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School of Law Conferences, Lectures & Events

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3-21-2024

## **Champions For Justice 2024**

Roger Williams University School of Law

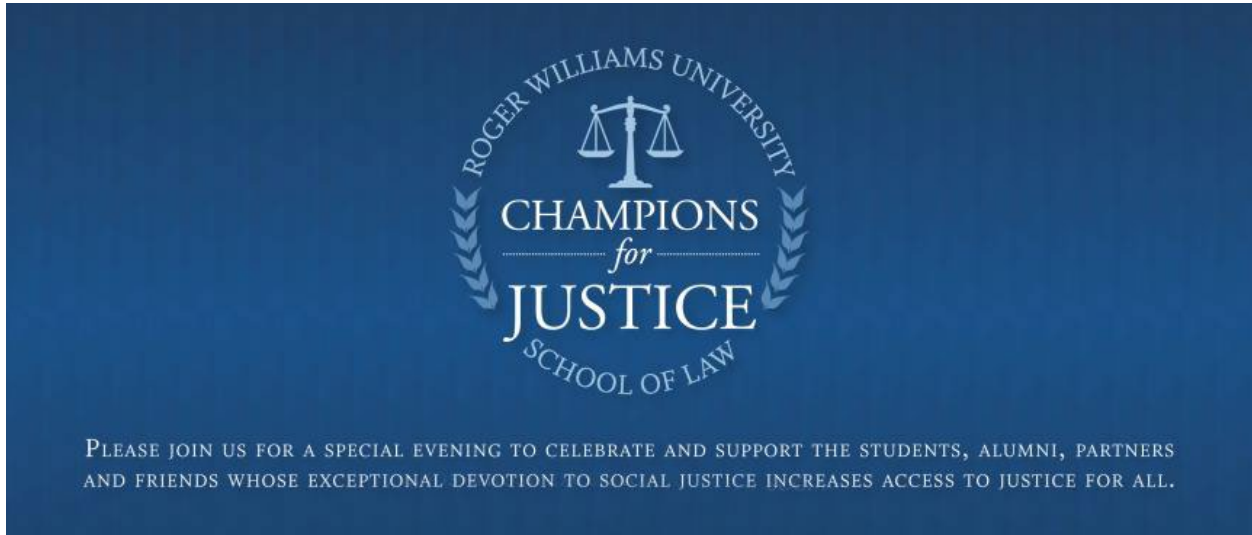
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# Champions for Justice



Thursday, March 21, 2024

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Graduate Providence

Open to the Public

Registration Required

Please save the date for a special evening on Thursday, March 21, 2024, celebrating 30 years and supporting students, alumni, partners, and friends' exceptional devotion to social justice by increasing access to justice for all.

5:00 PM VIP Reception

5:30 PM General Entry

Graduate Providence

11 Dorrance Street

Providence, Rhode Island

[Sponsorship Details](#)

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

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

Questions? | RWU Law Office of the Dean – Programs & Initiatives

[lawevents@rwu.edu](mailto:lawevents@rwu.edu)



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL EVENING TO CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT THE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS WHOSE EXCEPTIONAL DEVOTION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE INCREASES ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL.

## Champions for Justice

Please save the date for a special evening on Thursday, March 21, 2024, celebrating 30 years and supporting students, alumni, partners, and friends' exceptional devotion to social justice by increasing access to justice for all.

**30th Anniversary Event at The Graduate Providence**  
**Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 5:00 PM VIP Reception | 5:30 PM General Entry.**  
*(Keynote speaker to be announced in the new year.)*

Join us for an evening of inspiration and empowerment as we celebrate individuals who have significantly contributed to justice. This distinguished gathering promises thought-provoking discussions, compelling stories of legal triumphs, and the opportunity to network with esteemed professionals.

### About Champions for Justice

Whether you're a legal enthusiast, a student aspiring to make a difference or a seasoned practitioner, this event is a unique chance to engage with the forefront of legal innovation. Take advantage of an unforgettable evening dedicated to the champions who embody the spirit of justice. Secure your spot now for an enriching experience at the forefront of legal excellence. Step into the realm of legal excellence and advocacy at the upcoming Champions of Justice event hosted by RWU Law.

Questions? | RWU Law Office of the Dean – Programs & Initiatives | [lawevents@rwu.edu](mailto:lawevents@rwu.edu)

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## Be a Proud Sponsor

We invite you to support the social justice initiatives at RWU Law by sponsoring the 10th Annual Champions for Justice event. This event aims to benefit the Feinstein Center for Pro Bono & Experiential Education, RWU Law Clinics, and the Pro Bono Collaborative at Roger Williams University School of Law. Champions for Justice has become RWU Law's prominent event for the bench and bar, business, and academic communities, drawing more than 400 guests annually.

Grand Partner: \$20,000 (2) ONLY ONE REMAINS!

This package includes exclusive access to the event, preferred seating for ten people, and the opportunity to have your brand name presented at the event. Your logo will be featured in all printed and electronic communications before and after the event. Your brand will also be visible behind the podium, website, and blue/gold carpet. Additionally, you will receive ten tickets to the exclusive VIP reception with the keynote speaker and honorary guests.

VIP Reception Partner: \$15,000 (1)

This package includes the naming of the VIP Reception with the Keynote speaker, premier sponsors, and invited guests at an exclusive pre-function. Eight tickets are included for the main event, along with a static logo and recognition for the VIP reception and invitations.

Main Ballroom Cocktail Reception partner: \$15,000 (1)

The naming of the opening reception and social hour before the formal program begins. Eight event tickets include access to the exclusive VIP reception with the keynote speaker and honorary guests. Static signage and branding visibility at the venue and online.

Dean's Presenting Partner: \$15,000 (4)

Exclusive access includes eight tickets to the event with access to the exclusive VIP reception featuring the keynote speaker and honorary guests—event branding and large static/digital visibility behind the podium, at the event, on the website, and logo visibility.

Signature Partners: \$10,000 (8)

Six tickets for the event include access to the exclusive VIP reception with the keynote speaker and honorary guests. Static signage and branding visibility at the venue, online, and in all event communications. This is ideal for firms with RWU grads to show their support.

Champions Partner: \$5,000 (10)

Four tickets to the event include access to the exclusive VIP reception with the keynote speaker and honorary guests—static logo placement on signage in the venue.

Supporting Partner: \$2,500

Two tickets to the event. Static logo placement on signage at the venue.

*Sponsor Contact* | Chris Sienko | Assistant Vice President, Institutional Advancement, RWU Law | [csienko@rwu.edu](mailto:csienko@rwu.edu)

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## The Impact

Champions for Justice is quickly becoming a hallmark of the Rhode Island legal landscape, and we are proud to count so many as friends and supporters of the Law School. Proceeds from the evening benefit the many social justice programs within RWU Law:

[Alternative Spring Break](#)

[Pro Bono Collaborative](#)

[Public Interest Clinical Externships](#)

[Public Interest Summer Stipends](#)

[RWU Law Clinics](#)





## **Past Champions for Justice Honorees**

2023 Robert B. Mann, Esq. LHD'15  
2022 The Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson'10HL  
2020 Amato "Bud" DeLuca and Miriam Weizenbaum  
2019 Robert J. McConnell, Esq., Motley Rice, LLC  
2018 The Honorable Edward C. Clifton  
2017 Stephen M. Prignano, Esq., McIntyre Tate, LLP  
2016 The Honorable Judith Colenback Savage  
2015 Linn Foster Freedman, Esq., Robinson + Cole

## **Past Alumni Public Interest Champions**

2023 Joy C. Dingle, Esq. L'03, Street Law, Inc.  
2022 Akin Adepaju L '07  
2020 Weayonoh Nelson-Davies, Esq. L'07, Community Legal Aid  
2019 Diana deGroof, Esq. L'03, Rhode Island Legal Services  
2018 Luis Mancheno, Esq. L'13, The Bronx Defenders  
2017 Swapna Yeluri, Esq. L'07, Homeless Persons Representation Project  
2016 Dena Castricone, Esq. '98 L'02, Murtha Cullina, LLP  
2015 Deborah Gonzalez, Esq. '04 L'07, Gonzalez Law Offices, Inc.

