



SCHOOL of LAW

The Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice at Loyola University Chicago School of Law

2019–20 Report



“Not everything that is  
faced can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed  
until it is faced.” – James Baldwin



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The Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice supports and enhances several Loyola University Chicago School of Law clinics, programs, and initiatives that promote social and racial justice. These include the ChildLaw Policy Institute and its Legislation & Policy Clinic, Civitas ChildLaw Clinic, the Education Law & Policy Institute, the Health Justice Project, experiential learning, and the Center for Public Interest. The Rodin Center also is represented by the work of the named Social Justice faculty, staff, and advisors.





*Artwork hanging in the Curt and Linda Rodin Center produced by community members supported by the Chicago Help Initiative.*

## **OUR CALL TOWARD SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REFORM**

The 2019-20 academic year led the School of Law into a fraught moment in history. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified and exacerbated inequities that already existed in our communities, our cities, and our country. We also found ourselves in the midst of powerful protests for racial justice rising up across the nation, demanding a reckoning that will take the entire law school community learning together and challenging one another to find our way and change the systems that led to where we are today. The School of Law's mission statement was revised over the summer to guide us along this path and has, in part, shaped the work of the Rodin Center.



**Responding to the expanded needs of our community in Chicago**

The clinical faculty expanded their work to address the specific needs of community members during this period. During the summer and fall of 2020, the Health Justice Project (HJP), under the direction of Rodin Center advisor Kate Mitchell, joined with faculty and students from Loyola's schools of public health, medicine, and nursing to establish the COVID-19 Equity Response Collaborative Loyola (CERCL). The collaborative provides free COVID-19 testing and support to communities of color disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in near-western suburbs of Chicago. The HJP created resource handouts, a web page, a social and legal needs screening tool, and follow-up protocols for those who indicated a need for support in navigating financial and other consequences of COVID-19. More than 25 law students volunteered to support the HJP, following up with over 100 community members and ultimately providing resources and support to 30 people.

Under the direction of Rodin Center advisor Miranda Johnson and the leadership of Jackie

Ross, a staff attorney with the Civitas ChildLaw Center, members of the law student group Stand Up for Each Other (SUFEO) organized a free legal program for parents focused on special education issues that arose as a result of remote learning. Four legal service organizations participated, and 13 families registered for remote 30-minute sessions with an education law attorney. Services were offered in Spanish and English. SUFEO students sat in on these virtual intakes and were responsible for time keeping, note taking, and drafting legal advice that was provided to the parent after their visit. To our knowledge, the SUFEO program is the first free legal program devoted to removing barriers that prevent low-income families with children who have disabilities from accessing high-quality education during COVID-19 school closures. Given that these children and families are particularly vulnerable to the education gap that has been exacerbated by COVID-19, this type of accessible, high-quality, and solutions-oriented advocacy is critical.

Anita Weinberg, director of the Rodin Center and a Rodin Clinical Professor of Law and Social Justice, convened a group of advocates,

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including Civitas ChildLaw Clinic Director Bruce Boyer, to address challenges to children and families who are in the child welfare system due to the pandemic. The broad range of advocates represent children in the child welfare system, their parents, youth who have aged out of foster care, and private child welfare agencies. While the advocates often do not agree on desired outcomes in all cases, they share concern regarding the impact of the public health crisis and some of the decisions being made by the

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on children, youth, and their families in the child welfare system and the potentially lifelong impact of those decisions on the children. Under Professor Weinberg's leadership, the group agreed on a list of recommended actions that were shared with the Department to ensure that children and youth in DCFS care, and their parents, have the resources and support needed to maintain contact and work toward the best interests of the children during this time. As a result of these efforts, the working group meets regularly with legislators and DCFS leadership with the hope of effectively addressing identified concerns.

### **Responding to the expanded needs of our community in the Corboy Law Center**

Rodin Center faculty and advisors also responded to the needs of students, staff, and faculty in the face of the pandemic and racial reckoning.

Josie Gough, Rodin Assistant Clinical Professor of Law and Social Justice and assistant dean for inclusion, diversity, and equity, curated

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programs over the past year that focused on racial and social justice with community partners from the government, and civic, cultural, and faith-based communities. Professor Miranda Johnson worked with students and the law school's Office of Student Services to organize community circles to help members of our community process recent events related to COVID-19 and this summer's racial reckoning. Professor Johnson also supported the Office of the Provost and Center for Ignatian Pedagogy in University events related to racial reckoning and anti-racism.

