

2025 Defender Conference Presenter Biographies

Cindy Arends Elsberry 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 in promoting defender well-being. She received her J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law.

Elbert Aull is supervisor of the Major Felonies unit at Metropolitan Public Defender's West Division in Hillsboro, Oregon. He leads a team of eight attorneys representing clients charged with violent felonies and sex offenses. They carry the banner in Washington County—the most frequently overturned jurisdiction in Oregon. Aull worked at the King County Department of Public Defense and the Snohomish County Public Defender Association from 2014-2023. He started his career with Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem. Aull graduated, cum laude, from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law in 2012; he bleeds Scarlet & Gray.

Ramona Brandes 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, 2014, and 2024 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.

Judge Linda W.Y. Coburn was elected to the Washington State Court of Appeals in November 2020 after 15 years at the trial court level either as a career public defender or a judge. She has been a member of the Washington State Supreme Court's Minority and Justice Commission (MJC) since 2015, the same year she took the bench in Edmonds Municipal Court. She serves on the MJC Education Committee as well as the Appellate Education Committee. She also has served on the Byrne-JAG Advisory Committee since 2023.

Judge Coburn previously served on the governing board of the District and Municipal Court Judges Association (DMCJA) from 2016 to 2020. As a trial judge, she led the effort in the creation of the Legal Financial Obligations Calculator as part of a Price of Justice Grant received by the MJC and

has taught or presented on the topic of LFOs across the state and nationally. As a member of the DMCJA Diversity Committee, she previously presented regularly at the biennial pro tempore training event co-sponsored by the Washington State Bar Association. She taught at Judicial College in 2019-2020 and has been a frequent presenter at statewide judicial conferences. She also served on the MJC's Jury Diversity Task Force and the state Pretrial Reform Task Force. Judge Coburn also was on the state Supreme Court's Gender and Justice Commission's Study Advisory Committee. In 2018, she received the Asian Bar Association of Washington Judge of the Year Award.

Prior to becoming a judge, she was a career public defender. She previously clerked at Division One for the Honorable Stephen J. Dwyer and at Snohomish County Superior Court for the Honorable George N. Bowden. Judge Coburn spent 13 years prior to her legal career as a journalist. She graduated cum laude from Seattle University School of Law in 2005. She holds a Bachelor in Communications degree from the University of Washington and a Master of Science degree in journalism from Ohio University. She is an alum of the Radcliffe Publishing Procedures Course at Harvard University.

Judge Coburn and her husband live in Edmonds where they raised two boys. She can be spotted throughout Snohomish County on occasion umpiring a Little League game or officiating a high school volleyball match.

Rachel Cortez is the Public Defense Recruitment & Retention Program Manager East of OPD. Before then, she worked as a contract public defender for 10-years in Walla Walla and Columbia Counties. For 9 of those years, she owned and operated her own law firm that did public defense for the cities and counties. She is the former president of Washington State Defenders Association and was the WDA liaison for the WSBA Council on Public Defense.

D'Adre Cunningham is currently the Incarcerated Parents Project attorney at Washington Defender Association in Seattle, Washington. She formerly served clients for 15 years as a public defender at The Defender Association and its division of the King County Department of Public Defense. She spent five of those years as an Attorney Supervisor in the Dependency (or Family Defense) Unit. Her other legal experience includes representing children, youth, and parents in King County dependency court proceedings; defending children and youth in King County Juvenile Court criminal proceedings; defending indigent adults in Seattle Municipal misdemeanor proceedings & in King County Superior Court felony proceedings; and advocating for systemic reforms at The Racial Disparity Project. D'Adre is an alumna of the University of Washington School of Law.

Nicole Dalton Nicole T. Dalton is a Washington native and is a resident of the local Southwest Washington area. She completed her undergraduate studies, magna cum laude, at Portland State University, and obtained her J.D., cum laude, from Lewis and Clark School of Law in Portland, Oregon, in 2006. Nicole is licensed to practice law in the State of Washington and is dedicated to

providing caring representation and fiercely defending the liberty and the rights of her clients. Nicole handles personal injury matters and criminal defense. She has aggressively defended hundreds of cases, is an experienced and skilled litigation and trial attorney, and loves fighting the good fight.

Nicole Dalton frequently drafts and files detailed, painstakingly researched, and cutting-edge motions and is not afraid to use her strong research and writing skills to take on the status quo. She litigates cases in local district and superior courts, and in the Washington courts of appeals, including the Washington Supreme Court.

An active member of several professional organizations, Nicole has been a conference presenter for the Washington Defender Association and the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, is an active board member of our local non-profit professional organization, and is a member of the [WSBA](#), [WACDL](#), [WDA](#), [WSAJ](#), [WWL](#), [CDACC](#), and the [Clark County Bar Assn](#). Nicole actively pursues continuing education as the law is constantly changing and keeping on top of current case law and statutes is vital to providing exceptional legal representation. Nicole has a great deal of experience and perspective based on her many years of experience in the legal field. Nicole loves the outdoors, snow skiing, being on the water and with family and is fluent in the Spanish language.

Mary Kay High is the Chief deputy for the Pierce County Department of Assigned Counsel. Her practice includes trial and appellate representation of individuals charged with serious violent offenses. She graduated from the University of Washington Law School in 1990 with honors and was awarded the William O. Douglas Award from the Washington Association of Criminal defense Attorneys in 2013. She is frequent presenter at criminal law CLEs and is an adjunct professor at the Seattle University School of Law.

Nat Jacob has been a public defender in Washington for 12 years. He began his career as a trial defender in Jefferson County, joining Washington state OPD in 2022. Nat is a proud father of two sweet little girls and is married to a much more talented attorney than himself. He and his family are heavily involved in community organizing in and around his home community of Port Townsend. Decarceration, racial, and economic justice advocacy are his life's work.

Jason Lantz is a criminal defense attorney with the Law Offices of Burg and Lantz, LLC. Jason has extensive trial experience including defending BIPOC clients with strategies to deselect jurors exhibiting explicit and implicit bias. Prior to law school, Jason was a director of a unit of the American Red Cross where he was chosen to attend leadership training in Washington D.C. to diversify the volunteer makeup of the organization and improve community outreach to diverse communities. He has been a grassroots organizer and activist in diversity, equity, and inclusion for about twenty years. He has been nominated to the WACDL board and is a longtime member of the WACDL/WDA legislative committee. Jason has a Bachelor of Science degree in life sciences, a

general science degree, from Kansas State University and graduated from the Seattle University School of Law.

Pete Mazzone has been practicing law since 1995, focusing primarily on criminal defense. Following law school, he became a trial attorney at the Snohomish County Public Defender's Association where he practiced for five years before entering private practice in 2000. During his thirty years of practice, Pete has become a distinguished criminal defense lawyer. He frequently lectures at seminars, is an adjunct professor at the Seattle University School of Law and has successfully argued before the Washington State Supreme Court. Over the years he has earned a reputation for being a highly skilled litigator in State and Federal Court.

Jonathan Moore 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 at the Washington Defender Association Immigration Project, supporting public defenders and defense lawyers on issues related to the immigration consequences of criminal convictions.

Arian Noma learned litigation as an Assistant State's attorney in Baltimore City, Maryland. Since 2005, Arian also served as an Assistant State's Attorney in rural Carroll County, Maryland, and he was the elected Prosecutor of Okanogan County, Washington from 2018-2021. When not prosecuting, Arian has always practiced defense law in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Washington State in both local and federal courts.

Arian currently lectures at Gonzaga Law School, serves as the supervising attorney for the Moderate Means Program at Gonzaga, serves as a Youth Access to Counsel lawyer covering the entire state, practices clemency work for The Way to Justice, and operates a private practice committed to creating equal access to justice for all.

Jonathan Patnode is a Program Analyst in the Recruitment & Retention Program at the Washington State Office of Public Defense. He was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin but grew up in Tacoma Washington. His goal is to help with the growing statewide attorney shortage by encouraging law students to pursue public defense and finding solutions to keep current attorneys in the practice. He was in the Blake program at State OPD for two years prior to his current role and before that was a court clerk at the Pierce County Juvenile Court for 18 years. His hobbies include gardening, roller skating and surfing.

