

2024 Defender Conference Speaker Biographies

Francis Adewale (he/him) was elected to the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association in 2021 and elected by the Board as Treasurer in 2022. Francis is one of the attorneys that helped establish Spokane Community Court. Francis' commitment to community and movement lawyering is epitomized by his work on several community-based boards and activities in Eastern Washington. He has served as chair of Refugee Connections Spokane, co-chair of Spokane Homeless Coalition, Spokane County Regional Law & Justice Council's Racial Equity Disparity Committee, member/trustee of Spokane County Bar Association, and the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

He is the former chair of the Washington State Access to Justice Board, and a former member of the Washington State Supreme Court Interpreter Commission. He is currently a board member of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP). He is a founding member of the Washington Statewide Reentry Council, having been reappointed thrice by Governor Jay Inslee. In addition to serving as Treasurer and Board Member of Spokane City Credit Union, Francis and his wife also own and run a small business in Spokane. He is current Board President of AHANA: Eastern Washington's Multi-Ethnic Business Association.

Francis is an H. George Frederickson Honors Graduate of Eastern Washington University and is an adjunct faculty member at Whitworth University and Gonzaga Law School. Francis was admitted to the Washington State Bar in June 2000, and has since practiced as an assistant public defender for the City of Spokane.

Francis is a fellow of the Washington State Bar Association's Leadership Institute (WLI) and ATJ Equal Justice Leadership Academy. Francis is also a former recipient of the City of Spokane Human Rights Award, Washington Criminal Defense Lawyers' President Award and Spokane County Bar Association's Smithmoore P. Myers Professionalism Award. Francis, along with other team members of Spokane Community Court, are recipients of the 2018 WSBA Apex Award. Francis is the 2021 recipient of the Washington Defender Association's President Award.

Kimberly Ambrose (she/her) is a teaching professor at the University of Washington School of Law and directs the Tools for Social Change: Race and Justice Clinic, a clinic she founded in 2011, focusing on racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. She joined the clinic faculty part time in 2001 and full time in 2005, as Supervising Attorney for the Children and Youth Advocacy Clinic. Professor Ambrose also created and taught the Legislative Advocacy Clinic.

Before joining the faculty, she was a public defender representing indigent adults and juveniles in both child welfare and criminal proceedings and worked as a resource attorney for the Washington Defender Association, providing training, technical

assistance, and resources to public defense attorneys around Washington state. After she graduated from law school, Professor Ambrose clerked for U.S. District Judge David Ezra in the District of Hawaii.

In 2009, Professor Ambrose was Resident Fellow for the Open Society Justice Institute in Beijing, China, working on developing criminal defense clinics in several universities across China. She has also worked extensively with newly established clinics in Indonesia, in partnership with the UW Asian Law Center.

In 2012, Professor Ambrose received the Shanara Gilbert Emerging Clinician Award from the Association of American Law Schools Section on Clinical Legal Education. She serves on the Washington Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights and the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission.

Ramona Brandes (she/her) has been a public defender for 27 years in King and Kitsap counties, and presently serves on the Washington State Sentencing Guidelines Commission. She has been the co-chair for the WDA/WACDL Legislative Committee since 2012 and was recognized by WDA in 2011, and by WACDL in 2005 and 2014 for her policy work and efforts to improve public defense statewide. In 2019 she received the WACDL President's Award for her commitment to criminal defense, and her ongoing legislative work-- including her seventeen-year effort to eliminate Robbery 2 from the three strikes list. In 2021, in a case of first impression, Ramona's argument for contempt sanctions payable to her client for DSHS's failure to transport for competency treatment was upheld on appeal, providing a new avenue for defenders to pressure the state to provide the mental health treatment our clients need.

Twyla Carter (she/her) serves as the Attorney-in-Chief and Chief Executive Officer of The Legal Aid Society, becoming the first Black woman and first Asian American to lead the organization in its 148-year history. Prior to joining Legal Aid, Carter was the National Director of Legal and Policy at The Bail Project (TBP), a national nonprofit organization that pioneered a national movement to bring free bail assistance and pretrial support to thousands of low-income people every year. At TBP, Carter created the department's strategic mission and directed the legal, policy, and advocacy efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. Carter has also served as a senior staff attorney in the Criminal Law Reform Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) national office, where she litigated local and state bail inequities and right-to-counsel protections in the federal courts and designed alternative bail and representation policies and procedures for targeted jurisdictions. Prior to working at the ACLU, Carter was a public defender for ten years. She was the Misdemeanor Practice Director for the King County Department of Public Defense in Seattle, where she oversaw all misdemeanor casework across the four divisions of the department. As a Staff Attorney at The Defender Association, Carter handled felony and misdemeanor trial caseloads, represented juveniles, and appealed misdemeanor convictions. She won a published decision from the Washington State Court of Appeals, Division One, in *State v. Green*,

