



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
U N D E R L A W





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Letter from the President and Executive Director

The year 2017 brought with it some of the greatest challenges to the fight for civil rights in recent times, from the undoing of core civil rights protections at the Departments of Justice and Education to the formation of a taxpayer-funded election commission that threatens to purge millions of voters from the rolls. The challenges have been great. But the dedicated staff and board of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is bringing new energy to the fight for civil rights in the Trump-Sessions era.

Our work challenging the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, the Administration's retreat from civil rights enforcement, and vestiges of discrimination in voting and the criminal justice system have protected the rights of underrepresented minorities. But our work must continue.

At a White House gathering in 1963, President Kennedy laid bare the civil rights crisis unfolding across the country and made clear that private attorneys had the power, capacity and resources to fight racial discrimination and injustice in their communities. Decades later, we stand at a crossroads again. We are at a moment characterized by extremism, hate-inspired violence, and bitter opposition to the goals underlying civil rights laws. Voter suppression is alive and well. The new Administration is led by individuals with great hostility towards the goals and mission underlying the Departments of Justice, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and

Labor. To meet the challenges we now face, a new army of private lawyers is needed to help support the fight that lies ahead.

Lawyers must continue to rise up and collaborate with civil rights organizations dedicated to fighting hostile actions taken at the federal level. Lawyers are needed to stand with the Lawyers' Committee in our ongoing and extensive work to fight against voter suppression, extremism, hate-inspired incidents and our broken criminal justice system. We must expand this work to safeguard our democracy.

Throughout the years, thousands of lawyers, donors and grassroots activists across the country have heeded President Kennedy's call. They did so because lawyers are the legal barrier against discrimination, the ballast standing firm against the flowing tides of injustice. And now more than ever, we encourage lawyers to pledge their support to fight injustice and challenge efforts that threaten to turn the clock back on civil rights.

With vigilance and dedication, we will continue our significant work to #FightLikeHell.

Sincerely,



Kristen Clarke
President and Executive Director



About the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

HISTORY AND MISSION

At a historic meeting at the White House more than 50 years ago in 1963, President John F. Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy challenged 244 of America's prominent attorneys to spearhead the cause for equal justice during a tumultuous civil rights era. The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee) was founded at this important meeting and has been at the forefront of efforts to advance civil rights ever since.

Today, the Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose principal mission is to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. The Lawyers' Committee continues to marshal the resources of the private bar to obtain equal justice for minorities.

PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The Lawyers' Committee implements its mission through the following core projects and special initiatives:

- | | |
|---|--|
| » Criminal Justice | » Special Litigation and Advocacy |
| » Economic Justice | » Stop Hate |
| » Educational Opportunities/Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP) | » Voting Rights/Election Protection Coalition |
| » Fair Housing and Community Development | » Jerry Shestack Justice, George N. Lindsay and FirstGEN Fellowships |
| » Public Policy | |

The Lawyers' Committee is also engaged in critical matters, such as judicial nominations, environmental justice, the First Amendment rights of peaceful demonstrators and protestors, and the intersection of race and technology. The [Board of Directors](#) also leads initiatives to take positions on Supreme Court nominations, among others.



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE UNIQUE FACTS

Largest

Pro Bono Civil Rights Network
in the Nation and in the World

200+

Engaged Board of Directors
from Major Law Firms,
Academia and Corporate
Law Departments

150+

150+ Law Firms in Network

150+

National, Regional,
Statewide, and Local
Grassroots Organizations

8

Affiliated Local Committees
in Boston, Chicago, Denver,
Los Angeles, Mississippi,
Philadelphia, San Francisco, and
Washington, D.C.

Year in Review

In 2017, the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law worked to protect the rights of minorities at the federal, state and local levels. Through newly-established projects and well-established ones, the staff and pro bono network delivered meaningful results that will be built upon in the years ahead.

[Learn about the highlights from 2017 »](#)



VOTING RIGHTS PROJECT (VRP) / ELECTION PROTECTION COALITION

The Lawyers' Committee is at the forefront fighting against the Administration's attack on voting rights. The Voting Rights Project led the charge in litigating against the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, which was launched to support unfounded claims of voter fraud in the 2016 presidential election.

The VRP's [lawsuit](#) using key federal transparency laws forced the Commission to [release](#) information revealing its true motivation, which is to lay the groundwork for widespread voter suppression.

The VRP also [led](#) a national effort to combat an alarming voter purge campaign waged by a conservative group that seeks to deny the voting rights of racial minorities. Working with other national civil rights organizations, the VRP is providing guidance to hundreds of state and county election officials on how to overcome the deceptive tactics of these organizations and ensure the promise of the National Voter Registration Act is upheld.



