of environmental justice.
Panel 3: The Future of Environmental Justice Legislation, Litigation, and Transformation

Dr. Sacoby Wilson

Dr. Sacoby Wilson is an Associate Professor with the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health and Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Maryland-College Park. Dr. Wilson has over 15 years of experience as an environmental health scientist in the areas of exposure science, environmental justice, environmental health disparities, community-engaged research including crowd science and community-based participatory research (CBPR), water quality analysis, air pollution studies, built environment, industrial animal production, climate change, community resiliency, and sustainability. He works primarily in partnership with community-based organizations to study and address environmental justice and health issues and translate research to action.

He has worked on environmental justice issues including environmental racism with community-based organizations through long-term community-university environmental health and justice partnerships in South Carolina and North Carolina including the Low-Country Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC), in North Charleston, South Carolina; the West End Revitalization Association (WERA) in Mebane, NC; and the Graniteville Community Coalition (GCC) in Graniteville, SC. He has provided technical assistance to REACH in Duplin County, NC; RENA in Orange County, NC; and the NC Environmental Justice Network.

Dr. Wilson has been very active professionally to advance environmental justice science. He is a member of the USEPA’s National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), board member of the Citizen Science Association, Editor in Chief of Environmental Justice, a past Chair of the APHA Environment Section, a past Chair of the Environmental Health Section of the American Public Health Association. He is a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the CDC NCEH/ATSDR, and former Chair of the Alpha Goes Green Initiative, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He is also a senior fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program.

Dr. Wilson has received many awards for his contributions and achievements as an environmental justice researcher and advocate. He won the 2018 Taking Nature Black Environmental Champion Award. He also received the APHA Environment Section Damu Smith Environmental Justice Award in 2015. From the University of Maryland School of Public Health, he received the George F. Kramer Practitioner of the Year Award (2014-2015) and the Muriel R. Sloan Communitarian Award (2019-2020, 2012-2013). He also received the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Award from the University of South Carolina in 2011. He received a US EPA Environmental Justice Achievement Award given to Low Country Alliance for Model Communities, North Charleston, SC and Mitigation Agreement Committee. Additionally, Dr. Wilson received the Steve Wing International Environmental Justice Award in 2008.

Dr. Wilson, a two-time EPA STAR fellow, EPA MAI fellow, Udall Scholar. NASA Space Scholar, and Thurgood Marshall Scholar, received his BS degree in Biology/Ecotoxicology with a minor in Environmental Science from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1998. He received training in environmental health in the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Wilson received his MS degree in 2000 from UNC-Chapel Hill and his PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2005.
Panel 3: The Future of Environmental Justice Legislation, Litigation, and Transformation

Patience Crowder

Professor Patience Crowder joined the DU faculty in 2010 to create and teach the Community Economic Development Clinic. Prior to joining the faculty, she was the Wellspring Assistant Clinical Professor of Law at Tulsa College of Law, where she formed and taught a transactional legal clinic. She began her career in the legal academy as a Clinical Fellow in the Community Development Clinic at the University of Baltimore School of Law after working in Sacramento, California, as the business development manager of a nonprofit corporation that works to revitalize an inner-city neighborhood through economic development and public education. She began her legal career as a bank finance associate with Shearman & Sterling in San Francisco, California. Her scholarship examines the impact of contract, corporate, and local government law in transactional advocacy for the public interest, particularly the revitalization of inner-city and underserved communities. Her articles have been published by the Tennessee Law Review, the Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law (reprint), the Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy, the Marquette Law Review, and the Indiana Law Review – among others. She earned her J.D. from Rutgers School of Law – Newark, where she was an Articles Editor of the Rutgers Law Review. She received her B.A. in Sociology from Georgetown University.
Panel 3: The Future of Environmental Justice Legislation, Litigation, and Transformation

Catherine Smith

Catherine Smith joined the faculty at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 2004. She teaches torts, children and the law, and sexuality, gender and the law. She has published in legal journals, including Wisconsin Law Review, Washington University Law Review, and U.C. Davis Law Review. Smith’s research seeks to develop and expand children’s equal protection rights. Her co-authored amicus brief on children’s rights was cited and relied upon in the same-sex marriage decision, Obergefell v. Hodges. She recently completed a chapter (“concurring opinion”) for the forthcoming book, What Obergefell v. Hodges Should Have Said: The Nation’s Top Legal Experts Rewrite America’s Same-Sex Marriage Opinion (Jack M. Balkin, ed., Yale University Press, 2020). Smith is currently serving as an expert in Juliana v. United States, the landmark climate case brought by twenty-one young people suing the federal government for its role in the climate crisis.
Sarah Matsumoto is the Clinical Fellow in the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. In her role as a clinical fellow, she supervises teams of students on a variety of environmental law matters, including litigation under the Colorado and federal APA, oil and gas-oriented matters, and other advocacy efforts aimed at improving water and air quality. Sarah co-teaches the clinical seminar focused on various aspects of environmental law and lawyering skills. Before joining the clinic, Sarah advocated on behalf of plaintiffs in environmental citizen suits at a firm in Eugene, Oregon. Most of her clients sought to halt or remediate pollution by enforcing our nation’s major federal environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). During her time in Eugene, Sarah successfully litigated against several large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and a national freight railroad operator, and oversaw remediation efforts at a coal-fired power plant.

Sarah received her J.D. from Seattle University School of Law, where she co-founded a student-run publication that eventually became the Seattle Journal of Environmental Law. She also participated in the school’s International Human Rights Clinic, where she co-authored an amicus curiae brief in support of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori’s conviction for human rights violations. Prior to law school, Sarah worked in research and development at an international coffee company. She graduated with a B.A. in Political Science and Communication from the University of Washington.

Sarah has published Citizens of Washington State Work to Fill Gaps in Regulation of Surface and Groundwater Pollution from CAFOs, 33-SPR Nat. Resources & Env’t 26 (2019), and is working on an article discussing the need for centering food industry workers at the center of environmental justice considerations. Her additional scholarship interests include the Clean Water Act, organizational standing, and areas where environmental laws and policies disproportionately harm communities of color.
Maxine Burkett is a Professor of Law at the William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai’i and a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. She is also a Co-Founder and Senior Advisor to the non-profit Institute for Climate and Peace. Burkett is an expert in the law and policy of climate change, with a specific focus on climate justice, climate-induced migration, and climate change, peace, and conflict.

Her work has been cited in numerous news and policy outlets, including BBC Radio, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and Nature Climate Change. From 2009-2012, Burkett also served as the inaugural director of the Center for Island Climate Adaptation and Policy.

Prof. Burkett received her B.A. from Williams College and Exeter College, Oxford University, and received her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. She serves on the boards of Blue Planet Foundation, The Climate Museum, ELAW, and Global Greengrants Fund, was a member of the Federal Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment and is a member of the Independent Advisory Committee on Applied Climate Assessment. Professor Burkett is also a member scholar of the Center for Progressive Reform, the Lancet Commission for Reparations and Redistributive Justice, and the American Law Institute.
The Wiley A. Branton/Howard Law Journal Symposium Committee would like to thank all participants and guests who attended today’s Symposium. We offer our special thanks to the many people who made the Symposium possible.

Sidley Austin LLP
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