which affirmed the due process rights of parents accused of trespassing in public schools. Against the backdrop of the legislative attacks against the teaching of white supremacy and anti-Black racism in schools, Carter serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors of The Who We Are Project. Founded by Jeffery Robinson, a renowned expert on the role of racism in the criminal legal system, the project aims to correct the social, legal, political, and economic aspects of racism in the United States through educational materials, including through a feature-length documentary entitled *Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America*. Carter is admitted to practice law in New York, Washington State, and numerous federal courts. She is a nationally recognized expert on bail reform and is a frequent speaker on all aspects of the criminal legal system, including police reform, right-to-counsel issues, and how to incorporate race and culture into criminal, death penalty, and civil cases. Carter received her associate degree from the Seattle Central Community College, bachelor's degree from Seattle University, and Juris Doctorate from the Seattle University School of Law.

Cindy Arends Elsberry (she/her) is the Resentencing Resource Attorney for the Washington Defender Association (WDA). She has worked in public defense for 30 years and has a diverse background, having worked on all types of criminal cases, from low-level crimes to aggravated murder. She has experience with collaborative courts and mental competency hearings. Before joining WDA in 2009, she worked as a staff attorney providing representation to indigent defense clients at the Associated Counsel for the Accused in Seattle for over 14 years. In her role at WDA, Cindy provides technical assistance to attorneys and develops resources for public defenders across the state. She is a frequent speaker at CLE presentations. Areas of interest include representing youth and young adults in serious felonies, representing clients living with mental illness or intellectual disability, sentencing reform, and promoting defender well-being. She received her J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law.

Sonja Hardenbrook (she/her) has been a public defender for 20 years. She earned a BA in History and Political Science, with a minor in law from Pacific Lutheran University, before going on to earn her Master's in History at New Mexico State University. After graduating from UW Law School, she worked at the Snohomish County Public Defender Association from 2004-2022, serving in the district court unit (2 years), felony unit (5 years), supervising the misdemeanor unit (2 years) and litigating in the RCW 71.09 unit (10 years). In 2022 she left SnoCo and started her own firm, Hardenbrook Law, where she represents RCW 71.09 respondents on contract with the Office of Public Defense. Sonja was appointed to the Sex Offender Treatment Provider (SOTP) Advisory Committee in 2021 and also serves on the Sex Offender Policy Board (SOPB), along with Brad Meryhew, representing Washington Defender Association (WDA) and the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (WADCL). She lives in Greenlake with her husband, two teens, and a couple of naughty dogs.

Associate Chief Justice Charles W. Johnson (he/him) began service on the Washington State Supreme Court in January 1991, and is the longest serving justice on the court.

Justice Johnson was born in Tacoma, attended Curtis High School near Tacoma, and graduated from the University of Washington in 1974. He graduated from the University of Puget Sound School of Law (now Seattle University School of Law) in 1976, working his way through law school at a Tacoma lumber mill.

Justice Johnson remains active at Seattle University School of Law, where he is a Distinguished Jurist in Residence. He was an adjunct professor at Seattle University School of Law from 1995 to 2010, teaching a comprehensive seminar on state constitutional law. He also taught courses on the federal constitution, legal writing, oral advocacy, and brief writing. Justice Johnson, in conjunction with the Seattle University students, authored a comprehensive article on Washington search and seizure law in 1998, 2005, 2013, and 2019. He teaches and lectures throughout Washington State at law schools, universities, community colleges, high schools, and community organizations. He has received national recognition for his contribution to legal education, being awarded the 2012 John J. McAulay Legal Educator Award based on his dedication to the principles and ideals of integrity, compassion, courage and professional service.

Justice Johnson participates generously in law-related, professional, and community activities. He served as co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission from 1994 to 2018, and he co-chaired the 2004 Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding. He has served as chair of the Washington State Supreme Court's Rules Committee since 1996. Justice Johnson also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Association for Children and Parents, the Visiting Committee of the University of Washington School of Social Work, and is a co-chair of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

In October 2002, Justice Johnson received a special commendation from the Washington State Bar Association's Committee on Legal Services to the Armed Forces for his outstanding service and contribution to the Armed Forces stationed in Washington State by supporting a rule allowing military lawyers to be licensed in Washington to provide in-court representation to eligible low-income service members. In May 2011, he received the Washington State Bar Association's William O. Douglas Award for his years of judicial service. He has been presented with the Star Award, the Liberty Bell Award, and the Public Service Award by several organizations. Justice Johnson was also awarded the Distinguished Law Graduate Award from Seattle University School of Law and the Dedicated Service Award from the American Bar Association.