The challenges that voters experience in seeking to exercise their right to vote continue to stand as a threat to democracy. **We will continue to fight to ensure that every American is afforded their constitutional right to cast a ballot and have it counted.**

Key voting litigation matters in 2017

- » In ongoing litigation against **Texas'** voter ID law, a federal judge ruled in April 2017 that the law was written with discriminatory intent in addition to the previous finding of discriminatory results. Five court decisions over five years have found that Texas' voter ID law, as written, violates the Voting Rights Act. The VRP continues to fight for a remedy that does not deny racial minorities access to the polls.
- » The VRP successfully litigated to extend the registration deadline for **Georgia** voters in the State's special Congressional runoff in June, allowing thousands more voters to register as a result. The VRP later reached a consent decree with the State to ensure that eligible Georgians will not be unfairly cut off from registering to vote and participating in future federal runoff elections.
- » The VRP and its partners reached a settlement with the **New York City** Board of Elections in a case that was filed on the eve of the November 2016 election on behalf of voters who were illegally purged from the registration rolls.
- » Also in Georgia, a federal district court judge ruled that a coalition of plaintiffs representing minority communities can proceed with its suit claiming that the method of electing local officials in Gwinnett County denies them equal participation in electing local officials.
- » In another Georgia case, the VRP filed suit claiming that the redistricting of two state legislative districts constituted racial gerrymandering.
- » In Jones County, **North Carolina**, where 33% of all citizens are African American but none have been elected to the Jones County Board of Commissioners in more than two decades

under the at-large system, the VRP reached an important settlement in its vote dilution case.

- » The VRP is also challenging the discriminatory method of electing judges in states where important decisions affect minority communities:
 - o In **Alabama**, all 19 of the State's appellate judges are white, even though African Americans comprise almost 25% of the voting age population.
 - o In **Texas**, the State Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals are dominated by white judges, despite a state voting population that is 26.5% Latino.

The VRP also partnered with the Texas Civil Rights Project to produce a ground breaking [report](#) on the abysmal voter registration numbers for Texas high school students. The report revealed that the State fell far below its mandate of boosting student registration numbers in accordance with the State's High School Voter Registration law. In response to the report's findings, the Texas Secretary of State launched a statewide "High School Voter Registration Initiative" to increase compliance with the law and given students more opportunity to register to vote.



Election Protection 2017

The Election Protection Coalition, the nation's largest nonpartisan voter protection coalition led by the Lawyers' Committee, has assisted voters through its network of trained volunteers for the last 15 years. The **866-OUR-VOTE** hotline was live to receive calls from voters on Election Day 2017, when approximately 40% of all Americans had an election in their area.

- » Volunteers answered calls and provided assistance in elections throughout the country.

Examples include:

- June 13 Virginia Primary

- June 20 Run-off election in Georgia's 6th Congressional District
- September 9 New York Primary
- September 12 elections in states including New York, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio and elsewhere
- September 25, on National Voter Registration Day

In 2018, the Election Protection Coalition will lead voter assistance efforts for the midterm elections.





CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT (CJP)

The Criminal Justice Project seeks to end mass incarceration and make the ideal of “equal justice under law” a reality, particularly for marginalized communities that are disproportionately minority and poor. In 2017, the CJP worked to challenge the criminalization of poverty and end institutional practices that contribute to mass incarceration.

In a case that epitomized the criminalization of poverty, the CJP [won](#) a major lawsuit in **Louisiana** challenging the debtors’ prison scheme run by the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court. A federal district court judge ruled that the Court failed to consider an indigent individual’s ability to pay court debts before jailing them, core constitutional rights. The judge’s ruling explicitly connected the Court’s debtors’ prison scheme with its own pressing need to generate money, and called into question the constitutionality of Louisiana’s practice of funding its courts off the backs of the poor.

Just a year after the Lawyers’ Committee set out to end the modern-day debtors’ prison in Sherwood, **Arkansas**, the CJP reached a major [settlement](#) with the Sherwood District Court, effectively ending the jailing of poor individuals who cannot afford to pay fines and fees.

The CJP also began litigating a class-action [lawsuit](#) against **Louisiana** officials who oversee the State’s indigent defense services, including Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards. The suit seeks to provide relief to all indigent adults in Louisiana facing non-capital criminal charges punishable by imprisonment.

Shining a spotlight on efforts by the for-profit prison industry to undermine criminal justice reform, the CJP also brought national attention -- through its amicus brief -- to a highly unusual case in Craighead County, **Arkansas**, where a private probation company [unsuccessfully](#) attempted to sue two local

judges for instituting reforms that ended the county's use of the company's services.

