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June 5, 2024

Law School News

Professor Tara I. Allen Announced as Federal Public Defender

Professor Allen to Become Federal Public Defender
for the Districts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire,
and Rhode Island

June 5, 2024 Helga Melgar



(Adapted from a press release by the United States Courts for the First Circuit, Office of the Circuit Executive.)

Chief Judge David J. Barron of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit announced on June 4th that the Court has selected Attorney and current Bruce I. Kogan Distinguished Service Professor of Law Tara I. Allen to serve as the next Federal Public Defender for the Districts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Professor Allen has focused on criminal defense litigation and education for the majority of her approximately 25-year career. She earned a B.A. from Wesleyan University in 1991 and a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in 1998.

At RWU Law, Prof. Allen teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence. She also held the honorary title of Bruce I. Kogan Distinguished Service Professor of Law for two years, until mid-May 2024.

Before joining the Law School, Prof. Tara I. Allen was an Assistant Federal Defender for the District of Rhode Island, where she focused on federal criminal defense. She previously served as a trial attorney for federal defender offices in Pennsylvania and California. Additionally, she served as staff counsel for two federal appeals courts.

Chief Judge Barron stated: "The First Circuit is thrilled to have Tara Allen return to the office where she served indigent defendants so well and for so long, now as the Federal Public Defender for the Districts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Attorney Allen is a highly regarded member of the criminal defense bar and a distinguished professor of law, and the Court is confident that her varied experience will enable her to provide superb leadership to this critical and well-respected office, as well as the federal courts."

"For more than a decade, Tara Allen has been a beloved teacher who has taught and mentored our law students incredibly well. She has both cultivated our students' knowledge of the law and fostered their passion for justice, and she has inspired many RWU Law graduates to embark on careers in public defense and public service," said Gregory W. Bowman, dean of the Roger Williams University School of Law. "We will miss having her as part of our full-time law faculty, but Professor Allen will always be part of the larger RWU Law community—and we are thrilled about her selection as the Federal Public Defender for Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire."