





# Ambassadors for Racial Justice 2023

## **The Program**

Sponsored by the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative and The Gault Center, the Ambassadors for Racial Justice program is for defenders who are committed to challenging racial injustice in the juvenile legal system.

## **The Goal**

To grow the number of youth defenders and advocates equipped to develop strategies to combat racial inequities in their jurisdictions and to facilitate difficult conversations on race. We recognize that defeating systemic racial inequities within the juvenile legal system requires efforts outside of litigation and advocates all over the country. We believe that supporting a cohort of defenders as they engage in work that transcends routine legal advocacy will allow for long-term, sustainable results within the juvenile legal system.

## **The Outcome**

A group of well-trained, diverse youth defenders and advocates - who may go on to become policy experts, judges, and legislators - ready to represent minority viewpoints, empower communities of color, and systemically reform our juvenile legal system.



"The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned." – Bryan Stevenson

## Natalie Peebles

### New York, NY

19 years in public defense

Natalie Peebles is the Director of Youth Justice Policy and Training at the Juvenile Rights Practice of the Legal Aid Society. Natalie began her Legal Aid career in 2004, in the Brooklyn office of Juvenile Rights Practice. She transferred to their Criminal Practice in 2008, where she advanced her litigation skills representing clients in serious felony and misdemeanor cases from inception to disposition, for over a decade. Many of those cases were litigated as jury trials and suppression hearings in Criminal and Supreme Court in Brooklyn.

Natalie's passion for juvenile justice began during her clinical experience as a law student. During the clinic she represented children charged with delinquencies, and that experience sparked an interest in representing young people in the juvenile legal system. Natalie is passionate about juvenile defense and is deeply committed to bettering the lives of the children in the juvenile legal system.

## Marangely González-Correa

### San Juan, PR

16 years in public defense

Marangely González-Correa was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She started her bachelor's degree at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus and, in 1996, went to the University of South Carolina as part of an exchange program. She ultimately transferred to U.S.C., becoming a Lady Gamecock. In 1998, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a major in Marketing.

She decided at a very young age that she wanted to be an attorney. In 2001, she started her legal studies at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, where she graduated with honors in 2004. While studying law, she was surprised to find that she was interested in criminal law. She worked for a summer at the Attorney General's Office of Puerto Rico's Department of Justice, where the majority of cases she was assigned were criminal. While working on an appeal defending a guilty verdict, an alarm went off and she questioned herself... "What if this person is innocent and circumstances can prove it?" From that point on, she decided she wanted to represent people accused of committing crimes. In 2005, she started working at Sociedad para Asistencia Legal, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing legal services to underprivileged citizens accused of committing crimes. She was offered an opportunity in Juvenile Court, where she worked for almost four years. She witnessed the obstacles that most clients encounter and how the system criminalizes most clients because of where they live. After that experience, she was transferred to the Appeals Division in 2009, where she has worked ever since on juvenile appellate proceedings and also gives legal advice to juvenile attorneys.



"I would like to be an Ambassador for Racial Justice to bring awareness to the different forms of racism in Puerto Rico. I would also like to learn new techniques and approaches to deal with the issue of race at the appellate level and to pass that knowledge on to other defenders that work with children. At the same time, I would like to make youth aware that their circumstances are not obstacles to achieve greatness in their lives."





“Hope is a discipline.”  
– Mariame Kaba

## Charlyn Bohland Columbus, OH

11 years in public defense

Charlyn Bohland is a passionately hopeful person who believes in the power of connecting with others. She has represented children facing the legal system for 11 years. She is a supervising attorney in the Youth Defense Department of the Office of the Ohio Public Defender. In this role, she supervises and mentors a team of appellate attorneys, collaboratively works on cases, and helps to direct litigation strategy. As part of this work, Charlyn has managed the completion of a transfer guide that encourages youth defenders to raise disparate impact arguments. Charlyn also litigates appeals, and represents people who were sent to prison for extreme sentences as teenagers in parole proceedings.

For years, Charlyn’s representation focused on teenagers who were sentenced to die in prison. With the passage of Ohio’s S.B. 256, they now have a chance of release on parole. Because transfer from juvenile to adult court disparately impacts children of color, S.B. 256 is primarily a racial justice bill. It presented a tremendous opportunity to provide relief to those who were transferred and excessively sentenced. As part of the passage of S.B. 256, Charlyn volunteered to manage the implementation of the law for OPD, including developing a cadre of passionate attorneys to represent those newly eligible for hearings, fielding inquiries about the law, and working with the parole board on details of hearings. Charlyn also coordinates quarterly statewide youth defender meetings to learn and strategize; co-chairs the Kids in Adult Prison group; and participates in the Juvenile Law Committee of the state bar association, the Racial Justice Initiative, and the Diversity and Inclusion group.

Outside of work, Charlyn is a voracious reader and loves to spend time hiking with her husband, 5-year-old child, and dogs.

## Hannah Van De Car New Orleans, LA

6 years in public defense

Hannah Van De Car is a Supervising Attorney at the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, where she works exclusively on juvenile life without parole cases. Hannah has been with LCCR since 2016, beginning her career as a Loyola Law School Public Interest Law Fellow. In 2019, she joined the Juvenile Life without Parole Direct Representation Team at LCCR, which provides counsel to the vast majority of children facing life without parole sentences, as well as the men who have been imprisoned for decades under illegal mandatory life without parole sentences.

During law school, Hannah worked for two years as a certified law student in the Juvenile Justice Clinic, pursuing her singular goal of becoming a public defender for youth.

Hannah was born and raised in Hilo, Hawai'i, and is a member of the Native Hawaiian Bar Association.



“All kids stumble as they grow and learn. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth, like all children, deserve compassion and empathy as they grow. We must fight to dismantle the inherently racist system that criminalizes and punishes the normal adolescent development of children of color.”



“I am excited to be an Ambassador for Racial Justice because youth of color deserve zealous and competent representation.”

## Maria Bardo-Colon Jacksonville, FL

4 years in public defense

Maria Bardo-Colon joined the Ambassadors for Racial Justice while working as an Assistant Public Defender in the Juvenile Division of the Duval County Public Defender’s Office (Jacksonville, FL). She exclusively handled cases in delinquency court and was the attorney assigned to crossover (youth in foster care) and previously the treatment courts – Girls Court and HOPE (Mental Health) Court. In 2019, she completed the Juvenile Training Immersion Program at Georgetown Law.

She has spoken on juvenile justice panels, served as a presenter at the Department of Children and Families Summit and as a REACHing Teens Initiative Champion where she collaborated with others in the delinquency and dependency systems to better serve youth in foster care.

She received her B.A. in Economics from Boston College and is a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law.

## Keiler Beers

### Portland, OR

2 years in public defense

Keiler Beers is a public defender in Portland, Oregon with the Metropolitan Public Defender's Office. In the Parent|Child Advocacy Division, he represents youth charged with crimes, as well as parents and children in child welfare/family regulation system cases. Altogether, he sees his role as defending the rights of youth and their families against government separation, punishment and surveillance.

Keiler was raised in Portland, and has since lived all over the country working in the fields of migrant humanitarian aid, gang intervention, refugee resettlement, shelter management and youth defense. He earned a B.A. from Whitman College and J.D. from New York University School of Law, where he was a Student Fellow at the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law. Within his unit, he specializes in restorative justice cases, and takes every Spanish-speaking client. He is on the advisory board of the Western Region of the Gault Center, and a member of the coordinating committee of the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon.



"I am excited to be an Ambassador for Racial Justice because I have seen the devastating effects that the criminal legal system can have on youth of color, and I am eager to develop skills that will help me not only defend them, but also advocate for what they actually need."



## Imani Hollie

### Milwaukee, WI

2 years in public defense



“I am excited to be an Ambassador for Racial Justice because I want to equip youth defenders with the tools to disrupt a system designed to perpetuate racial injustice. I want to empower my clients by amplifying their lived experiences so they no longer have to persevere through racism but conquer it.”