## Past Community Partner Champions

2023 House of Hope CDC  
2022 Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc.  
2020 Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General  
2019 Rhode Island Public Defender  
2018 Barton Gilman, LLP  
2017 Rhode Island Medical-Legal Partnership  
2016 Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island  
2015 Committee for Public Counsel Services

# Roger Williams University School of Law

## Champions for Justice

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Join us for an evening of inspiration and empowerment as we celebrate individuals who have significantly contributed to justice. This distinguished gathering promises thought-provoking discussions, compelling stories of legal triumphs, and the opportunity to network with esteemed professionals while in support of our new Institute for Race and the Law for our 30th Anniversary celebration.

[See the event website for a complete listing of sponsor benefits.](#)

## Sponsorships and Tickets

	Fee	Quantity	Total
<b>Grand Partner</b>	\$20,000		\$0
Exclusive VIP reception and event access with preferred seating for 10 guests.			
<b>VIP Reception Partner</b>	\$15,000		\$0

	Fee	Quantity	Total
Naming of the VIP reception. Exclusive VIP reception and event access for 8 guests.			
<b>Main Ballroom Cocktail Reception Partner</b>	\$15,000		\$0
Naming of the opening reception and social hour before the main event. Exclusive VIP reception and event access for 8 guests.			
<b>Dean's Presenting Partner</b>	\$15,000		\$0
Exclusive VIP reception and event access for 8 guests.			
<b>Signature Partner</b>	\$10,000		\$0
Exclusive VIP reception and event access for 6 guests.			
<b>Champions Partner</b>	\$5,000		\$0
Exclusive VIP reception and event access for 4 guests.			
<b>Supporting Partner</b>	\$2,500		\$0
Event tickets for 2 guests.			
<b>Individual Ticket</b>	\$125		\$0
<b>Recent Law Alumni, Non-Profits, and Alumni Guests</b>	\$75		\$0
Law Classes 2019-2023			
<b>Law Student Ticket</b>	\$25		\$0
<b>I am not able to attend</b>	Select		\$0

Select 1 to confirm your name.

**Make a donation to help further the cause and offset the cost of student attendance**

**Total due:**

\$0

Register as an organization



Dean  
Gregory W. Bowman  
cordially invites  
you to attend

**CHAMPIONS  
for JUSTICE**

**Thursday,  
March 21, 2024**

CELEBRATING  
**30**  
Years  
EST. 1993

**The Graduate  
Providence**

5-6 p.m.  
VIP Reception

5:30-8 p.m.  
General Entry

**GRAND PARTNERS**

  
**JONES KELLEHER LLP**  
Attorneys at Law

**VIP RECEPTION PARTNER**

 **MANDELL,  
BOISCLAIR  
& MANDELL, LTD**

**SIGNATURE PARTNER**

**Robinson+Cole**

*As we celebrate 30 years of impacting the community through our pro bono programs, clinics, and externships, please join us for a reimagined Champions for Justice.*

## **CHAMPIONS FOR JUSTICE**

Thursday, March 21, 2024

5:00 PM VIP Sponsor Reception

5:30 PM General Entry & Awards Presentation

Graduate Providence | 11 Dorrance Street | Providence, Rhode Island

\$125 per Ticket – General Entry & Awards Presentation

\$75 per Ticket – Recent Law Alumni (2019-2023) & Non-Profit Organizations

**\$25 per Ticket – RWU Law Student**

*A General Entry ticket includes 5:30 PM Reception, Food Stations & One Beverage Ticket. Open Seating.*

*Honorees announced soon.*

**Limited General Entry Tickets! Reserve your ticket now! [Register HERE!](#)**

## **THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!**

### **GRAND PARTNERS**

Chisholm, Chisholm & Kilpatrick

Jones Kelleher

### **VIP RECEPTION PARTNER**

Mandell, Boisclair & Mandell

### **SIGNATURE PARTNER**

Robinson + Cole

### **CHAMPIONS PARTNER**

Adler, Pollock & Sheehan

Cameron & Mittleman

Marc DeSisto, Esq.