Justice Johnson is dedicated to supporting educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth. He and his wife support educational scholarship efforts of organizations, including Auburn and Tacoma Rotaries, and scholarship programs at the University of Washington, Washington State University, Tacoma Community College, and the Tri-Cities Hispanic Academic Achievers Program.

Justice Johnson and his wife are committed to public service and supportive of civic organizations including American Heart Association, YMCA campaigns, Tacoma Community College, University of Washington Foundation, Tacoma Rescue Mission, Olympic Wildlife Rescue, Children's Home Society, Washington State Law Enforcement Memorial, Peninsula School District, Boys and Girls Clubs, Washington Trails Association, Pierce County Food Banks, and the Lions Club.

He and his wife, Dana, live in Gig Harbor. Their interests include sailing, hiking, climbing, downhill skiing, biking, traveling, and reading.

Brit A. Kreimeyer (she/her) is a Defense Attorney with the Adult Felony Unit at Thurston County Public Defense. A third-generation Las Vegan, she recently moved to the lush Evergreen State of Washington after living in Boise, Idaho for 10 years. She completed her undergrad at the University of Nevada - Las Vegas with a major in political science. After a hiatus from higher education (including living on the back of a motorcycle for six months while gallivanting all over the United States and working at MGM Grand for a few years) she completed law school at Concordia University School of Law in 2016 and her Master of Laws in Risk Management from Texas A&M in 2022. Brit is the first in her family to graduate from college, let alone aspire for a graduate degree. She comes from a long line of immigrants and blue-collared workers.

After passing the bar exam, she was a deputy public defender. She also had the opportunity to teach part-time at Concordia University School of Law and University of Idaho College of Law. Brit also dabbled in civil litigation for a brief stint but realized that her one true passion is indigent defense and fighting for the underdog. She also has a love for community involvement and has served as the past President of Boise-area American Inns of Court and chairwoman of the Idaho State Bar Diversity Section. Brit keeps busy by adopting/rehabbing rescue pit-bull mixes (Shere Kahn, Tank, and Freeman). Her hobbies and interests include outdoor recreation, volunteer work, civic education, listening to good music, and perusing libraries and bookstores for a good book. Most importantly, Brit's life mission is based on the quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To laugh often and much...to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

Percy Levy (he/him) is the Community Outreach Specialist at the Washington Defender Association. He served 20 years behind bars before being granted executive clemency by Governor Inslee in 2019. Since that time, he has been an advocate for changing the criminal legal system from the inside out—with an emphasis on sentencing reform and bringing home the victims of the so-called "war on crime." He has an Associate of Arts degree from Walla Walla Community College and spent most of his time in prison working in the law library helping others with post-trial litigation efforts. Last, but not least, he is the author of several articles and three urban novels.

Arthur Longworth (he/him) is a writer who lives in Washington state, where he graduated from the foster care system to spend thirty-eight years incarcerated. Through his writing, Longworth often channels the experience of young people ensnared in state systems that essentially raise them to go to prison.

He is the author of *Zek: An American Prison Story* (Gabalfa Press, 2016), and contributing writer to *What We Know: Solutions from Our Experiences in the Justice System* (New Press, 2020), and *The Sentences that Create Us* (Haymarket Books, 2022). Arthur's writing has been published in the *New Republic*, *New York Review of Books*, *Medium*, *The Marshall Project*, and *Vice News*. He is a six-time PEN Prison Writing Award winner and PEN America Writing for Justice Fellow. He is also a 2024 Mellon Foundation/Haymarket Books Writing Freedom Fellow. Longworth is a Policy Specialist for Treehouse (<https://www.treehouseforkids.org/>), a foster youth advocacy organization in Seattle, where he works to decouple the foster care-to-prison pipeline.

Jonathan Moore (he/him) has worked with people in immigration proceedings since 1983. He worked as a paralegal at Proyecto Libertad, in Harlingen, Texas, with mostly detained Central American asylum-seekers, from 1983 until 1990. From 1985-1987, he also worked for the Rio Grande Defense Committee, on legal defense of South Texas sanctuary workers. He worked in Seattle, at the Joint Legal Task Force – Hispanic Immigration Program and its successor, the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, mainly on deportation defense, from 1990- 2005. Jonathan Moore was accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals through NWIRP from 1993 until 2005. He currently works with the Washington Defender Association Immigration Project, supporting public defenders and defense lawyers on issues related to the immigration consequences of criminal convictions.

After passing the bar exam, she was a deputy public defender. She also had the opportunity to teach part-time at Concordia University School of Law and University of Idaho College of Law. Brit also dabbled in civil litigation for a brief stint but realized that her one true passion is indigent defense and fighting for the underdog. She also has a love for community involvement and has served as the past President of Boise-area American Inns of Court and chairwoman of the Idaho State Bar Diversity Section. Brit keeps busy by adopting/rehabbing rescue pit-bull mixes (Shere Kahn, Tank, and Freeman). Her hobbies and interests include outdoor recreation, volunteer work, civic education, listening to good music, and perusing libraries and bookstores for a good book. Most importantly, Brit's life mission is based on the quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To laugh often and much...to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

Kathryn Russell Selk (she/her) has been an appellate public defender in this state for nearly 30 years, starting in 1994 after a clerkship at the Oregon Court of Appeals. She practices in all three Divisions of the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. She also

is a freelance writer and has served as a lecturer in criminal procedure at the University of Washington School of Law. Her most well-known Supreme Court case is *State v. Houston-Sconiers*; her most recent Supreme Court cases involved the right to counsel at hearings setting bail, *State v. Heng* and *State v. Charlton*.

Jane Spencer (she/her) has worked as a public defender at the Pierce County Department of Assigned Counsel (DAC) since 2009. Jane has practiced in DAC's misdemeanor, felony, and civil divisions. For the last seven years, she has represented clients in RCW 71.09 ("Sexually Violent Predator") civil commitment cases. Prior to joining DAC, Jane served as a law clerk in Snohomish County Superior Court. Jane earned her bachelor's degree from Santa Clara University and her J.D. from Seattle University School of Law.

Teresa Spinelli (she/they) Before joining WDA, Terry spent four years advocating for detained immigrants and asylum seekers in Arizona at the Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project. As a law student, they participated in the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program, the Crimmigration clinic, and the Harvard Civil Rights Civil Liberties Law Review, and they completed a summer legal internship at the Alaska Public Defender Association. Terry graduated *summa cum laude* from Northwestern University in 2015, with a BA in history, music, and German. While living in Dresden, Germany following graduation, they served as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant and volunteered with the local refugee population. In their spare time, Terry enjoys playing violin in community orchestras, reading and watching science fiction, spending time with their beloved cat Merlin, and exploring the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

Stacy Taeuber (she/her) has over 20 years of experience as an immigrant rights advocate and public defender. In addition to practicing in New York, Arizona, Florida, Minnesota and Wisconsin, Stacy founded and directed the Immigrant Justice Clinic at the University of Wisconsin Law School and was a visiting professor at the University of Minnesota Law School's immigration clinics. Stacy is passionate about advancing the rights of noncitizens and all those impacted by the criminal justice system. At WDA, she works with defense lawyers, immigration lawyers, and others on issues related to the immigration consequences of criminal convictions.

Anna Tolin (she/her) specializes in post-conviction work at the Tolin Law Firm in Seattle. For over 30 years, Anna has advocated for her clients' freedom in Washington's state and federal courts. She has served as a federal and state public defender, a CJA panel attorney for the Western District of Washington and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and was a law lecturer and director of the former Innocence Project Northwest at the University of Washington School of Law. Anna is a graduate of Cornell Law School, and a past president of the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. In 2018 she was appointed as the defense representative on the Forensic Investigations Council which oversees Washington State Patrol's forensic laboratory services bureau. In addition to direct client work, Anna enjoys training and consulting with criminal legal

stakeholders on client advocacy, DNA and forensic evidence, ethics, wrongful convictions, second chance avenues, and creative legal writing.

Lori Walls (she/her) completed her B.A. and J.D. from the University of Washington in Seattle. As a law student, she was an editor of the *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* and received the Charles Z. Smith Public Service Student of the Year Award. In 2011, she and three other women started the Washington Immigration Defense Group, a law firm that specializes in deportation defense. Her appellate practice before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals includes two published cases. Lori is a member of the Washington State Bar Association and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She has been a volunteer at the King County Bar Association's Neighborhood Legal Clinic Program for 16 years. Before attending law school, she worked as an editor and writer for 15 years and as a furniture builder for five years.

Mick Woynarowski (he/him) is a Seattle-based solo practitioner who represents clients at all stages of the criminal case process, including at trial, on direct appeal, and in post-conviction proceedings. Mick's expertise lies in defending violent crimes and complex matters that involve expert witness testimony, especially relating to mental health. Before private practice, he spent sixteen years working as a public defender with The Defender Association, the King County Department of Public Defense, and the Washington Appellate Project. He recently joined OPD's efforts to provide post-conviction representation to people serving long sentences, especially those who were late adolescents at the time of their alleged offense, or who otherwise lack the ability to file a personal restraint petition on their own. Nothing brings him greater professional satisfaction than being able to help a client keep, or regain, their freedom.