Imani Hollie is an Assistant State Public Defender in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, specializing in youth delinquency, child protection, and emerging adult criminal cases. Originally from Los Angeles, California, Imani is an alumna of Loyola University Chicago, School of Law. Imani was a law clerk at the Cook County Public Defender Office in the Juvenile Justice Division. She also interned for the Lawndale Christian Legal Center, a non-profit organization located on the Westside of Chicago, representing youth in delinquency proceedings.

Additionally, Imani represented students in suspension, expulsion, and IEP meetings as a student advocate for Loyola’s SUFEO (Stand Up For Each Other!), a student-run organization that provides free information and services for K-12 students facing suspension, bullying or exclusion from school.

Imani is the Associate Director of Professional Identity Formation at Loyola University Chicago, School of Law teaching a diversity, inclusion, and equity course to first year law students.

## Gavriella Roisman

### Austin, TX

2 years in public defense

Gavriella Roisman is a Staff Attorney at Lone Star Justice Alliance advocating for youth and adult survivors of human trafficking and intimate partner violence, and youth who were tried in the adult criminal legal system and given harsh sentences. Ms. Roisman has a background in education and special needs, and has worked in multiple community organizations within Austin, Houston, and Los Angeles, with a focus on engagement and outreach. She previously served as Deputy Legal Program Director and Legal Clinical Supervisor at the Juvenile and Children's Advocacy Project, Adjunct Professor of the Street Law course, and led the Education Rights Clinic at the University of Houston Law Center. Ms. Roisman provided pro-bono legal services for youth in the Fifth Ward in collaboration with the Center for Urban Transformation and Joel Androphy of Berg & Androphy, as well as a guardian ad litem and educational surrogate for youth with dual system status in Harris County.

Ms. Roisman sits on the Harris County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Steering Committee, Disability Rights Texas' Reentry Committee, and the VOICES Advisory Counsel. Ms. Roisman has presented across Texas, as well as led panel discussions on trauma-informed care for youth with dual-system status and clear-concern youth within the foster care system. Ms. Roisman was a contributor to professional and layperson advocacy publications through the Center for Children, Law & Policy. She continues to teach law and advocacy-based courses for high school students in both Houston and Austin.

Ms. Roisman is a graduate of the University of Houston Law Center where she served as an Irene Merker Rosenberg scholar, Marvin D. Nathan Fellow at the Anti-Defamation League, and received the UHLC Clinic Program Award for her work in the Civil Clinic, and the Yale Rosenberg Memorial Prize for legal writing.



“If we continue to remain silent, we are guilty of complicity in a system designed to subjugate, instead of providing grace to children, especially children of color. I am humbled to be working with such a deafening group of leaders and cohorts to fight for a system that is determined to treat kids as kids.”



“What you look like or how you identify should have no effect on how you are treated in the eyes of the law. Youth of color deserve to be able to explore adolescence without being disproportionately targeted by the judicial system. I am excited to become an Ambassador for Racial Justice because it will help me stay true to the reason I became a lawyer: to be an advocate for the historically marginalized.”

## Denis Lemus

### Omaha, NE

1 year in public defense

Denis Lemus serves as Staff Attorney for the Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic at Creighton University School of Law. Denis joined the Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic directly after graduating law school and has been committed to public interest work and addressing issues related to equal access to justice.

During law school, he spent two years as the law clerk for the Milton R. Abrahams Legal Clinic representing low-income clients before joining the Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic as a law student in his final year. While with the Juvenile Clinic he began representing youth accused of delinquencies and status offenses in Douglas County, Nebraska as well as providing educational advocacy for system-involved youth. This experience led Denis to pursue a career in youth defense, with the desire to effectuate change both in his jurisdiction and on a national level.

Denis graduated with a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and received his J.D. from Creighton University School of Law. He has spent both his professional and student legal career helping individuals who would otherwise have to forego representation. Denis strives to break the mold of how a typical lawyer should look and act and strives for authenticity in everything he does.



