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Roger Williams University School of Law

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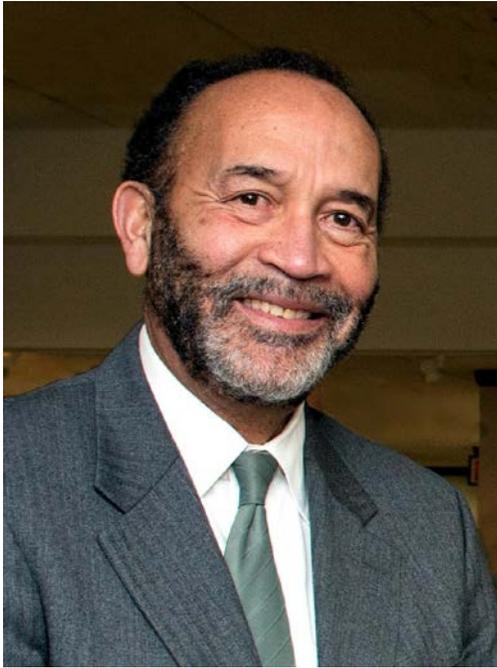
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Newsroom

Judge Edward Clifton Joins Faculty

The recently retired Rhode Island Superior Court judge will work with students on research related to racial and ethnic fairness in courts across the country.



BRISTOL, R.I., August 24, 2015 – Judge Edward C. Clifton has joined the faculty of Roger Williams University School of Law, where he will collaborate with students to conduct research on racial and ethnic fairness in the courts.

Judge Clifton, who retired from the Rhode Island Superior Court in June after more than two decades on the bench, has also served as a judge on the Providence Municipal Court and the Rhode Island District Court. At RWU Law, his title is Distinguished Jurist in Residence.

“Judge Clifton has much to offer our students as well as the entire law school and university community,” said RWU Law Dean Michael J. Yelnosky. “In addition to his sterling reputation as a jurist, he has worked tirelessly to address issues of inequality in the legal profession and in the treatment of litigants by the courts.”

Judge Clifton said he looks forward to the challenging task.

“It’s a very gratifying opportunity to address and hopefully propose remedies for the current lack of confidence in the courts, on both a national and local level,” he said, adding that the law school is “uniquely poised” to fulfill a pivotal role in the process.

“It is critically important that law students and young lawyers join in these conversations,” Judge Clifton said. “After all, it will be up to them to implement changes to currently existing institutions, and to address the multitude of societal problems that underlie their shortcomings.”

Judge Clifton’s research springs from his membership on the Minority Engagement Strategy National Advisory Board, an initiative of the National Center for State Courts. A member of RWU Law’s Board of Directors as well, he expects to share his findings at the law school during the spring semester, when he may also teach a course on civil rights.

Said Dean Yelnosky, “It’s exciting to me that Judge Clifton continues to explore the scope of and look for solutions to the problems of the underrepresentation of minorities in the profession and the relationship of communities of color to the courts. These remain, unfortunately, among the most pressing issues facing the profession and our society.”

Judge Clifton served as an enlisted man in the United States Army from 1966-68. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from UC Berkley in 1972 and his Juris Doctor from UCLA in 1975. After launching his legal career at Rhode Legal Services, Inc., as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow, he became a partner in the firm of Stone, Clifton & Clifton. In 1985, he was appointed as City Solicitor for the City of Providence, a position he held until 1992. Governor Bruce Sundlun appointed Clifton to the Rhode Island District Court in 1993, and to the Rhode Island Superior Court in 1994.

“Over the years, Judge Clifton has been a mentor to many of our students,” Dean Yelnosky noted. “I am very excited about the academic and mentoring capacity he will add as we draw him even deeper into our community.”