

INITIATIVE *on*  
LAND, HOUSING &  
PROPERTY RIGHTS

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## Heirs' Property and the Preservation of Affordable Housing Conference

*Our 2025 national conference is dedicated to addressing an important set of critical issues at the intersection of housing and heirs' property. We will highlight various housing-related challenges heirs' property owners often face and some of the policy, law reform, direct services, and community engagement work that is being done to transform heirs' property ownership from an often problematic, highly unstable form of ownership into ownership that can be sustainable and productive in economic and many non-economic ways. Working together, we can better empower families to preserve their homes, retain and build wealth, and strengthen communities.*

### **Date and Time**

June 12, 2025, 2pm to June 13, 2025, 6:30pm (EST)

### **Location**

Stuart House 315  
Boston College Law School  
885 Centre Street  
Newton, MA

[View on Google Maps](#)

### **Reception Location**

Barat House  
Boston College Law School  
885 Centre Street  
Newton, MA

[View on Google Maps](#)

# Agenda

## Thursday, June 12

2:00 – 2:30 pm

Check-In

2:00 – 3:00 pm

Coffee & Networking

3:00 – 3:15 pm

Welcome Remarks

- Professor Thomas Mitchell, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Robert F. Drinan, S.J. Endowed Chair

3:15 – 3:45 pm

[Heirs' Property Photo Project](#) and Q&A

- Presenter: Rachel Loischild

3:45 – 5:15pm

Opening Roundtable and Q&A: The State of Housing and Strategies for Stabilizing Homeownership for Heirs

Moderator: Abigail Suarez, JPMorganChase, Head of Neighborhood Development within the Office of Corporate Responsibility

Speakers:

- Symone Crawford, Massachusetts Affordable Homeownership Alliance (MAHA), Executive Director
- Senator Lydia Edwards, Massachusetts Legislature, State Senator
- Solomon Greene, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, Executive Director of Land and Communities
- Alexander Hermann, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Senior Research Associate

5:15 – 6:30 pm

Reception at Barat House

## Friday, June 13

8:00 – 8:30 am

### Check-In & Breakfast

8:30 – 8:55 am

### Welcome Remarks

- Dean Odette Lienau, Boston College Law School, Marianne D. Short, Esq., Dean
- Professor Thomas Mitchell, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Robert F. Drinan, S.J. Endowed Chair

8:55 – 10:00 am

### Panel 1: Heirs' Property and Middle Neighborhoods

Moderator: Christopher J. Tyson, National Community Stabilization Trust (NCST), President

Panelists:

- Ashley Williams Clark, Detroit Future City (DFC), Vice President
- Dr. Bill McKinney, New Kensington Community Development Corporation, Executive Director
- Michael Neal, Boston College Law School, Research Director at the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights; and Urban Institute, Senior Fellow in the Housing Finance Policy Center

10:10 am – 11:15 am

### Panel 2: Heirs' Property State Law Reform and the UPHPA

Moderator: Professor Thomas Mitchell, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Robert F. Drinan, S.J. Endowed Chair

Panelists:

- Jacy Fisher, Gregory Varner & Associates, Senior Associate Attorney
- Scott Kohanowski, Center for NYC Neighborhoods, General Counsel
- Matthew Lawrence, Players Coalition, Former NFL Player
- Jane Sternecky, Uniform Law Commission, Legislative Counsel

11:20 am – 11:40 am

### Lunch Available for Pick Up

11:40 am – 12:40 pm

### Luncheon with Keynote Speech and Fireside Chat

Keynote Speaker: Arthur L. Fleming, Owner and Principal of Fleming Connection and Former Senior Vice President and Director of Community Investment Services for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta

Fireside chat with Professor Thomas W. Mitchell, holder of the Robert S. Drinan S.J. Endowed Chair and Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing and Property Rights at Boston College Law School following the keynote address.

12:50 – 1:55 pm

### Panel 3: Preventing Heirs' Property Formation: New Estate Planning Legal Services Initiatives

Moderator: David Price, Boston College Law School, Special Projects Manager at the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights

Panelists:

- Destini Agüero, Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School, Senior Clinical Instructor and Estate Planning Project Director
- Peter J. Hamilton Jr., Hamilton Realty Co., Real Estate Broker and Attorney
- Bertha Sanchez Hayden, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Associate Vice President of Justice for Seniors and Justice for Dependent Adults
- Keeva Terry, Howard University School of Law, Professor of Law

2:05 – 3:10 pm

### Panel 4: Financing Products for Heirs' Property Owners

Moderator: John Sapor, LISC Jacksonville, Housing Resiliency Program Officer

Panelists:

- Ruth Gao, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Associate General Counsel
- Karama Neal, Asset Funders Network, Strategic Project Director
- Greg Perelka, CHN Housing Capital, Executive Vice President of Lending Operations

3:10 – 3:30 pm - COFFEE BREAK

3:40 – 4:45 pm

### Panel 5: Building Infrastructure for Heirs' Property and Rural Housing through Policy and Partnerships

Moderator: Josh F. Walden, Esq., Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Chief Operations Officer

Panelists:

- Andrea' Barnes, Mississippi Center for Justice, Director of the Heirs' Property Campaign
- Brianna Jackson, Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Director of Legal Services
- Nancy Lee, Habitat for Humanity South Carolina, Executive Director
- Amy Pritchard, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Legal Consultant

4:55 – 5:10 pm

### Closing Remarks

- Professor Thomas Mitchell, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Robert F. Drinan, S.J. Endowed Chair

5:20 – 6:30 pm

Reception at Barat House



# Speaker Bios



**Andrea' Barnes, Mississippi Center for Justice,  
Director of the Heirs' Property Campaign**

Andrea' Barnes is a native of Madison, Mississippi. She received her formal education in the Madison County Public School System. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tougaloo College, a Master of Business Administration from Jackson State University, and a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Andrea' is licensed to practice law in Mississippi.

Andrea' is the Director of the Heirs' Property Campaign for the Mississippi Center for Justice, a non-profit public interest law firm. The Heirs' Property Campaign provides legal assistance and community education to families around the state to preserve ownership of their land and maintain their legacy.

Prior, Andrea' practiced family law, estate and probate administration, and personal injury litigation. Andrea also worked as a law clerk with the Circuit Court of Hinds County, Mississippi, a prosecutor with the Hinds County Attorney's Office, and as the Public Records Officer and Staff Attorney with the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Andrea' has also served as an adjunct professor at Tougaloo College, educating aspiring lawyers about litigation and trial practice. Previously, she served on the Board of Directors for the Spencer Perkins Center for Reconciliation and Community Development.

Andrea' is a member of many professional organizations and associations, including: Mississippi Bar, Magnolia Bar, Metro Black Women Lawyers Association and others. She has received numerous accolades and recognition by profession and community. As an entrepreneur, businesswoman, and attorney by trade, Andrea' is truly a servant leader whose life reflects her commitment to her faith, integrity, and justice.



**Ashley Williams Clark, Detroit Future City (DFC), Vice  
President**

Ashley Williams Clark is the Vice President of Detroit Future City (DFC), a nonprofit think tank driving research and strategies to promote a thriving and resilient Detroit. She also leads DFC's Center for Equity, Engagement and Research, which produces actionable research and policy recommendations focused on advancing economic equity, while engaging Detroiters to shape and use this work.

With nearly 20 years of experience in public policy research, community engagement, and program development, Ashley has dedicated her career to improving outcomes for communities through bridging

data and community experience to create actionable solutions.

Before joining DFC, she worked for the City of Detroit's Housing and Revitalization Department, supporting public-private partnerships, and previously served as director of outreach and strategic partnerships at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, a nonpartisan applied community research organization. There, she also led research on housing and homelessness and helped lead an integrated data system initiative.

Earlier in her career, Ashley interned with Self-Help, was a research associate at the Urban Institute, and managed operations for the Urban Institute Academy for Public Policy Analysis and Research (now known independently as The Policy Academies), a training program for emerging scholars from underrepresented communities.

Ashley's work has earned recognition from Crain's Detroit 40 Under 40, the Michigan Chronicle's Women of Excellence, and the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership's Impact Award, among others.

She holds a master's degree in city and regional planning from UNC Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in urban studies from Washington University in St. Louis.



**Symone Crawford, Massachusetts Affordable Homeownership Alliance (MAHA), Executive Director**

Symone began her inspiring journey with MAHA in 2004 as a volunteer driven by a passion for increasing homeownership opportunities for people of color and first-time homebuyers.

Born in Jamaica, Symone moved to Boston in 1999 and became a homeowner in Mattapan through a mortgage program negotiated by MAHA. This personal experience sparked her advocacy for affordable housing and community empowerment. Before assuming her current leadership role in January 2022, Symone served 11 years on MAHA's Board of Directors, including a term as board chair, and joined the staff in 2018 as the Director of STASH and Homeownership Operations.

Under her leadership, MAHA continues to focus on narrowing the racial homeownership gap through innovative programs and community advocacy. One of her most significant contributions is the development and expansion of the STASH program (Saving Toward Affordable Sustainable Homeownership), a matched savings initiative designed to help first-generation homebuyers achieve sustainable homeownership.

Symone's expertise and commitment to housing equity have earned her appointments to several prestigious boards and committees:

- Massachusetts Housing Advisory Council
- Consumer representative to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners
- Citizens Housing and Planning Agency (CHAPA)
- Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriting Association (MPIUA)
- Hyde Park Seventh Day Adventist Church

Through her work, Symone embodies the mission of creating sustainable, affordable homeownership opportunities and advocates for policies addressing systemic barriers in housing access. Her personal journey from immigrant to homeowner to housing advocate provides her with a unique perspective on the challenges faced by underserved communities in achieving financial security through homeownership.



**Lydia Edwards, Massachusetts Legislature, State Senator**

Senator Lydia Edwards is a career advocate, activist, and voice on behalf of society's most vulnerable. She was raised all over the world by her military mom but chose to make East Boston her home.

Prior to being elected to the State Senate and Boston City Council, Lydia worked extensively in the legal field. She worked as a public interest attorney with Greater Boston Legal Services focusing on labor issues such as fighting for access to unemployment insurance, back wages, fair treatment for domestic workers, and combating human trafficking.

Senator Edwards coordinated a statewide campaign to pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights - and she won. Following the bill's passage, she was named Bostonian of the Year, Honorable Mention, by the Boston Globe in February 2023, Senator Edwards was named chair of the Joint Housing Committee and led the passage of the Affordable Homes Act, which included policies like eviction record sealing, ADUs as a right for homeowners, the creation of a Fair Housing Office, and \$5.4B in bonds to address Massachusetts' housing crisis.

In March 2025, for the 194th legislative session, she was named chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, overseeing matters related to crimes, penalties, sentencing, criminal records, judicial appointments, and court administration.

In addition to her role as a State Senator, she serves as First Lieutenant Officer in the Massachusetts National Guard working as a Judge Advocate General, where she addresses military legal matters.



**Jacy Fisher, Gregory Varner & Associates, Senior Associate Attorney**

Jacy Fisher is a Senior Associate Attorney at Gregory Varner & Associates in Alabama, where her primary practice areas include heirs' property, real estate litigation, estate planning, and probate. Since 2020, she has gained a strong reputation across the country as a passionate advocate for heirs' property landowners, working to preserve generational land and prevent involuntary land loss.

Jacy serves as the consulting attorney for Clear Landing, Inc., an organization providing *pro bono* preventative estate planning and title resolution services to low-income heirs' property owners in Alabama. She's a legal consultant for the

Alabama Heirs' Property Alliance and an active member of the Heirs' Property Practitioner Network (HPPN), contributing to peer collaboration, legal education, and advocacy.

She has successfully litigated and won numerous partition actions under the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, using innovative legal strategies to preserve her clients' family land.

Jacy presents annually at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives' Heirs' Property Bootcamp and delivers training sessions throughout the country with the Southern Rural Development Center and Policy Center at Alcorn University, focusing on "Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level."



**Arthur L. Fleming, Fleming Connections, Owner and Principal**

Arthur brings nearly 40 years of leadership experience in financial services, housing finance, land use law, and academia. Arthur is the owner and principal of *Fleming Connections*, a consulting firm with expertise in CRA, community lending, public/private partnerships, financing structures, land use law, etc.

Recently retired as Senior Vice President and Director of Community Investment Services for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Arthur served on the executive management committee and led FHLBank Atlanta's community investment, economic development, and affordable housing businesses. He spearheaded several signature initiatives such as the CRA Center of Excellence; the Heirs' Property grant and leadership program; the AHP Multiplier Economic Impact Study, and more.

Arthur's prior roles include Chief Lending & Investment Officer for the Opportunity Finance Network (OFN); Senior Director for the Southeast Region and Director of Housing Finance for the Fannie Mae Foundation; in-house consultant for a Wall Street inner-city investment fund; and held senior executive roles at GMAC Residential Mortgage (GMACM). Arthur was the founder and Executive Director of the Community Financing Consortium (CFC). Arthur also served as Attorney/Senior Associate for the FAU/FIU Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems.

A frequent speaker at industry forums, Arthur has received recognition for his contributions to the affordable housing industry, including a proclamation of "Arthur Fleming Day" in Palm Beach County. Arthur received his undergraduate degree from Florida State University, a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning and a J.D. from the University of Florida.



**Ruth Gao, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Associate General Counsel**



Ruth serves as Associate General Counsel at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Ruth advises on charitable program matters and impact investments at the Foundation. She also works on impact investment strategy for homeownership preservation, including heirs' property and tangle title.

Inspired by a vision to empower social entrepreneurs, Ruth spent a year in Jakarta working for a microfinance institution before attending NYU Law with the goal of understanding how the law may be used to enable change and impact. In 2019, she returned to NYU Law as a Fellow at the Grunin Center for Law and Social Entrepreneurship where she supervised and taught student clinicians. She then served as Associate General Counsel at Calvert Impact, a global non-profit investment firm, advising on transactional and corporate matters.

Previously, Ruth was in private practice as an associate at Ropes & Gray LLP and O'Melveny & Myers LLP, where she counseled fund managers and limited partners in the forming and raising of and investment in private equity funds. She also maintained an active pro bono practice for various not-for-profits and small businesses.

Ruth holds a J.D. from NYU School of Law and a BBA in Strategy and Accounting with High Distinction from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business.

**Solomon Greene, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, Executive Director, Land and Communities**



Solomon Greene leads the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy's Land and Communities Impact Area, which conducts research, builds networks, supports and scales innovation, and strengthens the capacity of local leaders across the globe to expand access to safe, stable, and affordable housing, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and create local economies that work for everyone.

Before joining the Lincoln Institute, Greene was appointed by President Biden to lead HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, which supported policy development and implementation across HUD with rigorous research and market analysis; data collection, sharing, and management; demonstration projects and innovation initiatives; international engagement and exchanges; and technical assistance for state and local governments. He also served as HUD's lead policy expert on housing supply, land use, tenant protections, AI and emerging technologies, innovative building technologies, sustainable and equitable development, and climate resilience.

Prior to joining HUD, Greene held leadership positions in research institutions, affordable housing and community development organizations, local government, and philanthropy. He has published extensively on a broad range of topics, including data innovation, civic technology, land use law, urban planning, and housing policy in the U.S. and abroad. He served on the Biden-Harris Presidential Transition Team and the U.S. National Committee for Habitat III. He also served on the board of directors for the National Housing Law Project, the American Bar Association COVID-19 Task Force Committee on Evictions, and the advisory board for Up for Growth. Mr. Greene received his BA from Stanford University, his MCP from the University of California, Berkeley, and his JD from Yale Law School.



**Peter J. Hamilton Jr., Hamilton Realty Co., Real Estate Broker and Attorney**

Pete Hamilton is a real estate broker and attorney based in New Orleans, Louisiana. He holds a Juris Doctorate from Southern University Law Center, May 1991, and a Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of New Orleans, May 1976. In addition to being a licensed attorney and broker in Louisiana, Pete is also a notary public and licensed certified general real estate appraiser.

Pete has extensive experience in real estate, including vacant land, single and multi-family housing, commercial and industrial properties. He has been a Louisiana licensed real estate broker since 1978 and currently serves as the President of Hamilton Realty Co., where he provides commercial brokerage and consulting services, specializing in unique and challenging real estate issues. In his legal practice, Pete offers counsel in real estate sales, leasing, trust, successions, mortgages, and contracts, and he is adept at negotiating between buyers, sellers, landlords, and tenants.

In addition to his role at Hamilton Realty Co., Pete is the President of Southern Land Consultants, Inc., where he performs appraisals and provides consultation for industrial, commercial, and residential real estate. He is recognized as an expert witness in Orleans Civil District Court.

Pete's client list includes prominent organizations such as Liberty Bank & Trust Company, the City of New Orleans, the Urban League of Louisiana, and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, among others. His professional qualifications and extensive experience make him a valuable resource in the fields of real estate and law.



**Bertha Sanchez Hayden, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Associate Vice President of Justice for Seniors and Justice for Dependent Adults**

Bertha Sanchez Hayden serves as Associate Vice President of Justice for Seniors and Justice for Dependent Adults at Bet Tzedek Legal Services. Bet Tzedek is a nationally recognized premier legal services firm in Los Angeles, California. Ms. Hayden currently oversees the portfolio of Elder Justice, Caregiver, Senior Outreach, and Access to Justice programs. Current project highlights include launching the Leaving a Legacy program which provides complete estate planning services to residents living in the highest need areas of Los Angeles County and building a platform for self-help services designed to increase access of decision-making tools. Ms. Hayden recently served as a delegate at the World Congress on Adult Capacity. In 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed her to the Professional Fiduciaries Advisory Committee where she currently serves as chair.

In 2023, Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero appointed Ms. Hayden to the California's Judicial Council Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee. Ms. Hayden is also stakeholder co-chair of California's Elder and Disability Justice Coordinating Council (EDJCC) and chair of the EDJCC's conservatorship workgroup.



**Alexander Hermann, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Senior Research Associate**

Alexander Hermann is a Senior Research Associate at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, working on projects related to housing markets, affordability, and housing policy. Alex has been a researcher at the Center for nearly a decade and has helped lead the Center's flagship annual report—The State of the Nation's Housing—since 2017. Prior to joining the Center, he worked as a grant writer at a Detroit nonprofit providing housing and treatment services to homeless populations. Alex received a Master's in Public Policy and a Master's in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan.



**Brianna Jackson, Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Director of Legal Services**

Brianna Jackson is a native of Stone Mountain, Georgia. She earned her bachelor's degree in English with an interdisciplinary certificate in Disability Studies from The University of Georgia in 2014 and her Juris Doctorate from Charleston School of Law in 2017.

Brianna, a member of the South Carolina Bar and the Charleston County Bar Association, was admitted to practice law in 2018.



Brianna joined the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (CHPP) as a staff attorney in May 2019. CHPP's direct impact on the community but also its involvement in heirs' property legislation reform attracted her to the organization. In March 2022, Brianna accepted the position of Director of Legal Services managing CHPP's Charleston, Columbia, Orangeburg, and Florence offices. Brianna embraces her leadership role at CHPP as it allows her to foster growth, inspire innovation, and positively impact communities within CHPP's service areas and replication models.

Looking ahead, Brianna is focused on expanding CHPP's footprint beyond the Lowcountry and cultivating a new generation of advocates dedicated to preserving family legacies through the evolving practice of heirs' property law.

Brianna often reflects on the following quote by Jim Rohn, "All good men and women must take responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine."



**Scott Kohanowski, Center for NYC Neighborhoods,  
General Counsel**

K. Scott Kohanowski serves as General Counsel at the Center for NYC Neighborhoods and its wholly-owned subsidiary Sustainable Neighborhoods, a Community Development Financial Institution and tax-exempt mortgage lender, where he oversees a wide range of legal and operational matters. The Center's mission focuses on preserving and fostering affordable homeownership throughout New York through advocacy and support and leveraging its subsidiary to serve homeowners through charitable loan programs, including foreclosure avoidance, climate resiliency, home repair, first-time homebuyer, and heirs' property preservation.

Scott previously directed the Homeowner Stability and LGBT Advocacy Projects at the New York City Bar Justice Center. In that role, Scott trained attorneys, supervised cases placed with pro bono and staff attorneys, provided direct legal representation to distressed homeowners, and engaged in law reform to preserve housing and communities. Scott's areas of expertise include (i) foreclosure, lending and property law, (ii) heirs property and community stabilization, (iii) deed theft and scam prevention, and (iv) non-profit law, all with an acute focus on racial equity and social justice across communities. He is a 1996 graduate of the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in Portuguese and Spanish and a 2001 graduate of NYU School of Law. Scott worked at Morrison and Foerster prior to transitioning to public interest law. He serves on the New York City Bar Association's Mortgage Foreclosure Task Force and Non-Profit Organizations Committee, the New York Attorney General's Deed Theft Task Force and the New York City Non-Profit Legal Services Foreclosure Prevention Task Force.





**Matthew Lawrence, Players Coalition, Former NFL Player**

Matthew Lawrence is a former Baltimore Raven and global philanthropist. He co-founded 32 Sports to bridge the gap between professional athletes and youth development, becoming a leading voice in youth empowerment, education, and equity.

Under his leadership, 32 Sports has won six youth world championships and launched

Connecticut's first girls flag football league, where one of his athletes became the first girl in the U.S. to earn a college scholarship for flag football.

Off the field, Matt runs Lawrence Farms in Georgia, delivering fresh produce to low-income communities and food deserts across New England and the South. A global speaker, he presents annually at the World Economic Forum and has contributed to the Presidential Council on Fitness and Nutrition.



**Nancy Lee, Habitat for Humanity South Carolina, Executive Director**

Nancy Lee joined Habitat for Humanity South Carolina as the Executive Director in 2019, after prior tenures with Charleston Habitat for Humanity and Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity. As a nonprofit executive with 20 years of service, Nancy represents the state's collective Habitat network across 46 counties. She advocates for affordable homeownership, generates statewide partnerships, and enhances recognition of housing's economic and societal impacts.

Under Nancy's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, Habitat South Carolina collaborated with nonprofits, government, and stakeholders to address unmet needs, launching a COVID-19 Mortgage Relief program, and assisted nonprofits and small business to apply for \$65 million in relief through the SC CARES Nonprofit Grant Program. The Habitat South Carolina network advocated for a \$145 million federal homeowner assistance fund via the American Rescue Plan Act and \$25 million for mortgage and rental assistance through CDBG-CV funding.

Most recently, Nancy partnered closely with the South Carolina Office of Resilience on Common Housing Operating Picture (CHOP), established to streamline housing recovery in South Carolina after Hurricane Helene. Committed to ensuring residential property owners can access post-storm recovery repair assistance, Nancy has been diligent in identifying partners and solutions that expand acceptable proof of ownership requirements and remove barriers to aid. Due to a multi-year collective effort to advocate for the rights of property owners, a legislative Heirs' Property Study Committee was established in 2022 to analyze laws, processes, and methods to proactively address heirs' property in South Carolina. Nancy holds a Bachelor of Arts from Furman University.



**Odette Lienau, Boston College Law School, Marianne D. Short, Esq., Dean**

Odette Lienau joined BC Law in January 2023 as the inaugural Marianne D. Short, Esq., Dean. Her scholarly interests center around international economic law, debtor-creditor relations, and legal theory.

Dean Lienau's book, *Rethinking Sovereign Debt: Politics, Reputation, and Legitimacy in Modern Finance*, won an American Society of International Law Book Award. Her research has appeared in many distinguished publications, including the *Harvard International Law Journal*, the *Yale Journal of International Law*, and *Oxford University Press*. She has served as a consultant and expert for UNCTAD, the IMF, and the World Bank, and is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Dean Lienau practiced in Shearman & Sterling's Financial Restructuring & Insolvency group in New York City before joining academia. She was previously an Associate Dean and Professor at Cornell Law School, and has taught at Harvard and Yale Law Schools. She received her A.B. from Harvard College, J.D. from NYU School of Law, and Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University, where her dissertation received the university's Charles Sumner Prize.



**Rachel Loischild, Boston-based Artist and Photographer**

Rachel Loischild is a Boston-based artist and photographer. Her art practice is centered on the histories and lived experiences of marginalized peoples. Her work brings together history, geography, and ephemera to examine race, class, gender, capitalism, climate change, and colonialism, using photography and archival materials to (re)contextualize our understanding of the world.

Loischild is a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellow in Photography and received multiple grants from the City of Boston Opportunity Fund. Her work has been supported as an artist in residence for LISC Jacksonville, an ART grant from the Berkshire Taconic Artists' Resource Trust, the Puffin Foundation, and a 1492/1619: American Aftermaths Project Grant. Her work has been featured at the Filter Photo Festival in Chicago, the Danforth Museum of Art, the Monmouth Museum, the Cosmos

Arles Books Festival in France, and solo exhibitions at the Griffin Museum of Photography and the Jeonju Photo Festival in Korea. Her work has been featured and published both in print and online, and is held in Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, the Fitchburg Art Museum collection, and the Magenta Foundation.

Rachel has been both an artist and educator for the last two decades. She was the department chair for Visual Arts at Pine Manor College and has taught Photography at Boston College, Boston University, MassArt, and Clark University.



**Dr. Bill McKinney, New Kensington Community Development Corporation, Executive Director**

Dr. Bill McKinney joined NKCDC as the Executive Director in 2020 after more than 25 years leading in nonprofits and public and academic institutions. A longtime resident of Kensington, Dr. McKinney has researched, written and presented extensively on Philadelphia and Kensington on a variety of issues related to race, equity and economic justice. His expertise spans food access, educational opportunities, community institutions such as libraries and settlement houses, incarceration and re-entry, addiction and recovery, emergent non-profit support, gender pay equity, and the effect of race and ethnicity on the economic status of women. Dr. McKinney received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Temple University, a Master's in Applied Anthropology from the University of Maryland, and a B.A. in Anthropology from Cleveland State University.



**Thomas W. Mitchell, Boston College Law School - Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Director**

Thomas W. Mitchell is a professor at Boston College Law School where he holds the Robert F. Drinan, S.J. Endowed Chair and founded and serves as the Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights. He is a national expert on property issues facing disadvantaged families and communities and has published leading scholarly works addressing these matters.

Professor Mitchell has engaged in extensive law reform and policy work, most prominently serving as the principal drafter of a uniform act (model state statute) named the Uniform

Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA), which is designed to substantially enhance the ability of disadvantaged families to maintain ownership of their property and their property-related generational wealth. Twenty-three states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have enacted the UPHPA into law thus far, making it one of the most successful uniform real property acts the Uniform Law Commission has promulgated in the past thirty years. Professor Mitchell also has helped develop other state and federal policy proposals designed to help disadvantaged farmers and property owners. In 2020, Professor Mitchell was named a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship in recognition of the substantial impact his overall professional work has had in assisting disadvantaged farmers and property owners. In 2021, he was awarded the Howard University Award for Distinguished Postgraduate Achievement. Professor Mitchell is a graduate of Amherst College, the Howard University School of Law, and the University of Wisconsin Law School where he received an LL.M. and served as a William H. Hastie Fellow. He is a member of a number of professional organizations, including the American College of Real Estate Lawyers.





**Michael Neal, Boston College Law School - Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Research Director & Urban Institute, Senior Fellow in the Housing Finance Policy Center**

Michael Neal is a Senior Fellow in the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Mr. Neal's research intersects racial equity, financial markets and wealth building, with a focus on housing homeownership. His recent research on heirs property has sized the risk of heirs tangled titles among senior families, amplified the need for renovations assistance as well as highlighted supports for estate planning and will-making.

Mr. Neal is also a JPMorgan Chase Fellow and a member of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's Homeownership Working Group for Project REACH. He also serves on the technical data advisory

committee for the Black Wealth Data Center as well as the HBCU Wealth Building Initiative Advisory Board.

Prior to Urban, Mr. Neal was a Director of Economics in Fannie Mae's Economic and Strategic Research Division and before that, he was an Assistant Vice President in the Economics and Housing Policy Department at the National Association of Home Builders. He has also worked for Goldman Sachs, the Federal Reserve and the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress.

Mr. Neal recently joined the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights as it's first Research Director. Mr. Neal has a bachelor's degree in economics from Morehouse College and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Pennsylvania. He also studied abroad in St. Catherine's College at the University of Oxford and in the Graduate School at Princeton University.



**Karama Neal, Asset Funders Network, Strategic Project Director**

Karama Neal, PhD, serves as the Strategic Project Director at Asset Funders Network (AFN), focusing on heirs' property.

Before AFN, Dr. Neal was appointed to lead the Rural Business-Cooperative Service at the Rural Development mission area of the US Department of Agriculture. Prior, she served as president of Southern Bancorp Community Partners, a nonprofit community development loan fund and financial development organization.

Inspired by her family's ownership of rural heirs' property, in 2013 Dr. Neal started a statewide grassroots organization to promote passage of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act in Arkansas. The legislation was passed with no dissent in 2015 making Arkansas the fifth state in the US to adopt this legislation. Dr. Neal founded the Heirs' Property Information Project and writes and speaks frequently about heirs' property. She is also a certified civil and probate

mediator with the State of Arkansas with a practice that focuses on family property owners.

Dr. Neal currently serves on the boards of the Housing Assistance Council and the Central Arkansas Library System and previously served on the boards of the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission and the Little Rock Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. She has authored numerous peer-reviewed and other publications.

Dr. Neal holds an undergraduate degree in biology from Swarthmore College, master's degree in bioethics from Loyola University Chicago, and doctorate in genetics from Emory University. She also completed executive education in impact investing at the University of Oxford Said School of Business.



**Greg Perelka, CHN Housing Capital, Executive Vice President of Lending Operations**

Greg is an accomplished senior executive and board member with over 30 years of success across the banking and financial services industries. Currently, he is the Executive Vice President for Lending at CHN Housing Capital, DBA, Believe Mortgage, a Cleveland CDFI that he helped form in 2021.

Throughout his executive career, Greg has held various sales and operational leadership roles while successfully building start-ups, effectively scaling organizations, and providing overall strategic direction for NewRez LLC, Freedom Mortgage Corp., New York Community Bank, Ohio Savings Bank and Citizens Financial. Greg serves on several national affordable housing committees. He graduated with a Bachelor of Business Management from Cedarville University and holds a Master of Business Administration through the University of Phoenix.



**David Price, Boston College Law School - Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights, Special Projects Manager**

David Price is the Special Projects Manager for the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights at Boston College Law School. The Initiative seeks to advance community development, affordable housing, property rights, and wealth-building on behalf of disadvantaged communities. In this role he manages the Homeownership Estate Planning Project, a community legal education program; the Real Estate and Community Development Law degree concentration; and internships for law students in the community development, estate planning, and real property fields. He supports Massachusetts stakeholders and advocates pursuing policy change and legislative reform, such as the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property, in the areas of affordable housing, fair housing, tenants' rights, and property justice.

David teaches an undergraduate class, *The State of Affordable Housing in the U.S.*, and a law school seminar, *Real Estate and Community Development Law*.

Prior to joining BC Law, David worked for twenty-seven years for community development corporations in Boston, including most recently over thirteen years as the Executive Director of Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood. David's community organizing experience began as a volunteer with Mel King's campaigns for Mayor of Boston in 1979 and 1983. David is a graduate of Harvard College (1977) and Boston College Law School (1991). He clerked for Hon. Francis O'Connor at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and was a real estate attorney at Goulston & Storrs in Boston prior to joining the community development field.



**Amy Pritchard, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Legal Consultant**

Amy Pritchard is a legal consultant for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's Keeping it in the Family Program, which helps family landowners address the barriers that keep them from unlocking the full potential of their land. In her previous role as a clinical law professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Pritchard developed the school's heirs' property clinic and spearheaded initiatives to increase access to attorneys in rural Arkansas. Now in private practice, Pritchard's work centers around real property and health law.



**John Sapora, LISC Jacksonville, Housing Resiliency Program Officer**

John joined LISC full-time in 2019 as Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Manager, focused on Hurricane Irma recovery, establishing a Duval disaster coalition and serving as a citizen expert on the City Council's Special Committee on Resiliency. In his current role, John promotes neighborhood-based interventions that help residents in formerly redlined neighborhoods build family wealth through homeownership, including legal assistance to address heirs' property, property tax relief, appraisal devaluations and a home repair collaborative that integrates energy efficiency and weatherization to promote health, cost savings and storm resiliency.

John also serves on national LISC's Green Team organized around three core areas – Green and Healthy Homes and Jobs, Resilient and Regenerative Communities and Green Finance – to take advantage of growing opportunities for LISC and partners to support environmental sustainability and climate resilience while building more livable Communities.



His experience includes working as tenant intake attorney at Jacksonville Area Legal Aid and 16 years as national legal counsel for The First Tee youth development program. John also practiced real estate and finance law in Jacksonville, and continues to advise faith communities and nonprofit organizations. He has a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Florida, Levin College of Law, a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School, and a B.A. in History from the University of Illinois.



**Jane Sternecky, Uniform Law Commission, Legislative Counsel**

Jane Sternecky is Legislative Counsel for the Uniform Law Commission in Chicago, where she works on the enactment of uniform acts in real property and criminal law, including the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act. Prior to joining the Uniform Law Commission, Jane was an Assistant Attorney General for the Public Access Bureau of the Illinois Office of the Attorney General. Jane received her J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law and her B.A. from the University of Iowa. She is a member of the Illinois bar, and is currently a fellow for the Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section of the American Bar Association.



**Abigail Suarez, JPMorgan Chase & Co. - Office of Corporate Responsibility, Head of Neighborhood Development**

Abigail Suarez is the Head of Neighborhood Development within the Office of Corporate Responsibility at JPMorgan Chase & Co. She is responsible for developing and implementing the company's housing policy and philanthropic strategies. This includes the firm's \$400 million investment in Neighborhood Development, which encompasses low-cost loans, equity, grants, and advancing evidence-based policy solutions to improve housing affordability, homeownership growth, and wealth building for households across the U.S.

Before joining JPMorgan Chase, Abigail was a Market Lead for Capital Impact Partners, a national Community Development Financial Institution. In this role, Abigail led Capital Impact's investment strategy and growth for the East Coast. Abigail started her career as a Policy and Program Officer in the New Markets Tax Credit within the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. She holds an MBA from the University of Virginia, Darden School of Business, and a B.A. in Finance from St. Edward's University.



**Keeva Terry, Howard University School of Law, Professor of Law**

Professor Keeva Terry is a Professor of Law at Howard University School of Law. She earned her A.B. degree from Harvard University, her M.B.A. degree from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, and her J.D. degree from Columbia University School of Law. Professor Terry teaches Wills, Trusts & Estates, Federal Income Taxation, and Contracts.

Professor Terry examines systemic disparities in wealth preservation and federal income taxation in her scholarship and service. She was instrumental in the passage of the Maryland Partition of Property Act, the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Act in Maryland. She also advocated for a similar bill enacted in the District of Columbia, the Partition of Real Property Act of 2022. Both laws help families preserve their wealth and legacies in the form of real property.

Professor Terry contributed significantly to the 2022 report, Strengthening Probate Administration in the District of Columbia. This report identified a range of legislative, regulatory, policy, educational, and practice changes that will aid D.C. residents, especially those who navigate the probate administration process without legal counsel. The recommendations contained in this report formed the basis for the recently enacted Strengthening Probate Administration Amendment Act of 2024.

Professor Terry is also currently engaged in discussions regarding legislation to increase access to non-probate options, such as transfer on death deeds, payable on death bank accounts, and motor vehicle death beneficiary designations. These non-probate options provide families with an easy and affordable way to transfer and preserve generational wealth.



**Christopher J. Tyson, National Community Stabilization Trust (NCST), President**

Christopher J. Tyson is President of the NCST (National Community Stabilization Trust) and leads the organization's efforts to create pathways for families and communities to experience the benefits of homeownership. NCST advances affordable homeownership by lending capital to revitalize vacant single family homes, advocating for homeownership policy innovation and reform, and facilitating transactions and single family housing supply.

Since 2008, NCST has facilitated the transfer of over 28,000 homes and collaborated with local practitioners to stabilize neighborhoods and increase housing supply across the nation. Prior to NCST Christopher served as the President and CEO of Build Baton Rouge, where he led the agency's revival and raised more than \$50 million to support equitable development in the Baton Rouge region. Prior to Build Baton Rouge Chris was the Newman Trowbridge Distinguished Professor of Law at the LSU Law Center.

Christopher serves on the Baton Rouge General Medical Center Board of Directors and the Howard University Board of Trustees. His published works have appeared in numerous academic and editorial journals, including the New York Times and the Harvard Journal on Racial & Ethnic Justice. He holds



degrees in architecture, public policy, and law from Howard University, the Harvard Kennedy School, and Georgetown University, respectively.



**Josh F. Walden, Esq., Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Chief Operations Officer**

Josh F. Walden joined the Center in 2009 as Supervising Attorney and then served as Director of Legal Services before transitioning to Chief Operations Officer in 2019 where he oversees the Center's Legal, Forestry and Outreach departments in its holistic approach to protecting family land, building generational wealth and growing working landscapes. Josh is a member of the South Carolina Bar and

Charleston Bar Associations and is a South Carolina Board Certified Civil Court Mediator who specializes in family/heirs' property mediation. Josh also serves as a Board Member for the Sustainable Forestry African American Land Retention (SFLR) Network. He was born in Mt. Airey, North Carolina and has lived in South Carolina since 1979. He grew up in Chapin, South Carolina and received a bachelor's degree in psychology from The University of South Carolina in 1996 and earned his Juris Doctorate from The University of South Carolina School of Law and was admitted to practice in 2000.

## Thank you For Joining Us

Thank you for participating in the *Heirs' Property and the Preservation of Affordable Housing* Conference. We hope you enjoyed the program.

Please complete this [brief survey](#) about your experience.

We are seeking your feedback to help us improve our future events.

## Connect with the Initiative

- [Website](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Email Us](#) at [LHPRights@bc.edu](mailto:LHPRights@bc.edu)



# Support for the Initiative

The Initiative on Land, Housing, & Property Rights at Boston College Law School is grateful to the organizations whose financial support makes our work possible.

Thanks to their generosity, the Initiative is able to host a wide range of programs - including our annual national conference, workshops, panel discussions, and other gatherings - and produce publications that contribute to a deeper understanding of critical property rights affecting disadvantaged communities.

We are producing research and policy proposals; training law students to have greater capacity to work on land and housing issues; and are doing community engagement work with our community partners. The comprehensive range of activities we have undertaken, which are made possible by our supporters, are designed to address significant land, housing, and community development challenges socially and economically disadvantaged communities face.

**[If you would like to contribute to the mission and activities of the Initiative, consider a gift donation.](#)**

**Your gift will increase the Initiative's ability to undertake additional research, policy, and community engagement activities.**

To date, the Initiative:

- Launched a Real Estate and Community Development Law Concentration at Boston College Law School. 18 students are currently enrolled or have graduated with the Concentration.
- Created experiential learning opportunities that offer students with hands-on legal experience at Citizens' Housing & Planning Association (CHAPA), the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) and the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School (LSC).
- Sponsored four law school public policy panels for students, the public, faculty, and others on topics of significant public concern - "MBTA Communities Act: Legal Analysis for the Frontlines," "MBTA Communities Act Implementation Part II: Progress and Push Back," "Rent Control and Rent Stabilization Bills: What Would They Do," and "Beyond Single-Family Housing: Collective Ownership Models and Opportunities."
- Support stakeholders in multiple states interested in the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA).
- Sponsors a community legal education program designed to help community members better understand the laws and policies that impact the property challenges they face. The Homeowner Estate Planning Project aims to sustain long-term homeownership by facilitating an effective, successful transfer of family homes and family wealth to future generations.
- Participate in multiple community engagement listening sessions to learn from community stakeholders and to inform our proposed legal reform and policy proposals.