## Faculty & Leadership





“Together, we can radically reduce the footprint of police in the lives of Black and Brown children. That work starts by decriminalizing normal adolescent behaviors and treating all children like children!”

## Kristin Henning

### Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative

Kristin Henning is a nationally recognized advocate, author, trainer, and consultant on the intersection of race, adolescence, and the “policing” of Black youth. She is the Blume Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative at Georgetown Law and was previously the Lead Attorney of the Juvenile Unit at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia.

Kris has been representing children accused of crime for more than twenty-six years and is the co-founder of a number of initiatives to combat racial injustice in the juvenile and criminal legal systems, including the Ambassadors for Racial Justice program and a Racial Justice Toolkit for youth defenders. Kris also trains state actors across the country on the impact of racial bias on youth in the courts and the traumatic effects of over-policing and hyper-surveillance.

She has received several awards, including the 2021 Leadership Prize from the Juvenile Law Center and the 2022 Women of Distinction Award from the American Association of University Women. Kris has written many articles and other publications advocating for reform in the juvenile legal system. Her recent book, *The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth* (Penguin Random House), was featured on the front page of the *New York Times* Book Review and was awarded a 2022 Media for a Just Society Award by Evident Change and the 2022 Social Justice Advocacy Award from the In the Margins Book Awards Committee.

## Mary Ann Scali

### The Gault Center: Defenders of Youth Rights

Mary Ann Scali serves as the executive director of The Gault Center where she works with youth defenders and advocates dedicated to promoting justice for all children by ensuring excellence in youth defense. After working as a summer law clerk for The Gault Center in 1996, Mary Ann became the Deputy Director in 2000 and the Executive Director in 2017. In partnership with The Gault Center team and youth defense leaders, Mary Ann delivers youth defense training and technical assistance, conducts state-level youth defense assessments, and facilitates cross-disciplinary reform efforts aimed at developing resources and policies to strengthen youth defense and access to justice for all youth.

Prior to joining The Gault Center, Mary Ann defended youth in the juvenile division of the Office of the Public Defender in Baltimore City, MD; spent two years teaching high school in Pohnpei, Micronesia; served in the Jesuit Refugee Service in Rome, Italy; and taught Baltimore City boys at the Baraka School in Nanyuki, Kenya. Mary Ann holds a JD and MSW from Loyola University Chicago where she was a CIVITAS ChildLaw Fellow.



“Addressing racial disparities has long been a part of our work as juvenile defenders. We now have the mandate and the tools to create the change needed to establish racial justice for all youth!”



“Black and Brown children, like all children, are entitled to a healthy and happy childhood without the interference of racism and biases from the adults who are supposed to be protecting them. It is our responsibility to safeguard their opportunity for positive life outcomes by defending their rights vigorously and standing guard against harms that flow from involvement in the system.”

## Ebony Howard

### The Gault Center: Defenders of Youth Rights

Ebony is the Deputy Director for The Gault Center. In this role, she works to serve youth defenders and advocates so that they may seek justice for children and adolescents and provide excellence in juvenile defense.

Prior to joining The Gault Center, Ebony was a Senior Supervising Attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center where she developed, implemented, and managed litigation and policy campaigns to combat injustice and systemic racism in the criminal and youth justice systems. Ebony also defended individuals charged with federal crimes in District Court as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the Northern District of Alabama. Currently, Ebony serves on the boards for the National Juvenile Justice Network and Youth Towers – a Birmingham, Alabama-based organization dedicated to supporting homeless youth ages 19 to 26.

Ebony graduated from Howard University Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in Political Science, and attended the Georgetown University Law Center. While at Georgetown Law, Ebony was a student attorney in the Juvenile Justice Clinic where she represented young people before the District of Columbia Superior Court.

## Rebba Omer

### Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative

Rebba Omer serves as Senior Staff Attorney and Lead Program Manager for the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative (JJCI). Rebba joined JJCI after serving for four years as an Assistant Public Defender at the Community Law Office in Knoxville, TN where she specialized in advocating for children accused of delinquent offenses. Rebba has been trained in holistic, client-centered criminal defense representation and youth defense specialization through the Gideon's Promise Core 101 three-year training program and The Gault Center's Youth Defender Advocacy Program (formerly JTIP) Summer Academy. Rebba came to the Community Law Office through Northwestern University School of Law's Pritzker Fellowship.

While a student attorney in the Northwestern Bluhm Legal Clinic's Children and Family Justice Center, Rebba represented individual clients impacted by the juvenile justice system and collaborated with professors on policy advocacy. In her final year of law school, Rebba completed a senior research project in Bangladesh where she assisted an NGO with a country-requested audit of the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Prior to law school, Rebba was an AmeriCorps volunteer at an Oakland, CA homeless shelter where she taught job search and retention skills to clients with barriers to employment. She graduated summa cum laude from DePaul University in 2010 with a B.A. in English literature and a minor in public policy.



"I'm thrilled to support the 2023 Ambassadors for Racial Justice as we work together to abolish the white supremacy embedded in our legal system and create a world where Black and Brown youth are free to fully enjoy their rights as children."



## Tiera Brown

### The Gault Center: Defenders of Youth Rights

Tiera Brown is the 2022-2024 Gault Fellow at The Gault Center. Prior to joining the Gault Center, Tiera worked at the Colorado State Public Defenders Office, assisting with the defense of youth with felony and misdemeanor cases, and at the Colorado Juvenile Defender Center, where she represented young people in their expungement and deregistration hearings through CJDC's Believe in Youth program and worked on legislative policy efforts related to youth restitution, fines, and fees.

Tiera serves on the Coalition for Minority Youth Equity, which aims to address racial and ethnic disparities in the youth justice system; she is a founding board member of BSWC LCA, an organization providing on-the-ground support and resources to sex workers and victims of trafficking; and she is a volunteer for LYRIC, Learn Your Rights in the Community, an organization composed of passionate attorney volunteers donating their time to empower Colorado youth to exercise their constitutional rights.

Tiera graduated from the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law, where she was a student attorney in the Criminal Defense Clinic, and from Boston College.

Tiera lives in Denver, Colorado with her son and their growing collection of over 50 houseplants.



“I imagine a world where youth are afforded quality care, community, and resources so that they’re better equipped to navigate the world and less likely to be caged away by a society that refuses to invest in them.”



"Black and Brown youth deserve a childhood free from racism and full of opportunity. Passionate, effective advocates like the Ambassadors for Racial Justice help make the vision of a just future, rooted in dignity and love, a reality."

## Alina Tulloch

### Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative

Alina Tulloch is the Racial Justice and Youth Defense fellow at Georgetown Law's Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative. The promise of true equality, especially for those impacted by race-based discrimination, motivates her work. She received her J.D. from New York University School of Law (NYU).

In law school, Alina participated in the Racial Equity Strategies Clinic and the Racial Justice Clinic, which allowed her to work alongside attorneys from the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union, respectively. Her clinical experiences centered on school desegregation and advancing voting rights. She was a member of the Black Allied Law Students Association's public interest committee, a Diversity & Outreach Co-chair of the Public Interest Law Students Association, and a Staff Development Editor for the *Review of Law and Social Change*. In 2020, Alina was selected as a Paul-Weiss fellow with NYU's Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law. She spent her summers at the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights and the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Originally from South Florida, Alina served in various student-facing and administrative roles at Broward College. She also worked as a research assistant at the University of Miami. While there, she was part of a team focused on delivering evidence-based, culturally-informed therapy to minority youth and their families. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a major in Psychology and a minor in Hispanic Studies.

# Ambassadors for Racial Justice

For more information about the Ambassadors for Racial Justice Program and the Juvenile Justice Initiative at Georgetown Law, please visit <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/experiential-learning/clinics/our-clinics/juvenile-justice-clinic/juvenile-justice-initiative/> or email [lawjjc@georgetown.edu](mailto:lawjjc@georgetown.edu). You can find a toolkit for youth defenders at [defendracialjustice.org](https://defendracialjustice.org).

