

EXPERIENCE

THE WREN COLLECTIVE

MARCH 2020-PRESENT

Founder, Executive Director: Wren provides policy, research, and communications support for elected officials, grassroots and social justice organizations, and athletes who want to implement public health solutions to this country's most pressing problems. Wren also provides in-depth research on indigent defense systems and support for improving the provision of indigent defense in counties across the country. Wren works largely in the criminal justice space, but also provides support on homelessness, voting rights, mental health, and policing work. As Executive Director, I fundraise for the organization, manage all employees, provide strategic expansion plans, and guide all work of the rapidly growing organization.

THE LAW & JUSTICE JOURNALISM PROBLEM

JULY 2022-PRESENT

Founder, Board Member: We provide mentorship and education to journalists across the country on how to responsibly cover issues in and adjacent to the criminal legal system. The program pairs early-stage reporters with experienced mentors in the legal system, provides reporters with resources to help them understand the complicated issues that arise in the legal system, and also provides national trainings on these issues with both journalists and subject-matter experts. Along with the Board of Directors, I guide the day-to-day operations of the program, fundraise for it, and provide the substantive curriculum for reporters.

THE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE (TJC)

JANUARY 2017-Feb 2020

Legal Director: The Justice Collaborative is a team of legal experts, researchers, journalists, and media strategists that work to reduce the harm caused by the deeply flawed criminal justice system. When I joined the organization, TJC had four full time employees and it now has over fifty. The organization has a policy, communications, advocacy, journalism (the Appeal), and network division. I helped to build out all of these arms from the ground up, ran the policy and advising wings (described in greater detail below), conducted quality control on high profile, public-facing decisions made across every branch, and served as a member of the core management team.

Policy Team: I led the team that worked directly with elected prosecutors across the country to develop policies and structural changes to cut incarceration rates. My team focused on altering probation, sentencing, bail, juvenile, diversion, and declination practices, among others. We also helped offices transition following elections, develop office infrastructure and management, and plan for potential crisis situations. Finally, the team produced model legislation to reduce and ameliorate the harsh effects of incarceration.

Advising Team: I led the team that worked with NFL and NBA athletes on social justice campaigns, particularly those active in the Players Coalition. We supported athletes to lobby for expungement, bail, discovery, and speedy trial reform, to end non-unanimous juries in New Orleans, to fund public defenders, to push for voter restoration in Louisiana and Florida, and to improve prosecutor and sheriff practices across the country. We provided campaign ideas, subject matter expertise, briefings, talking points, op-eds and public service announcements for the players, and ensured that their work elevated the work of local organizers. We also advised a small business, American Family Insurance, to push for criminal justice reform across the Midwest region.

The Appeal: The Appeal is TJC's journalism arm; it produces cutting edge criminal justice reporting. I conducted legal reviews for potential defamation claims and to ensure accuracy of any complicated legal issues.

TEXAS DEFENDER SERVICE, Austin, TX

JULY 2015-DEC 2016

Staff Attorney, Capital Trial Project: Consulted on pre-trial death penalty cases in Texas.

Worked on all aspects of litigation, including developing litigation strategies, formulating mitigation and investigation plans, writing pre-trial motions, reviewing discovery and forensic evidence, drafting settlement agreements, and selecting and preparing expert witnesses. Provided training for Texas attorneys on litigating the admissibility of forensic and mental health evidence, putting on affirmative expert defenses, developing a pre-trial motions practice, and on other areas related to capital defense work. Supervised work of four fellows and all Austin interns and externs. Was responsible for majority of attorney outreach and case work delegation.

PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE, Washington, D.C. SEPT. 2008-JUNE 2015
Appellate Attorney & Forensic Practice Group Attorney: Served as a lead attorney on direct appeals from criminal convictions in serious felony charges and argued cases before the D.C. Court of Appeals. Specialized in litigating cases involving DNA, other forensic evidence, and eyewitness identification testimony, both at the trial and appellate level. Planned and conducted internal and external trainings on forensic issues. Stayed abreast of the state of scientific knowledge across forensic disciplines and received regular trainings on complex DNA issues. Served as junior co-counsel on two trial cases, including a quadruple homicide retrial dismissed following extensive pre-trial litigation. Supervised the appellate summer law clerk program.

U.S. COURT OF APPEALS, 10TH CIRCUIT, Salt Lake City, UT AUG. 2007-AUG. 2008
Law Clerk to the Honorable Michael McConnell

EDUCATION

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL JUNE 2007
J.D., *magna cum laude*
Honors: Dean's Award for Community Leadership
Heyman Fellowship
Activities: Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, Managing Editor & Articles Editor
HLS Capital Punishment Clinical: assisted in program development; secured all first-year program placements
Criminal Justice Institute Clinical (defense trial clinical program)
Public Interest Auction Co-Chair
Jobs: Law Clerk: Committee for Public Counsel Services (Boston); Federal Defender Capital Habeas Unit (Philadelphia); Defender Service (Seattle); Research Assistant (Charles Ogletree)

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA MAY 2004
B.A., *summa cum laude* in American History (honors) and International Relations
Honors: Phi Beta Kappa
Salutatorian for International Relations Major
Ivy Day Senior Honor Award; Rose Undergraduate Research Award for excellence in senior honors thesis; Lynda Hart Award (community contributions)

BAR ADMISSION: Admitted to practice in Texas, California, and the District of Columbia

OTHER: Board Member, Texas Defender Service
Board Member, Center for Integrity in Forensic Science
The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) Defense Planning Group;
Defense Planning Group, Response to President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology Report on Forensic Science and Criminal Courts;
University of Pennsylvania Platt House Arts Alumni Advisory Council

SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS

Campaigning for Defense Lawyers, Office of the Administrative Courts CJA Panel Conference (Austin, TX February 2020)

Webinar, Second Look Legislation, The Justice Collaborative (December 11, 2019)

Commonwealth Attorneys Training, Criminal Justice Reform Priorities, The Justice Collaborative Institute, a Project of Tides (Richmond, December 9-10, 2019)

Second Look Review: Training Prosecutors on How To Review Lengthy Sentences, Fair and Just Prosecution Training (Yale University, November 2019)

SWGDM (Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis and Methods): A Story of Love and Hate, or How to Litigate Around Accreditation in DNA Labs (New York, June 2018)

Co-Chair & Presenter, 2017 Capital Defense College at The Center for International and American Law (Plano, April 2017)

Planning Committee & Presenter, Discovery in Pattern Matching, 2017 Forensic Science College (New York, June 2017).

Challenging Eyewitness Identifications, Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Forensic Science Training (Houston, Oct. 2016)

Dealing with the State's Mental Health "Expert" & Getting Death Off the Table: Investigating Mitigation, Arkansas Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers: The Death Penalty in Arkansas (Little Rock, Oct. 2016)

Litigating For Funding & Settlement (co-presenter with Raoul Schonemann), NLADA Bring Your Own Case (San Antonio, June 2016)

Small Group Faculty, Federal Death Penalty Case Consultation and Training Conference (Houston, May 2016)

Selecting Experts, Working with Experts, and Getting Them, Paid, Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Capital & Mental Health Training (Houston, Feb. 2016)

Faculty, Cross Examination & Impeachment – A Program for the Defense, The Center for American and International Law (Plano Dec 2015)

Developments in Eyewitness Identification (co-presenter with Dana Page), PDSDC Forensic Science Conference (D.C., 2014)

Expert Testimony from Start to Finish (co-presenter with Dana Page); Deborah T. Creek Criminal Practice Institute: Training for Appointed Criminal Defense Attorneys in D.C. (D.C.. Sept 2013)

Current state of Eyewitness Identification Law (co-presenter with Liyah Brown), PDSDC Forensic Science Conference (D.C., June 2012)

Challenging Fingerprint Identification, Mississippi Public Defender Training (Biloxi, Miss. 2012)

Legal Issues in DNA: Making the Government Prove Its Case (co-presenter with the Honorable Kate Easterly), PDSDC Forensic Science Conference (D.C., June 2011)

SAMPLE PUBLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS

Gabfest, Slate, (March 14, 2024)

Sixty Years After Gideon: Indigent Defense in Harris County (March 2024)

Public Defenseless Podcast, (Feb. 15, 2024)

Death By Design Part 1 & 2 (Dec. 2023)

Texas Standard (Dec. 15, 2023)

Capital Punishment in the United States: An Explainer, The Appeal (Sept. 24, 2018)

US Attorney's Office That Prosecuted Inauguration Day Protesters Has History of Misconduct Findings, with Ethan Brown, The Appeal (July 30, 2018)

How Fines and Fees Criminalize Poverty: An Explainer, The Appeal (July 16, 2018)

The Criminalization of Homelessness: An Explainer, with Bidish Sarma, The Appeal (June 29, 2018)

Bail Reform: An Explainer, with Jessica Pishko, The Appeal (June 14, 2018)

Faulty Forensics: An Explainer, The Appeal, (May 4, 2018)

How Naming a Drug Operation for a Fallen Trooper Endangers His Alleged Killer's Fair Trial, with Ethan Brown, The Appeal, (May 1, 2018)

The Epidemic of Brady Violations: An Explainer, The Appeal, (April 25, 2018)

The Secret Story of Corruption Behind Meek Mill's Incarceration, with Ethan Brown, The Appeal (April 16, 2018)

Houston Police Chief Who Called Michael Bennett "Morally Corrupt" Is Quiet on Police Brutality, The Appeal (March 28, 2018)

Massachusetts and New York Prosecutors' Bail 'Reforms' Permit Business As Usual, The Appeal, (January 25, 2018)

Civil Asset Forfeiture: An Explainer, with Waseem Salahi and Callie Heller, The Appeal (January 3, 2018)

Bail Reform Should Not Be Derailed, TribTalk (December 15, 2017)

Jail Policies Restrict Legal Representation in North Carolina, The Appeal (December 14, 2017)

Why Prosecutors Get Away With Bullying Defense Lawyers, Slate (August 4, 2017)

Bar Complaint Filed Against Former MA Assistant Attorneys General in Lab Scandal, The Appeal (July 21, 2017)

The Supreme Court Signals It Doesn't Care When the Government Withholds Evidence, Slate (July 6, 2017)

Dontae Sharpe Is Not a Murderer, Why Won't North Carolina Set Him Free? Slate (May 22, 2017)

Arkansas and America's Long Dance with Death, CNN (April 26, 2017)

Harvard Project Outlines Pattern of Attorney Failures in Arkansas Death Row Cases, NPR Morning Edition Interview (April 24, 2017)

Decline in States' Use of Capital Punishment, CSPAN (April 21, 2017)

Despite Legal Battles, Arkansas Could Still Execute 7 Inmates: But Should It? NPR Here & Now Interview (April 17, 2017)

Arkansas Is About to Execute Six Men Who Likely Suffer From Crippling Mental Impairments, Slate (March 30, 2017)