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3-29-2023

## **19th Annual Diversity Symposium Dinner 2023**

Roger Williams University School of Law

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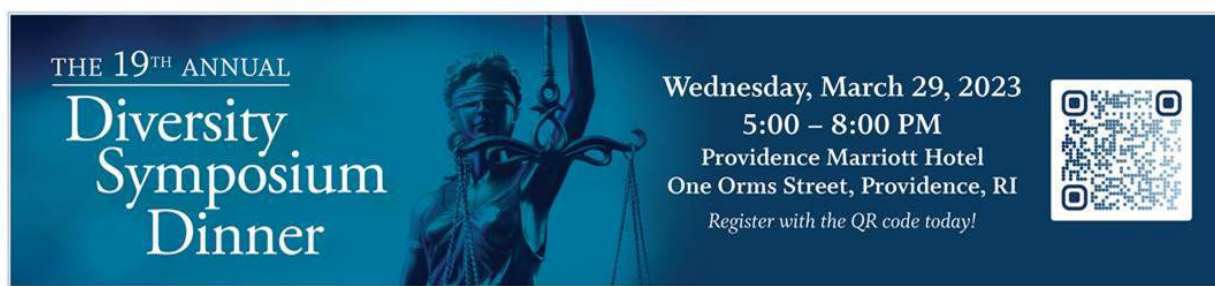
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## 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Diversity Symposium Dinner, 2023

Please join us for *the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Diversity Symposium Dinner*, sponsored by the RWU Law Office of Diversity & Outreach and our friends at Nixon Peabody. The program will be held at the Providence Marriott Hotel, One Orms Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

We are excited to share that **Braxton Howard Medlin, Esq. L'19** will be our moderator for this year's program.



THE 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**Diversity  
Symposium  
Dinner**

Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
5:00 – 8:00 PM  
Providence Marriott Hotel  
One Orms Street, Providence, RI  
*Register with the QR code today!*

*Please join us for an evening of discussion around*  
**Being Authentic; Diversity in Policy & Legislative work**

An opportunity for Rhode Island High School, College, and Law School students to interact and engage with members in the Legal Profession that include lawyers, judges, and members of the Legislature.

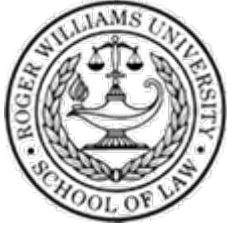
Kindly RSVP by March 23, 2023  
\*Please indicate any dietary restrictions/food allergies on registration form.

Roger Williams University  
**SCHOOL OF LAW**

We hope to see you there!

Thank You,

Morgan



Morgan Beltre  
Program Coordinator, Inclusive Excellence  
Diversity & Outreach/ Academic Excellence

# 19th Annual Diversity Symposium Dinner

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Providence Marriott Hotel - One Orms Street - Providence, Rhode Island

Registration Required

***Being Authentic; Diversity in Policy & Legislative Work.***

An opportunity for Rhode Island High School, College, and Law School students to interact and engage with members in the Legal Profession that include lawyers, judges, and members of the Legislature. Please join us for an evening of discussion around issues of diversity and the law.

## Meet the Panel



Jorge Elorza

**RWU Law Professor Jorge Elorza** was raised by Guatemalan immigrant parents in inner-city Providence, Professor Jorge Elorza returned to his old neighborhood after his graduation from Harvard Law School to give back to his community as an attorney for Rhode Island Legal Services. He litigated housing-related cases for two years before joining the Roger Williams

University School of Law faculty. After 10 years of teaching, Professor Elorza was elected Mayor of the City of Providence and served two successful terms, until he was term-limited. He returned to the RWU Law faculty and continues to stay active on issues that he is passionate about, such as housing policy, charter schools, and mayoral leadership supports.

While at RWU, Professor Elorza has served as a Housing Court Judge and co-founded the Latino Policy Institute. He teaches Property, Constitutional Law, Housing Law & Policy, and Municipal Law. He has published law review articles on the Economics of Housing Policy and on the intersection of Law, Science and Religion; and he has also published several opinion pieces on a variety of topics.

He is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island (summa cum laude) and Harvard Law School.



Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies

**Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies, L'07** is the Executive Director of the Economic Progress Institute, a nonpartisan research and policy organization dedicated to improving the economic well-being of low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders. She was previously the managing attorney of Community Legal Aid's (CLA) Worcester County offices, where she supervised several special projects including the Asian Outreach Project, the Medical-Legal Partnership pro bono project, the CORI/Reentry Project, and the Veterans Legal Assistance Project. She started her legal aid career over 14 years ago as a Bart Gordon Fellow at South Coastal Counties Legal Services focusing on the cumulative effects of structural racism on communities of color and specialized in general poverty law, medical-legal partnerships, public benefits, and housing law.