Rob Levine & Associates

Miriam Weizenbaum, Esq.

## **SUPPORTING PARTNER**

Higgins, Cavanagh & Cooney LLP

Locke Lord

Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP

Sloane & Walsh

***Sign up to be a Sponsor!*** [Sponsorship Details](#)

## **THE IMPACT**

Proceeds from the evening benefit the many social justice programs within Roger Williams University School of Law:

- [Alternative Spring Break](#)
- [Institute for Race and the Law](#)
- [Pro Bono Collaborative](#)
- [Public Interest Clinical Externships](#)
- [Public Interest Summer Stipends](#)
- [RWU Law Clinics](#)

**Limited General Entry Tickets! Reserve your ticket now! [Register HERE!](#)**

Thank you for your support!

Roger Williams University School of Law

Office of the Dean – Programs & Initiatives

Dean Gregory W. Bowman is excited to announce the Roger Williams University School of Law Champions for Justice Keynote Speaker & Honorees...

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

State of Rhode Island Governor Daniel J. McKee

**CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE**

The Hon. Christopher K. Smith, L'07  
Associate Judge, Rhode Island Superior Court

**ALUMNI PUBLIC INTEREST CHAMPION**

John Karwashan, Esq. L'15  
Rhode Island Center for Justice

**COMMUNITY PARTNER CHAMPION**

City of Central Fall, Rhode Island  
Presented to The Hon. Maria Rivera, Mayor of Central Falls - Mayor's Office &  
Matthew Jerzyk, Esq. L'08, Central Falls City Solicitor

**Limited General Entry Tickets! Reserve your ticket now! [Register HERE!](#)**

**ATTN: RWU Law Students**

**RWU Law received funds from a sponsor to support twenty law students to attend Champions for Justice complimentary.**

**The first twenty students to respond with their interest to Dominique Abatecola at [dabatecola@rwu.edu](mailto:dabatecola@rwu.edu) will receive the tickets.\***

*\* This does not apply to anyone who already purchased at ticket. Thank you for your support.*

**Thank you.**

Dean Gregory W. Bowman announces the Roger Williams University School of Law **Champions for Justice** Keynote Speaker & Honorees...

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

State of Rhode Island Governor Daniel J. McKee

### **CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE**

The Hon. Christopher K. Smith, L'07  
Associate Judge, Rhode Island Superior Court

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John Karwashan, Esq. L'15  
Rhode Island Center for Justice

### **COMMUNITY PARTNER CHAMPION**

City of Central Falls, Rhode Island  
Presented to The Hon. Maria Rivera, Mayor of Central Falls - Mayor's Office &  
Matthew Jerzyk, Esq. L'08, Central Falls City Solicitor

Limited General Entry Tickets! Reserve your ticket now! [Register HERE!](#)

**2/29/24 UPDATE: We now have TEN complimentary CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE tickets for law students.**

**UPDATE: ALL TICKETS HAVE BEEN FILLED!**

## **ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW CELEBRATES CHAMPIONS FOR JUSTICE AND LAUNCH OF INSTITUTE FOR RACE AND THE LAW**

**PROVIDENCE, R.I., March 18, 2024** – At its 10th annual Champions for Justice gala on March 21, Roger Williams University School of Law will launch the law school's new Institute for Race and the Law and celebrate the champions of our legal system and business community who embody the spirit of justice.

The program will feature a keynote address from R.I. Governor Daniel J. McKee; a celebration of the School of Law's 2024 champions; and an introduction to RWU Law's [Institute for Race and the Law](#), an initiative to train lawyers and legal educators on how matters of race intersect our legal system and institutions and support scholarships, justice reform research, and legal services in areas of law most significant to Rhode Island's racial inequality.

Media are invited to attend.

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 21, from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Graduate Providence, 11 Dorrance St., Providence, R.I.

**WHAT:** RWU Law officially launches its Institute for Race and the Law and celebrates Champions for Justice, featuring a keynote address by Gov. Dan McKee

**WHO:**

**Welcome Remarks**

RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman

**Keynote Address**

R.I. Governor Daniel J. McKee

**Champion for Justice**

The Hon. Christopher K. Smith L'07, Associate Justice, Rhode Island Superior Court

**Alumni Public Interest Champion**

John Karwashan, Esq. L'15, Rhode Island Center for Justice

**Community Partner Champion**

The City of Central Falls, Rhode Island, presented to The Hon. Maria Rivera, Mayor of Central Falls, and Matthew Jerzyk, Esq. L'08, Central Falls City Solicitor

Please RSVP to Jill Pais at [jpais@rwu.edu](mailto:jpais@rwu.edu) if you plan to attend.

**About RWU Law:** The only law school in Rhode Island, Roger Williams University School of Law offers students a rigorous, hands-on, affordable legal education in a supportive environment. RWU Law has been a leader in providing experiential and pro bono education opportunities for its students, and has a legacy of outstanding scholarship, accomplished alumni, and profound engagement with the bench and bar.

**About RWU:** At Roger Williams University, students are prepared to be thinkers and doers ready to solve challenging problems with innovative solutions. RWU offers 50 majors and robust offerings of graduate and professional programs across eight schools of study including Rhode Island's only law school, with campuses on the coast of Bristol and in the heart of Providence, R.I. With small classrooms and a focus on undergraduate and graduate research and community engagement, a Roger Williams education blends the strength of liberal arts and professional studies, providing all students with the depth and breadth of interdisciplinary thinking and well-rounded knowledge necessary to succeed in our interconnected, global world. RWU is committed to strengthening society through engaged scholarship so that students graduate with the ability to think critically and apply the practical skills that today's employers demand.

## **RWU School of Law Launches Institute for Race and the Law and Celebrates Champions for Justice**

The March 21 event honored champions in Rhode Island's legal system and business community, while introducing the law school's new institute focused on legal education, research and legal services advancing racial equity

March 22, 2024



School of Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman speaks at the 10th annual Champions for Justice event, which honored champions in the legal system and business community on March 21.

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – Roger Williams University School of Law celebrated its growing leadership in racial justice legal education with the official launch of an [Institute for Race and the Law](#) and honored champions in the legal system and business community at the annual [Champions for Justice](#) event on March 21.

As part of its 30th anniversary celebration year, RWU School of Law marked the next step as national leaders on race in the law and the legal system with the opening of the Roger Williams University School of Law Institute for Race and the Law, which will provide legal education, legal research and policy work, and legal services that advance racial equity in Rhode Island and across the country. The institute represents the evolution of the law school's innovative social justice work that has been central to its mission since the school's founding in 1993.

At the event, which took place at The Graduate Providence, School of Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman highlighted RWU Law's achievements over the past three decades.

“In our 30 years as Rhode Island's only law school, Roger Williams University School of Law has made an indelible mark by advancing the diversity and talent of our state's bench and bar and by providing critical legal services to Rhode Island residents and communities,” Dean Bowman said. “The Institute for Race and the Law will significantly amplify our work as a national leader in teaching and research on the intersection of race and the law and training lawyers who advocate for and create change.”

An advocate for the law school's mission and work, State of Rhode Island Governor Daniel J. McKee lauded the expanding equity work that RWU Law will be leading with the launch of the Institute for Race and the Law.

“Roger Williams University has a rich tradition of fostering bright legal minds, many of whom continue to serve our state today,” said Governor Dan McKee. “The Institute for Race and the Law will help aspiring attorneys and judges champion the values of equality, justice, and fairness, driving positive change and progress for all Rhode Islanders.”

Among its accomplishments, RWU School of Law has trained and graduated more than 6,000 lawyers, helped thousands of Rhode Islanders in need through legal clinics and pro bono work, and diversified the state's bench and bar – including seeing [alumna Melissa DuBose](#) appointed as Rhode Island's first Black and LGBTQ+ judge to the U.S. District Court of Rhode Island – ensuring that the legal profession better reflects the public it serves. In addition, RWU Law has taught its innovative [instructional program on how to teach race and the law](#) to faculty and staff at more than 95 percent of law schools across the United States, serving as a national model and leading the vanguard of this important work.

In addition to celebrating RWU Law's work in the region, the event also honored champions of our legal system and business community who embody the spirit of justice. The following honorees were presented with awards from the Roger Williams University School of Law.

**John Karwashan, Esq.**, a law school graduate of the class of 2015 and supervising attorney at the Rhode Island Center for Justice at RWU Law, received the Alumni Public Interest Champion



Award. Before joining the center, Karwashan was an assistant public defender at the Rhode Island Public Defender's office for more than three-and-a-half years and ran his own criminal defense practice for two years, practicing in both state and federal courts. For nearly a decade he has served as a mentor to RWU Law students and has supervised student interns and externs throughout his career. In addition to serving on the RWU Law Pro Bono Collaborative Advisory Board for several years, Karwashan was a pro bono supervising attorney for the Pro Bono Collaborative's ACI Civil Legal Clinic Project and has consulted on several other Pro Bono Collaborative projects.

On behalf of the City of Central Falls, R.I., **Central Falls Mayor Maria Rivera**, who graduated from Roger Williams University with a B.A. in Public Administration in 2019, and **Matthew Jerzyk, Esq.**, a 2008 RWU Law alumnus and the Central Falls City Solicitor, accepted the Community Partner Champion Award. The City of Central Falls has facilitated law student pro bono service during an Alternative Spring Break program and Jerzyk has worked with dozens of RWU Law students in his office through the public interest externship program. Additionally, Rivera and Jerzyk re-launched the Domestic Violence Task Force with the help of an RWU Law extern, and this spring an extern is working on improving housing conditions for residents of the city. Central Falls has also been a leader in educating and preventing lead poisoning in the city's housing stock.

**The Honorable Christopher K. Smith**, an RWU Law alumnus of 2007, received the Champion for Justice Award. Appointed by Gov. McKee in 2023, he currently serves as an Associate Justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court. Prior to this position, he was appointed by then-Governor Gina Raimondo to the Rhode Island District Court in 2019. Before joining the bench, Judge Smith practiced law at the Rhode Island Public Defender's Office where he rose from an Assistant Public Defender to the Chief of the District Court Unit. As a public defender, he supervised dozens of RWU Law students, inspiring many to pursue careers in public defense. While on the bench, Judge Smith has continued to engage law students in public service, most recently when he helped launch the Rhode Island District Court Eviction Help Desk. He is also a frequent guest speaker in many RWU Law classes.

The main sponsors of this year's event included Chisholm, Chisholm & Kilpatrick; Jones Kelleher; Mandell, Boisclair & Mandell; Robinson + Cole; and Motley Rice, LLC. For a full list of sponsors, visit the [Champions for Justice website](#).



Christopher Smith and Dean Gregory Bowman



Dean Gregory Bowman



Dean Gregory Bowman and Prof. Bernard Freamon



John Karwashan, Christopher Smith, Maria Rivera, Matthew Jerzyk



John Karwashan and Dean Gregory Bowman



Matthew Jerzyk, Maria Rivera, Dean Gregory Bowman







































































