

The Education of the Urban Child

Eighth Annual Urban Child Symposium

April 7, 2016

**Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC)
University of Baltimore School of Law**

Participant Bios

Barbara A. Babb, Associate Professor of Law and Director, Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC)

Barbara Babb has taught various family law courses at the University of Baltimore since 1989. She has written and spoken extensively at the state, national and international levels about unified family courts, family justice system reform, family law decision-making and other family law issues. Professor Babb's scholarship is interdisciplinary and focuses on the incorporation of therapeutic jurisprudence and the ecology of human development in family law matters. She has participated in court and law reform projects in Maryland, nationally and internationally. In recognition of her work, Professor Babb has received the University System of Maryland Regents' Award for Outstanding Public Service, the first Benjamin L. Cardin Distinguished Service Award, the Rosalyn B. Bell Award for Outstanding Contributions in Family Law, two Outstanding Teaching Awards from the School of Law, a Human Rights and Justice Champion Award from the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau and the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award from the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). She is the editor-in-chief of AFCC's *Family Court Review*, which is the leading interdisciplinary academic and research journal for family law professionals. She received a J.D. and M.S. from Cornell University, and she is a member of the New York and Maryland bars.

Moshe Berry, School Social Worker, Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School

Moshe Berry, LCSW-C, has been a School Social Worker in Baltimore City Schools for almost 10 years. He has been involved in overseeing attendance in several schools that range from elementary through high school. Through his work, he has developed a strong interest in understanding attendance and truancy. In addition, he co-chairs the Intervention and Student Support Teams and is the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) coach and point person for all social and emotional issues at school, which can range from suicidal ideation to child abuse and neglect. He also partners with many other agencies and organizations to provide programming, resources and training for students, parents and staff. Topics include: mental health, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) initiatives, mentoring, financial literacy, bullying, safety, tutoring, books and career day. Finally, he has provided district-wide professional development training on attendance, check-in check-out, bullying and field internship orientation for all social work interns in Baltimore City Public Schools. Mr. Berry is passionate about education and very keen on working with other individuals/educators, as well as community resources and stakeholders to support schools in various roles. He received an M.S.W. from the University of Maryland, School of Social Work.

Monisha Cherayil, Attorney, Public Justice Center

Monisha Cherayil is the lead attorney with the Public Justice Center's Education Stability Project. In that role, she advocates to ensure that students who are homeless and in foster care have the opportunity to enroll, stay stable and succeed in school both through work with individual students and families, and through systemic reform efforts. Prior to joining the Education Stability Project, Ms. Cherayil was the Public Justice Center's 2009–2010 Murnaghan Fellow and a 2008–2009 clerk with the Honorable Judge Phyllis Thompson on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. She previously worked for the Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Boston and the Harrison Institute for Public Policy. She graduated from Georgetown University Law Center with honors and from Brandeis University with honors and a joint degree in economics and political science.

James Cole, Jr., General Counsel, Delegated Duties of Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

At the U.S. Department of Education, James Cole, Jr., oversees a broad range of operational, management, policy, legal and program functions, including the Department's work on President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Task Force, which seeks to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color, and to ensure that all young people are able to reach their full potential. Deputy Secretary Cole was the first in his family to graduate from college. He credits a high school English teacher with inspiring and convincing him to pursue higher education. He went on to receive his B.S. in finance with honors from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and his J.D. from the University of Chicago, where he served as a comment editor of the University of Chicago Law School Roundtable. He clerked for the Honorable Stephanie K. Seymour of the U.S. Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit. He has held several previous positions focusing on educational achievement, access and opportunity for all students. From 2004 to 2011, he served on the board of directors of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. From 2005 to 2011, he also served on the board of trustees of Prep for Prep, a New York City-based youth leadership development program that identifies and prepares students of color for the rigors of independent day and boarding schools. In addition, he has mentored high school and college students since graduating from Dunbar Vocational High School, located on Chicago's South Side.

Gloria Danziger, Senior Fellow, CFCC

Gloria Danziger has served as CFCC Senior Fellow since 2002, where she oversees the day-to-day operation of the Truancy Court Program, researches and writes about family justice system reform and develops grant proposals and programs. Prior to her position at CFCC, Ms. Danziger served as Staff Director of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Substance Abuse for eight years. She has spoken widely and has written about the impact of addiction and substance abuse on families, children and the courts, and she is the founding Co-Chair of the National Substance Abuse Coalition, a coalition of national membership organizations collaborating on substance abuse and addiction issues. Ms. Danziger has served on a number of advisory committees and boards. In 2002, she received the Award of Outstanding Service from the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. Prior to entering law school, Ms. Danziger was an investigative reporter in Atlantic City and worked for the East European Bureau of the Voice of America in Munich, Germany. She received a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center and an M.Phil. from Oxford University.

Katherine Davis, Esq., Truancy Court Program Attorney, CFCC

Katherine Davis provides legal services for Truancy Court Program students and their families and serves as a supervisor to the CFCC's Student Fellows Program. She often serves as the bridge between the Baltimore City Public School System and families within the school system, providing counsel to children and their parents relating to public benefits, inadequate housing, evictions, guardianship and school discipline—all factors that impact student absenteeism. Prior to joining the University of Baltimore, Ms. Davis served as an Assistant Attorney General for the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, where she drafted Final Agency Decisions for the Maryland Office of Safety and Health and provided legal counsel to the Commissioner of Labor and Industry on some of Maryland's most critical labor and employment issues. In her time there, she was instrumental in the drafting of the *Workplace Fraud Act* of 2009 and the *Clean Indoor Air Act* of 2007. She was as an Adjunct Professor at the UB Law School from 2011 to 2013, and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 2012. She received a J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law in Athens, Georgia, and a baccalaureate from the University of Richmond.

Jenny Egan, Assistant Public Defender, Juvenile Division, Office of the Public Defender, Baltimore City

Jenny Egan is a juvenile public defender in Baltimore, Maryland, where she focuses on school-based arrests and ending the school-to-prison pipeline. Prior to serving as a public defender, she was a fellow at the National Women's Law Center and the Advocacy Coordinator for the ACLU's National Security Project. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School and Smith College.

Pat Halle, Paralegal, Maryland Disability Law Center

For over 30 years, Pat Halle has provided legal advocacy assistance to parents and caregivers of children with disabilities who attend public schools in Maryland, focusing especially on Baltimore City. The Maryland Disability Law Center is a private non-profit law office which is the Protection and Advocacy Agency mandated to advance and defend the rights of Marylanders with disabilities. Ms. Halle regularly provides training to parents, teachers, foster parents, advocates, Department of Social Service workers and mental health clinicians about access to education, special education and afterschool and summer programs, special education laws, advocacy and self-advocacy skills. For the past five years, she worked closely with youth leaders and other advocates to understand the barriers to everyday school attendance faced by youth with disabilities. She works closely with advocates, service providers, parents and community leaders to increase opportunities for youth with disabilities to participate safely and effectively in afterschool and summer programs as part of a strategy to improve school attendance, engagement and achievement.

Michele Hong-Polansky, Program Specialist, CFCC

Michele Hong-Polansky is a Program Specialist at CFCC. In that role, she assists with grant and report writing, truancy court program data analyses, CFCC's blog and supervision of student fellows. Prior to joining CFCC, she spent after seven and a half years as a policy analyst with the Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. At the Institute, she participated in numerous strategic planning efforts with state and city child-serving agencies to improve outcomes for Maryland's children, youth and families, focusing on justice-involved youth as well as behavioral health services, child welfare and education. Ms. Hong-Polansky previously worked as Policy Coordinator for Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice at Advocates for Children and Youth, where she helped advance ACY's legislative agenda during the Legislative Session, working on various coalitions to promote child welfare and juvenile justice reform throughout Maryland. Before re-locating to Baltimore, she lived in New York City where she served as Associate General Counsel at Kaplan, Inc., part of Graham Holdings, formerly The Washington Post Company, and worked as a litigation associate at Fried Frank Harris Shriver and Jacobson and at RubinBaum LLP (now Dentons US LLP), specializing in securities fraud and Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations litigation. She received a J.D. from Cornell Law School and a B.A. in comparative literature from Columbia University.

Cassie Motz, Executive Director, CollegeBound Foundation

Cassie Motz joined the CollegeBound Foundation as Executive Director in January 2014. Prior to joining CollegeBound, Ms. Motz served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Martin O'Malley. She also served as Deputy Legal Counsel to Governor O'Malley and as the Interim Director of the Governor's Office for Children. She taught at a public middle school in the South Bronx, New York, through Teach for America and practiced law for several years in Washington—prosecuting homicide and domestic violence cases as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and serving as a Deputy Attorney General for the District of Columbia government, representing the city's child welfare and mental health agencies. She served on the University System of Maryland Board of Regents from June 2014 to March 2015 and is the immediate past President of the board of Baltimore Outreach Services, a homeless shelter and job-training program for women in Federal Hill. She serves as Board Secretary for the KIPP Baltimore School and is a graduate of the Greater Baltimore Committee's Leadership Program. She graduated from Dartmouth College and Yale Law School.

Robert Nixon, Community Organizer, Youth as Resources

Robert Nixon lives in Baltimore and is a community organizer at Youth as Resources (YAR). Founded in 1994, YAR is a youth-led and managed grant making, community organizing and leadership development organization that helps youth address the problems associated with living in poverty in our own communities. YAR projects have included the Big Sib/Little Sib Mentoring Program, 3D Garden to teach environmental awareness to teens, East Baltimore Lost Boys and Girls Safe Space, The Baltimore Algebra Project and Beast Grrl Zine. Mr. Nixon graduated from Maryland Academy for Technology and Health Sciences in June 2011 and plans to pursue a college degree in the field of engineering and robotics.

Kurt L. Schmoke, President, University of Baltimore

Kurt L. Schmoke became the University of Baltimore's eighth president in 2012, bringing to the university a wealth of experience in public service, higher education and leadership. Schmoke served three terms as the Mayor of Baltimore from 1987 to 1999 and was the Baltimore City State's Attorney from 1982 to 1987. Prior to joining UB, he was Dean of the Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., then served as Howard's General Counsel and Interim Provost. During his tenure as Baltimore's mayor, he initiated innovative programs in housing, education, public health and economic development. His public service record extends to the 1970s, when he was appointed Assistant Director of the White House Domestic Policy Staff under President Jimmy Carter. He also served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland. After serving as Mayor of Baltimore, he returned to the practice of law as a partner in the firm of Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering. He became actively involved in the National Bar Association and the American Bar Association, serving as Chair of the ABA's Council on Racial and Ethnic Justice. He has provided countless hours of pro bono legal services to charitable organizations, such as the Children's Health Forum, a nonprofit group established to combat lead poisoning among children. As Howard Law School's Dean, he focused on increasing the university's bar passage rate and expanded its clinical law program to emphasize environmental justice, fair housing and civil rights. President Schmoke earned his undergraduate degree in history from Yale University, pursued graduate studies on a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford University and earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Bebe Verdery, Director, Education Reform Project, ACLU of Maryland

Bebe Verdery is the Director of ACLU of Maryland's Education Reform Project. The ACLU, representing thousands of Baltimore City schoolchildren not getting their constitutionally guaranteed education, works for adequately funded, effective schools for at-risk schoolchildren across the state. Ms. Verdery has played a key role in state coalitions, leading advocacy efforts for passage of an equitable Maryland education funding formula in 2002. ACLU's research and advocacy to find solutions to the condition of Baltimore's dilapidated school buildings launched Baltimore's \$1 billion school construction plan, passed in 2013 with a significant coalition campaign. While at Planned Parenthood of Maryland, Ms. Verdery helped lead the campaign to pass Maryland's historic 1990 pro-choice law and to uphold it in the subsequent 1992 statewide voter referendum. Her organizing work began in the Carolinas, on civil rights and environmental issues. She has been recognized by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation with their Award for Outstanding Advocacy for her leadership in the passage of the 2002 Bridge to Excellence Act and in 2013 by the *Baltimore Sun* as one of five finalists for Marylander of the Year. She graduated magna cum laude from Furman University.

Karen Webber, Director, Education and Youth Development, Open Society Institute - Baltimore

Karen Webber is the Director of the Education and Youth Development program at the Open Society Institute - Baltimore. Previously, Ms. Webber served as the Executive Director of the Office of Student Support and Safety for Baltimore City Public Schools, where she helped create policies and practices that contributed to student suspension and expulsion rates decreasing dramatically across the district. Before moving into her role in the district's central administration, Ms. Webber served as a teacher, resident principal and successful middle/high school principal in Baltimore City. She began her career in New York City government at the New York City Commission on Human Rights, and ended as an Assistant Commissioner for the city's Department of Homeless Services. She also served as Executive Director of the Public Justice Center in Baltimore and the Open Housing Center in New York City. She earned a B.A. in English from Colgate University and received a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law.

Ronald Weich, Dean, University of Baltimore School of Law

Ronald Weich was named Dean of the University of Baltimore School of Law in 2012, following a lengthy career in government in which he served as an Assistant Attorney General in the U.S. Department of Justice during the Obama administration and as Chief Counsel to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and to Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Dean Weich served as Chief Counsel to Sen. Reid from 2007 to 2009 and in a similar capacity when Reid was minority leader from 2005 to 2006. As principal legal adviser to the Democratic leader, he helped to manage Senate floor activity on Judiciary Committee bills and judicial nominations and coordinated related activities of the Democratic caucus. Dean Weich played a key staff role in the enactment of the 2007 ethics reform law, the 2008 amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and other significant legislation. As the Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs, Dean Weich developed and implemented strategies to advance the department's legislative priorities, coordinated the department's response to congressional oversight and guided nominees through the Senate confirmation process. Dean Weich studied political science and government at The London School of Economics and Political Science, earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia University and earned his J.D. from Yale Law School.