To better understand the School of Law's history in attracting African-American and other students of color, Rodin Social Justice Leader-in-Residence Mary Bird and Rodin Professor of Law and Social Justice Alan Raphael proposed that the law school undertake a detailed analysis of admissions

policies and practices, particularly with regard to African-American student enrollment.

Recognizing that the School of Law has attracted too few students of color to enroll in the JD program, the Admissions Committee has been charged with immediately initiating a campaign around increasing diversity, especially regarding African-American and Latinx, and other underrepresented students of color, analyzing the admissions and scholarship policies and practices, and creating a faculty-supported diversity scholarship program. Professor Raphael is serving as the chair of the Admissions Committee this year and has begun that analysis and has, together with Professor Bird and the Office of Advancement, established the Faculty Diversity Scholarship, which will distribute its first award to one or more students in August of 2021.





**OUR ONGOING EFFORTS**

Rodin faculty and advisors also remained engaged in their ongoing teaching, social justice activism, and scholarship. The following examples illustrate their important and ongoing work.







### Teaching

Professor Alan Raphael taught 70 students in Constitutional Law and classes of 45 and 79 students in two different Criminal Procedure courses.

Rodin Professor of Law and Social Justice Henry Rose taught 65 students in his Law and Poverty course and 20 students in the Civil Rights course.

Under the leadership of Rodin Clinical Professors of Law and Social Justice Bruce Boyer and Stacey Platt, the Civitas ChildLaw Clinic continued to serve as counsel for vulnerable children in child protection and domestic relations courts, as well as in other areas, including international child abduction and education matters. Each semester, the Clinic represents over 100 child clients, with the assistance of 18 to 20 law students. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Clinic attorneys have worked with court personnel and other advocates in an ongoing effort to develop appropriate child-oriented practices around remote hearings and family visits. Recent case highlights include the successful

reunification of two abducted children with their mother in Slovakia.

In an exciting interclinic development, the Civitas ChildLaw Clinic has begun referring families in its domestic relations parenting dispute cases to the Education Advocacy Project for school-based advocacy. The Education Advocacy Project is overseen by Professor Miranda Johnson and Staff Attorney Jackie Ross. This collaboration seeks to improve educational support and outcomes for children, refocusing disputing parents on child-centered shared goals and building law students' skills and knowledge in multiple areas of child-related advocacy.

The Legislation and Policy Clinic taught by Professor Anita Weinberg continued to advocate on behalf of underrepresented and marginalized communities. Students are working on policy and legislative issues related to child welfare, juvenile justice, immigration, and education. Projects this past year included researching and developing recommendations for a minimum age of criminal responsibility and drafting

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*Students travel to the capital city for an experiential learning opportunity in legislation.*

legislation to add a statutory provision on juvenile competency to stand trial, alternative school placement for students who have been expelled, and strengthening child representation for children in foster care. Clinic students also worked with youth in the child welfare system to develop and advance a legislative agenda on issues of concern for them.

The Health Justice Project (HJP), under the leadership of Professor Kate Mitchell, represented more than 20 clients referred by its medical partner, Erie Family Health Centers, to address the health-harming legal needs of patients in poverty through holistic civil legal services. Student attorneys assisted clients with immigration issues and with obtaining supplemental social security income benefits (SSI) and access to Medicaid and SNAP benefits.

Dean Josie Gough and Professor Miranda Johnson served as two of the faculty leads in the Professional Identity Formation course, now in its third year and a requirement for first-year students. This course seeks to assist students in the recognition and elimination of personal bias and in building awareness of

how diversity and inclusion of others whose world views are different from one's own are critical to professional development and success in the practice of law.

Despite a Chicago Public Schools teachers' strike and remote learning obstacles due to the pandemic, the Street Law program, coordinated by Professor Mary Bird and Adjunct Professor Cathie Hawke, impacted over 400 Chicago-area high school students by having Loyola Law students bring to life legal topics, including immigration law, criminal procedure, the prison system, election law, contracts, and tort law through engaging, hands-on lessons and activities.

### **Social Activism**

Rodin faculty and advisors worked to strengthen and expand the law school's outreach to underrepresented communities. Dean Josie Gough facilitated a relationship with Chicago State University to mirror the 3-plus-3 program, which allows students to earn a BA and a JD in just six years. She also mentored Latinx students through the Castillo

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*Students gather in the Curt and Linda Rodin Center to participate in the 2019 Stand Up for Each other (SUFEO) orientation.*

Scholars Program and she serves as the pre-law advisor to the Loyola University Chicago Pre-Law Minority Association.