Weayonnoh has served as a small group faculty and capstone project mentor of the Patient Care in Complex Systems Gateway Program at Brown University Medical School and taught a civic engagement law-based course as an adjunct professor at the Community College of Rhode Island. She was named one of GoLocal Prov 22 to Watch in Rhode Island in 2022. She has also

received several recognitions for her social justice advocacy work including the 2020 Roger Williams University School of Law Alumni Public Interest Champion of Justice Award and the 2017 Massachusetts Bar Association Access to Justice Rising Star Award. She is currently a cohort member of the Institute of Nonprofit Practice's inaugural Black Leadership Institute. She is a proud alumna of the Rhode Island Foundation's Equity Leadership Initiative, the Shriver Center's Racial Justice Institute, Leadership Worcester, and City Year Rhode Island. She received her Juris Doctorate from Roger Williams University School of Law and undergraduate degree from Rhode Island College.

### **Meet the Moderator**



Braxton Howard Medlin

**Braxton Howard Medlin, Esq, L'19** is a trial attorney from Chapel Hill, NC. He moved to Rhode Island during a massive snowstorm in January of 2017. An avid runner, he has always been invested in advocacy and community building, whether through fitness, arts, or the pursuit of justice. After earning his bachelor's degree in Romance Languages (Spanish) at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, NC, he completed two years of AmeriCorps service. He worked with the ACCESS Project as a Family Support Specialist, providing education and wellness outreach programs to immigrant communities in rural North Carolina. Braxton earned his Juris Doctor from Roger Williams University School of Law. He was President of the Student Bar Association, a CALI Award winner in Trial Advocacy, a member of the Trial Team, and the 2019 Public Interest Award recipient. Additionally, he was a student attorney at the Roger Williams University School of Law Criminal Defense Clinic and other Public Defender offices arguing motions, representing clients at probation hearings, and trying cases.

Prior to joining the Coalition and Dorcas, Attorney Medlin honed his legal skills working as a

Public Defender in Colorado and in the private sector. Presently, Braxton is a Staff Attorney with the Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island at Dorcas International Institute. He focuses his practice on supporting and providing free legal representation for Asylum seekers detained at Wyatt Detention Facility in Central Falls, RI. He also represents folks facing deportation or in other court proceedings at the federal level in the Boston Immigration Court. He is active in all three of the Coalition's subcommittees.

When he is not in court, he volunteers with several organizations committed to uplifting and supporting communities of color, including Youthbuild Providence. Most recently, Braxton was selected as the Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the Town of Barrington.

**This event is made possible by the generosity of sponsor [Nixon Peabody](#).**



### **Special Accommodations**

Persons who, because of a special need or condition, would like to request an accommodation for an event should contact the RWU Law Events, as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours before the event, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. [lawevents@rwu.edu](mailto:lawevents@rwu.edu)



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*Providence Marriott Downtown*

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SCHOOL OF LAW

*Co-sponsored by:*

Roger Williams University  
SCHOOL OF LAW



**NIXON  
PEABODY**



## WELCOME

MODERATOR:

The Honorable Braxton Cloutier, Esq.  
*Associate Attorney*  
*Bremer Law & Associates, LLC*

## REMARKS

Ana W. Barraza  
*Director of Diversity & Outreach*  
*Roger Williams University School of Law*

## DINNER AND TABLE DISCUSSION

### PANEL DISCUSSION

Carlos Lopez Estrada, J.D.  
*Director of Legislative and Government*  
*Relations, The University of Rhode Island*

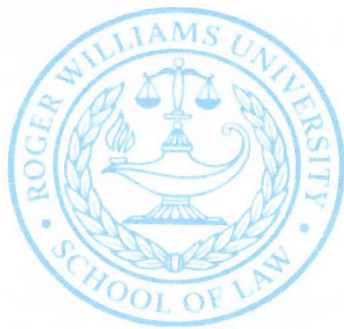
Jorge Elorza, Esq.  
*Professor of Law, RWU Law*

Kim Ahern, Esq.  
*Deputy Chief of Staff, RI Office of the*  
*Governor*

Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies, Esq.  
*Executive Director, Economic Progress*  
*Institute*

## CLOSING

Gregory Bowman, Esq.  
*Dean, Roger Williams University School of Law*



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**SCHOOL OF LAW**

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