Collaborating with other Lawyers' Committee projects, the CJP was instrumental in helping to [launch](#) a new partnership with the International Association

of Chiefs of Police. The partnership was formed to address hate crimes and create a vehicle for rebuilding trust between communities and the police, and to lift the national dialogue sparked by protest in cities across the country on criminal justice reform.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE PROJECT (EJP)

The Economic Justice Project seeks to address persistent inequality and high poverty rates faced by African American and other minority communities. Launched in 2016, the EJP expands the Lawyers' Committee's longstanding work against employment discrimination.

The EJP reached a major victory in 2017 by working with the popular online job site Glassdoor to explicitly [prohibit](#) job advertisements that unlawfully discriminate against people with criminal backgrounds. Glassdoor's announcement garnered national press attention and paved the way for EJP to work with major companies to increase employment opportunities for people with criminal records in various industries, including the technology sector.

The EJP continued to address the persistent problem of pay inequality impacting African-American men and women. In September, EJP [partnered](#) with the National Women's Law Center to shine a light on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) abrupt decision to suspend the collection of pay data information. The decision by OMB threatens to turn the clock back on efforts to identify and eliminate pay discrimination through increased transparency and reporting. EJP also engaged in policy and advocacy efforts to advance pay equality measures at the federal level.

Finally, the EJP engaged in extensive appellate advocacy on behalf of communities of color. In *Lewis*

v. Bentley, the EJP filed an amicus brief urging the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals to review the dismissal of a federal lawsuit alleging that Alabama state legislators discriminated against African Americans in Birmingham by preempting an ordinance to raise the City's minimum wage. Working with pro bono attorneys and partner organizations, the EJP authored an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd., v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* and signed on to a brief in *NLRB v. Murphy Oil USA, Inc.*



Checklist for Employers to Recruit and Hire People with Criminal Records

- » Comply with relevant federal, state and local employment and consumer protection laws
- » Ensure accuracy and relevance in background check reports
- » Provide jobseekers an opportunity to review and respond to background check reports
- » Take affirmative steps to reach qualified jobseekers with criminal records
- » Improve hiring processes and monitor progress



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (EOP)

More than six decades after the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* ended school segregation, challenges remain to ensuring minority and low-income students have equal access to quality education. The Educational Opportunities Project strives to close this gap through litigation and advocacy to ensure public schools and institutions of higher learning are a place of equal opportunity for all students.

After nearly a decade of litigation, in November the EOP [secured](#) an historic remedy in favor of Maryland's four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The most important decision for a desegregation case in the past 20 years, the remedy requires Maryland to eliminate the vestiges of discrimination from its higher education system and puts the State on a long overdue path toward educational equity for all students.

The Lawyers' Committee is involved in two closely watched cases challenging affirmative action efforts in the higher education contexts. The EOP is representing a student intervener in defense of the University of North Carolina's affirmative action

policy. It also filed an amicus brief in support of Harvard University's admissions policy. In addition, the EOP continues using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to hold the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice (DOJ) accountable for the Administration's efforts to undermine race-conscious college admissions.

The EOP also filed [amicus briefs](#) in two lawsuits challenging the DOE's delayed implementation of rules to protect student loan borrowers from misrepresentation, fraud, and abuse. African-American and Latino students are disproportionately impacted by the for-profit college industry, and the decision to delay action to protect these students leaves them vulnerable to predatory practices.

Additionally, the EOP launched the "Let Us Learn: Schools for Every Child" [initiative](#) to ensure that all children—regardless of their immigration status—can enroll in school. Efforts to support parents, students, and schools are needed now more than ever while immigrant communities remain the targets of deportation raids, hate crimes, and politically-motivated policies such as the Administration's move to

rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The **Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP)** also took meaningful steps in 2017 to empower parents and support children. In response to the rising number of hate crimes across the country, PREP hosted webinars, [launched](#) a Bullying Prevention Month of Action with the Stop Hate Project, and assisted parents of children who experienced bullying or hate incidents at their

schools. Additionally, PREP supported immigrant children and underrepresented minorities by assisting qualifying young people applying for temporary protected status under the DACA program.

PREP also developed an innovative model incorporating technology and the Lawyers' Committee's pro bono network to increase access to justice for parents in key states. Parents in California, New York, and Mississippi can now video chat with our pro bono attorneys to address their child's educational needs.

FAIR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (FHCD)

The Fair Housing and Community Development Project fights housing discrimination by working to enforce the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) and promote greater opportunity for low-income people of color. The FHCD Project achieves this goal by ensuring equitable access to crucial resources and meaningful housing choices for racial minorities.