Professor Mary Bird oversaw the Loyola Law Academy program, a pipeline program that brings high school students to the law school on Saturdays for law-related workshops, mock trials, and law firm field trips. The program is geared toward minority students and those who will be the first in their families to attend college. Over 100 high school students and 25 law students were involved this year. Professor Bird also worked with law students to coordinate Law Related Education in the Cook County Temporary Detention Center Program. Fifteen law students visited the detention center on Saturdays to teach classes on juvenile and criminal court proceedings, court personnel and their roles, and relationships and encounters with police officers. The program culminated with the 45 residents participating in a mock trial. In partnership with the John Howard Association, Illinois' prison watchdog group, Professor Bird worked to establish a project for students to respond to letters from people in Illinois prisons relating to medical needs, prison policies, and court decisions that affect prison conditions.

Professor Henry Rose chaired the law school's Loan Repayment Assistance Program Committee that distributed financial assistance to 38 JD alumni who have full-time public interest jobs and high educational debt.

The student organization Stand Up for Each Other (SUFEO) continued to grow and expand under the leadership of Staff Attorney Jackie Ross and with the addition of new Anti-Bullying Fellow Julie Pautsch. The group expanded the scope of legal cases to include discipline, special education, bullying, truancy, and remote learning. The program's work related to representing students who have experienced school bullying was featured in an American Bar Association article co-written by program faculty and two law students. Under the umbrella of the Civitas ChildLaw Clinic, 27 students were represented in education law cases with the help of SUFEO advocates.

### **Scholarship**

Professor Miranda Johnson recently entered into a book contract with Teachers College Press to produce an edited volume on

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research, practices, laws, and policies related to addressing the disproportionate discipline of students with disabilities.

Professor Juan Perea wrote the article “Immigration Policy as a Defense of White Nationhood,” which was published in the *Georgetown Journal of Law and Modern Critical Race Perspectives*. He also wrote “Policing the Boundaries of the White Republic,” which will be published in Ramon Gutierrez and Kathleen Belew’s book, *Nativism, Anti-Immigrant Violence and White Supremacy*, and the article “Conquest and the Constitution,” which explores the role of the Constitution in the conquest of Native America.

Professor Stacey Platt wrote the article “Gatekeeping by Allegations: An Examination of Verified, Unfounded, and Fabricated Allegations of Child Maltreatment Within the Context of Resist and Refusal Dynamics,” which was co-authored with Mike Saini and Taina Lajaasalo and published in *Family Court Review*.

Professor Alan Raphael wrote two articles for an ABA publication about the Electoral

College. The first, “Are presidential electors free to vote as they wish, despite a state’s popular vote?” was co-authored with student Elliott Mondry and discussed a pending Supreme Court case asking if states could remove or punish presidential electors who vote for a candidate other than the one who wins the state’s popular vote. This piece was published in *Preview of United States Supreme Court Cases, Issue 7*. The second, “Electoral College: Supreme Court decides that states may replace or punish presidential electors who do not vote for the candidate who won the most votes in the state but leaves several questions unanswered,” discussed the decision and several still unanswered questions about the Electoral College. This piece was published in *Preview of United States Supreme Court Cases, Issue 8*.

Professor Henry Rose wrote the article “How the Trump Administration’s Plan to Limit Disparate Impact Liability Would Undermine the Fair Housing Act’s Goal of Promoting Residential Integration,” which was published in the *Real Estate Law Journal*.

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Professor Anita Weinberg wrote the essay “Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Rethinking the Meaning of ‘Child Welfare,’” which will be published later this year in *Reflections on Child Welfare Areas of Practice, Issues, and Service Populations: Sociological Autobiographies, Volume 2*.

Professor Mary Bird wrote the article “COVID-19 & Youth Detention: The Global Pandemic Exposes the Need for Alternatives” with student co-authors Nadia Woods and Kelly Barret. This piece is currently published on the Center for the Human Rights of Children website.





