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## Trending @ RWU Law: 12/29/2015: Dean Yelnosky's Post: Fourteen Weeks

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# ***Dean Yelnosky's Post***

## Fourteen Weeks

Posted by Michael Yelnosky on 12/29/2015 at 11:34 AM

This year our perhaps inappropriately named “spring” semester begins on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> and ends fifteen weeks later, on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. (We take off one week for “spring” break in early March). Exams follow, and commencement exercises for the class of 2016 are on Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>.

One of the signature aspects of a legal education at RWU Law is the number and quality of programs we offer during our fourteen-week semesters. For example, in the fall semester the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit held live argument at the law school ...



as did Judge Jack McConnell of the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island...



In addition, the Rhode Island Supreme Court judged the finals of our Esther Clark Moot Court Competition in their breathtaking courtroom in Providence...



We hosted a major symposium on Cybersecurity and Law Enforcement that brought leading academics and law enforcement officials from around the country to Bristol and included a panel featuring U.S. Senators Reed and Whitehouse and Congressman Langevin...



Just weeks later Congressman Cicilline was in Bristol to participate in a symposium on legal issues facing the LGBTQ community after the success of the marriage equality movement...



These are just some of the highlights from the fall semester.

The RWU Law spring 2016 semester programs promise to be equally dynamic and engaging. The first major event takes place during our week-long observance of the Martin Luther King holiday. On Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:30 in Bristol, Judge Carlton W. Reeves of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi will deliver the [MLK Celebration Keynote Address](#). Judge Reeves is only the second African-American appointed to the federal bench in Mississippi, and two of his rulings are particularly salient for the MLK Lecture. In February 2015 he delivered a stunning [speech](#) to three white male defendants he was sentencing for the brutal murder of a black man. And in November of 2014,

months before the United States Supreme Court agreed, Judge Reeves ruled that Mississippi's same-sex marriage ban was [unconstitutional](#).

The following Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Omni Hotel in Providence we gather to recognize three Champions for Justice for their work in support of the cause of equal justice for all. This year our honorees are Judge Judith Colenback Savage, a Distinguished Jurist in Residence at the law school; Dena Castricone '98 L'02, who practices law at Murtha Cullina in New Haven, CT; and Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, which offers citizenship and immigration services to indigent Rhode Islanders. The Champions for Justice event also includes the annual Public Interest Law Auction, which this year will feature a new twist. As always all proceeds from the event will be used to support the public interest programs that are at the heart of an RWU Law education. The evening also presents a forum for current students to share their public interest experiences with lawyers (many of whom are alumni), judges, and other generous supporters of RWU Law. Details about the event can be found [here](#).

Another court will visit the law school in early March to hear live arguments – [the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims](#). The Court, which was created in 1988, normally sits in Washington, D.C., and we are proud to be one of a few locations outside Washington where the Court will sit this year. The Court's visit follows closely on the heels of the launch of our [Veterans Disability Appeals Field Clinic](#), in which students represent veterans who are appealing claims for disability benefits that have been denied by the Board of Veterans' Appeals. The arguments will take place in the moot court room at the law school on March 2, 2016.

Finally, on April 14<sup>th</sup> Dr. Mahzarin Banaji will be in Bristol to deliver the Thurgood Marshall Memorial Lecture. She is the Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. The Marshall Lecture has a great history. For many years Mrs. Marshall joined us and spoke about her husband, and our speakers have been remarkable. The Marshall Lecture has been given by Eric Holder, David Wilkins, Regina Austin, Devon Carbado, Martha Minow, and Randall Kennedy. Dr. Banaji will no doubt carry on this important tradition by talking about her groundbreaking research on implicit bias and her most recent book, [Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People](#).

These are just the highlights of what promises to be another exciting semester at RWU Law, and you can keep informed about additional programming by visiting <http://law.rwu.edu/> or following me on Twitter @MichaelYelnosky.