Christopher Poulos is an attorney and the executive director of the Center for Justice and Human Dignity (CJHD) and previously served as the Director of Person-Centered Services at the Washington State Department of Corrections and Executive Director of the Washington Statewide

Reentry Council. The mission of the Center for Justice and Human Dignity is safely expanding alternatives to incarceration while improving conditions for both incarcerated people and correctional staff. Poulos's recent focuses include federal sentencing reform and alternatives to incarceration, and studying and improving U.S. and international conditions of confinement and correctional culture.

Prior to his appointment to the Reentry Council, he served as Executive Director of Life of Purpose Treatment at the University of North Texas, where he was also an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice. During law school, he served at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and The Sentencing Project. Poulos has advised United States Senator Angus King (I-Maine) on addiction and justice policy and served on several national, state, and local task forces related to criminal justice policy. He graduated cum laude from the University of Maine School of Law, where he was President of the American Constitution Society and represented children facing criminal charges as a student attorney in the Juvenile Justice Clinic.

Prior to law school, Poulos overcame many obstacles, including tragic family losses, addiction, homelessness, and a federal incarceration. He now dedicates his life to helping others overcome or avoid similar challenges.

His work and personal story have been featured on The Today Show and in The Guardian, The New York Times, Washington Post, NBC News, The Hill, Crosscut, and The Harvard Law and Policy Review. Poulos was selected as one of Portland Magazine's "Most Intriguing People" and as "Law Student of the Year" by National Jurist Magazine.

Anna Samuel has been a career public defender. She started at Washington Appellate Defender Association arguing criminal appeals before the Court of Appeals, Division 1. She was at the Department of Assigned Counsel in Tacoma before joining the Department of Public Defense in King County where she tried many challenging cases to jury. She now supervises the Seattle Municipal Court unit and is an adjunct professor at Seattle University School of Law.

Kathryn Russell Selk has handled more than 550 appellate public defense appeals in Washington state, many of which involved doing comparability analysis. After a clerkship at the Oregon Court of Appeals, she came back home to Washington to work as one of the first attorneys at the Washington Appellate Project. She left the Project in 1996 and has continued her appellate public defense practice with her own firm, which contracts with the state's Office of Public Defense to provide appellate public defense services. Her best-known published cases include *State v. Houston-Sconiers*. She has also worked as a lecturer in criminal procedure at the University of Washington School of Law and, every now and then, as a freelance writer.

Ms. Russell Selk lives and works in Seattle where she also volunteers at the FamilyWorks community closet.

Michael Schueler is a trial attorney and partner at Heyman & Schueler, PLLC. Prior to entering private practice, Michael worked at the King County Department of Public Defense – Associated Counsel for the Accused Division and practiced in misdemeanors, felonies, and also supervised attorneys. He has been in practice since 2014.

Lori Walls 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 5 years.

Ann Wennerstrom is a forensic linguist specializing in second language acquisition and discourse analysis. She has an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language, an MA in Linguistics, and a Ph.D. in English Language and Rhetoric, all from the University of Washington. She is author of *The Music of Everyday Speech* published by Oxford University Press on the analysis of naturally occurring language and intonation.

For over 20 years, Ann worked as a lecturer at the University of Washington teaching ESL and other language-related topics, including language acquisition research and linguistic variation in North America. She also developed assessments and training materials for the UW language programs and has published widely on a variety of language related topics.

Ann became an attorney in 2009 and currently has a small Seattle practice in immigration and family law. She still applies language analysis for forensic purposes on a consulting basis. Ann is a member of the Washington State Bar Association and the International Association of Forensic Linguists.

Lei Young supervises the Disproportionality Unit at the Washington State Office of Public Defense, where she works to advocate against racial and social injustice in the legal system. Prior to that position, she spent 17 years as an attorney with The Defender Association, which is now a division of the King County Department of Public Defense. As a public defender, she represented clients in a variety of practice areas, including felony, sex offender civil commitment, and dependency proceedings. Her teaching experience includes serving as an Adjunct Professor at Seattle University School of Law. She received her J.D. from Cornell Law School.