**RODIN CENTER FELLOWS:  
PAST AND PRESENT**

The Rodin Center fellowship program supports students as they develop the skills needed to work with underserved individuals and communities through litigation, legislative and policy reform, and other forms of advocacy. Rodin Fellows work in community-based legal settings during their second summer of law school and then share their experiences and new perspectives with the law school student community. Fellows also have responsibilities, with the director of the Center, related to planning programs for the law school community and collaborating with the broader community to convene programs.

The internship requirement of Rodin Fellows provides these students with the opportunity to integrate their classroom learning with practical experience. The opportunity to work in a community-based setting helps students learn how to collaborate with members of the community; understand their own identity, race, and emotions; and take a community perspective on legal problems. Overall, the internship experience and other responsibilities of being a fellow help prepare students to pursue anti-racism and social justice work upon graduation.





2018-19 Rodin Fellows:  
A Post-Graduation Update

### **Jacqueline Collins**

State Senator Jacqueline Collins continues to represent her constituents in the 16th Senate District in the Illinois General Assembly, amid a very challenging year.

In response to reports of widespread racial inequality in the way home loans and property appraisals are conducted, Collins, who is chair of the Illinois Senate Financial Institutions committee, held a subject matter hearing with banking executives, advocates, and government agencies to seek information on possible avenues for reform.

“Reporting and university studies have shown that the largest predictor of a Chicagoan’s ability to receive a home loan is still race, and the disparity in lending is worse now than it was in 1980,” Collins said. “This has fueled the cycle of generational poverty and must be reformed.”

Senator Collins also received a Legislator of the Year award from the John Howard Association for her legislative efforts and commitment in the area of criminal justice reform. She was specifically recognized for her work fighting for the rights of people who are in prison.



2018-19 Rodin Fellows:  
A Post-Graduation Update

**Brianna Hill**

In May 2020, Brianna Hill graduated with her JD degree. Most of her summer was spent studying for the bar exam and getting ready to welcome a new baby in October. She also accepted a position with Legal Aid Chicago in the Housing practice group, where she will begin work in January.

Hill's Rodin Center fellowship experience helped expose her to housing inequities as well as the racist history of housing policy in the United States. She hopes that she will be able to continue to advocate for the social justice mission of the fellowship program through her work with Legal Aid Chicago.



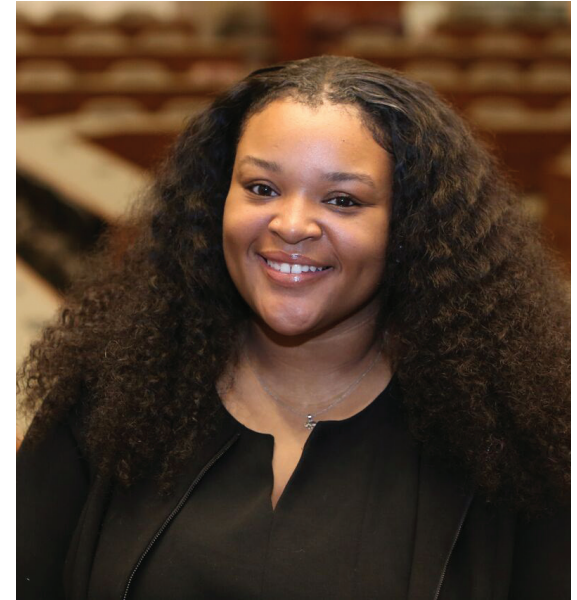


2018-19 Rodin Fellows:  
A Post-Graduation Update

**Imani Hollie**

After graduation, Imani Hollie became an assistant state public defender at the Wisconsin State Public Defender Office. She also continued to serve as a workshop leader for the Professional Identity Formation class in the law school. Hollie plans to build experience as a public defender and ultimately transition into academia. She hopes to one day become a professor at the School of Law.

Hollie is interested in continuing to explore social justice issues such as race and criminality. Her time as a Rodin Fellow solidified her passion for representing underprivileged communities. Her experience allowed her to focus on issues of personal importance, which heavily impacted her academic experience during her last two years at Loyola.



2018-19 Rodin Fellows:  
A Post-Graduation Update

**Kate Malcolm**

Kate Malcolm graduated in 2019 with a law degree and a social work degree from Loyola. While in school, she enjoyed planning events for the law school with her Rodin peers, which challenged her to consider other perspectives. In addition to working with other students, meeting advocates from external organizations and witnessing their work inspired Malcolm to continue looking for novel solutions to the problems we face.

Malcolm works at a small criminal defense law firm, primarily handling federal and national terrorism cases. She hopes to continue to gain experience in the criminal defense field. After receiving her bar results, she will continue her service with the Marine Corps, first attending The Basic School and then Naval Justice School. She looks forward to carrying her experience as a Rodin Fellow with her. Being selected as a Rodin Fellow will always impact her career as a lawyer, as Malcolm saw it as a call to action to always look for just solutions and to encourage her peers to do the same.



2019-20 Rodin Fellows:  
Summer Internship Experiences

**James B. Moran Center  
for Youth Advocacy**

**Andy Froelich**

Andy Froelich clerked at the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy, a community-based legal aid organization that serves young people in the Evanston community. The Moran Center, among other things, advocates for young people in the juvenile justice system, emerging adults in the criminal justice system, and Evanston students in special education and school discipline. The Moran Center has recently opened a school-based civil legal clinic that serves families with children in the Evanston/Skokie School District.

As a law clerk at the Moran Center, Froelich primarily worked with the Education Advocacy Program, advocating for special education students in the community and students who are facing exclusionary discipline hearings. He represented students at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, prepared due process cases, defended a student at an expulsion hearing, and advocated for a more equitable education system in Evanston schools. Most importantly, Froelich witnessed the fundamental importance of an education that is rooted in compassion and equity.



Froelich continued to clerk at the Moran Center through the fall semester, and his time there has become a crucial part of his law school experience. Froelich came to law school because he wanted to be a community lawyer. His experience with the Moran Center has taught him what community lawyering truly means, and he is excited to remain at the Moran Center for the remainder of his law school experience to continue learning how to be an effective advocate in order to build stronger communities.



2019-20 Rodin Fellows:  
Summer Internship Experiences

**James B. Moran Center  
for Youth Advocacy**

**Jordan Shead**

Jordan Shead spent her summer internship with the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy. Her experience was spent in the Civil Legal Clinic division.

Despite a completely remote internship, she was still able to gain live client experience through many phone and video calls. Her cases involved guardianship of minors and young adults as well as landlord tenant disputes, which involved advocating for clients whose landlords unlawfully withheld security deposits. She also assisted clients in drafting repayment of rent agreements and advocated for clients in disputes with landlords who disregarded the governor's executive order prohibiting evictions. Shead drafted and filed various motions for these cases, including motions to reconsider, motions to dismiss, a motion to seal an eviction, and a motion to enter an agreed order.

She also contributed to the Moran Center Civil Legal Clinic by conducting research on best practices of guardian ad litem programs and helping create training materials for pro bono attorneys and new interns regarding



housing law, unemployment law, and various family law issues.

Even though she was not able to be physically present in the community this summer, Shead was still able to feel the importance of community lawyering from her living room.



2019-20 Rodin Fellows:  
Summer Internship Experiences

### **Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**

#### **Kelsey Wilson**

Kelsey Wilson witnessed community lawyering in action while interning with Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. Chicago Lawyers' Committee provides legal assistance and crafts community-based solutions and policy reforms to secure racial equity and economic opportunity for all. Chicago Lawyers' Committee focuses its practice on education, housing, voting and civic empowerment, public safety, and community economic development.

Specifically, Wilson worked with the Equitable Community Development & Housing and Educational Equity practice areas. She conducted research, drafted memoranda, and met with clients and coalition members about the administration of a local affordable housing program. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wilson helped draft guidance for educators on school discipline in virtual and blended learning environments with the Illinois Transforming School Discipline Collaborative. The pandemic exacerbates existing inequities felt particularly hard by Black and Brown communities. These communities are more likely to be affected by COVID-19 and are grappling with civil unrest from police violence, and they face significant challenges accessing online education. Knowing



that students would be returning to school in the fall with these burdens upon their shoulders and that Black and Brown students face higher rates of exclusionary discipline, there was a pressing need to incorporate culturally responsive, racially equitable guidance for re-engaging students.

One of Wilson's takeaways from this summer was that community lawyering is adaptive work. It involves navigating a landscape of conflicting values held by different groups in an effort to eliminate the gap between the different values people have and how to improve lives.



## What does social justice mean to you?



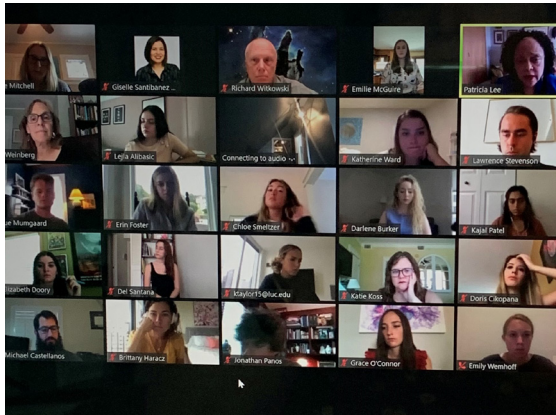
## INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

First-year law students were introduced to the Rodin Center for Social Justice during new student orientation. School of Law faculty and administrators were intentional when choosing the Rodin Center as a central highlight during orientation. Many, if not most, of our students chose Loyola Law at least in part because of the school's commitment to preparing students to make a positive difference in the world.

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*Students participate in first-year orientation via Zoom as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### The social justice program during orientation included:

- An introduction of the named Rodin faculty and advisors who serve in leadership roles shaping the Center, mentoring students, and providing meaningful teaching, scholarship, and advocacy.
- A panel discussion with the 2019-20 Rodin Fellows, who discussed:
  - What “social justice” means to them;
  - What opportunities they have sought to engage in social justice work, including their summer internship supported by the Rodin Fellowship;
  - What social justice opportunities they were looking forward to pursuing during the school year; and
  - What they hoped incoming students would take away from the panel discussion.
- Breakout groups, led by Rodin Fellows, faculty, advisors, and other students engaged in social justice work. The prompt for the discussion in the breakout groups was: “This is a fraught moment in history: the pandemic, racial reckoning, a growing

awareness of the inequities that people of color face. What does it mean to you to be starting law school at this moment in time?”

The most fundamental hope our faculty holds for our students is that they leave Loyola with a keen awareness of the power of the law. Loyola Law faculty are committed to helping students learn how the law can be a tool for justice, and the ways they can embrace social justice work as a lifelong commitment, whether through public interest legal careers, pro bono activities, or in their communities and workplaces.

Given that the Rodin Center for Social Justice builds upon existing programs in the law school that advance fairness, equity, and justice in underserved and underinvested communities, introducing students to this facet of our institution was of critical need early in their academic journeys. School of Law faculty and staff are committed to pursuing justice for the most marginalized communities and to engaging and involving students in this work. The Rodin Center is one of the law school’s most powerful entities to demonstrate how this work is made possible.





### LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES

At the start of the 2019-20 academic year, the Rodin Center began convening a monthly Lunch and Learn series. Events were hosted during both the fall and spring semesters.

The fall 2019 series focused on Black women organizers. The speakers included:

- **Dennericka Brooks** (JD '07), Director, Housing Practice Group, Legal Aid Chicago
- **Phylicia Noel**, Life Coach, Firehouse Community Arts Center

The spring 2020 speakers discussed a range of topics including:

- **The 2020 Census and Hard-to-Count Illinois Communities: Efforts Underway**, with Steven Monroy (JD '15), Staff Attorney, Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF);
- **Illinois' Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act: Rollout Challenges and its Social Equity Goals**, with Toi Hutchinson, Senior Advisor to Governor J.B. Pritzker on the Rollout of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act;

- **Voting Engagement and Expanding the Rights of Prisoners: Focus on Recently Passed Legislation**, with Stevie Calles, Executive Director, Chicago Votes.

The purpose of the Lunch and Learn series is for students to have an opportunity to meet with attorneys and other activists and community members from outside the law school in an informal setting to network and to learn about the presenters' work and challenges faced.

The last Lunch and Learn program about voter engagement was intended to lead into our second Rodin Social Justice annual program, The Constitutional Right to Vote: A Failed Promise and A Way Forward. Plans were almost completed for the April 2020 program and would have included speakers and interactive learning. Unfortunately, the program had to be cancelled because of the pandemic.







### FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

This year—perhaps more than any other—law students have been confronted with the reality that while the law has the potential to move us toward social justice, it is not always just and can be as powerful a tool in causing harm. The School of Law believes that the Rodin Center for Social Justice offers students, the law school community, and the greater Chicagoland community the opportunity to explore this truth, face its challenge, work to reform laws that can be harmful, and use the law as a powerful tool to do good.

Loyola University Chicago School of Law remains grateful to Curt and Linda Rodin for the generosity and continuing partnership that help make the Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice a unique and special place for promoting fairness, equity, and decency in serving the underserved.





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