In 2017, the FHCD Project reached great success on behalf of communities across the country seeking equal access to housing and economic opportunities.

Key housing litigation matters in 2017

- » Reached a major [settlement](#) against the **Village of Mastic Beach in New York** for discriminating against six African-American renters and two landlords who used housing subsidies.
- » Reached a [settlement](#) with the **City of Escondido in California** in a two-year-old exclusionary zoning suit impacting unaccompanied refugee children from Central America.

» Obtained a [favorable decision](#) on a disparate impact claim challenging the exclusionary practices of **Village of Garden City in New York**, in which the FHCD Project alleged the Village's zoning decision had an unjustified disparate impact on African Americans and Latinos in violation of the FHA.

The FHCD Project, along with pro bono counsel and other national groups, [filed](#) another important suit against the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its unlawful decision to suspend the implementation of its Small Area Fair Market Rent rule, which would open access to high opportunity areas for people with Housing Choice Vouchers. The team filed several amicus briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as courts of appeals and district courts.

The FHCD Project also works closely with communities to prepare their Assessments of Fair Housing (AFH). In 2017, the FHCD Project provided expert [assistance](#) to the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) on their landmark AFH to HUD. The FHCD

team, along with Enterprise Community Partners, served as consultants, creating one of the most robust and progressive assessments conducted by a HUD grantee to date. This assessment should serve as a model to jurisdictions around the country.

Dedicated staff for the FHCD Project also worked countless hours to provide analysis and support to the City of Philadelphia, State of **Louisiana**, Contra Costa County, **California** and Madison County, **Illinois**, in their fair housing plans.

SPECIAL LITIGATION AND ADVOCACY

The Lawyers' Committee is expanding its work to confront injustice, and the **Special Litigation and Advocacy** team is leading the way in many of these efforts. In 2017, the Lawyers' Committee [filed](#) litigation to challenge the Administration's discriminatory

Muslim Ban, [took action](#) to protect the rights of student athletes at public colleges and universities who chose to #TakeAKnee during games, and provided [critical guidance](#) to individuals displaced by Hurricane Harvey.

PUBLIC POLICY PROJECT (PPP)

The **Public Policy Project** advocates for the effective advancement of civil rights law through legislation and public education. This year, the PPP launched a new [report series](#) entitled "Where Is Justice?" to provide thoughtful analysis of the Department of Justice under the direction of

Attorney General Sessions. The PPP also launched the [Creative Control Initiative](#), an exciting new partnership with pro bono attorneys supported by Google to empower entrepreneurs and creatives of color by providing them with access to intellectual property expertise.

STOP HATE PROJECT (SHP)

With the increase in hate crimes affecting communities across the country, the Stop Hate Project has emerged as a critical voice in the fight to end hate. With a community-centered approach, the SHP provides resources to support local organizations and leaders combating hate across the country.

In 2017, the SHP launched a partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to [increase the dialogue](#) between law enforcement and communities most affected by hate crimes. Partnering with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the SHP

provided law enforcement and community leaders critical tools to help protect the rights of peaceful protesters speaking out against hate. The SHP also [took on hate speech online](#), and the team's efforts led to the temporary shutdown of the nation's largest and oldest white supremacist website.

In the courts, the SHP sought leave to file an amicus brief in a case in the Northern District of California highlighting the devastating effect hate speech and cyber-hate can have in the school setting. The judge in the case agreed with the arguments in the brief, concluding that "students have the right to be free



of online posts that denigrate their race, ethnicity or physical appearance, or threaten violence.”

And through its national stop hate hotline (844-9-NO-HATE), the SHP [heard](#) from parents

across the country whose children have experienced hate and bullying in schools, and partnered with our PREP program to make sure these families got the resources and advocacy that they needed.

SUPREME COURT

In March, President and Executive Director Kristen Clarke presented testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to serve as an Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. In her [testimony](#), Clarke raised concerns regarding Gorsuch's history of rulings on criminal justice proceeding and alleged police misconduct cases. "The Supreme Court occupies a central place in American democracy. For African Americans and other disenfranchised minority groups, it has been the primary forum for seeking equal justice under the law," Clarke said. "For the last several decades, minority groups have looked to the Court to vindicate their constitutional and civil rights." Clarke also raised concerns regarding Gorsuch's written opinions as a judge on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals on employment law issues, his narrow view

of constitutional rights, and his views on educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Lawyers' Committee also filed or signed on to [several briefs](#) during the 2017 Supreme Court term, the first full term for Justice Gorsuch. The docket featured important cases with major implications for racial minorities on issues like voting rights and equal access under public accommodations laws.

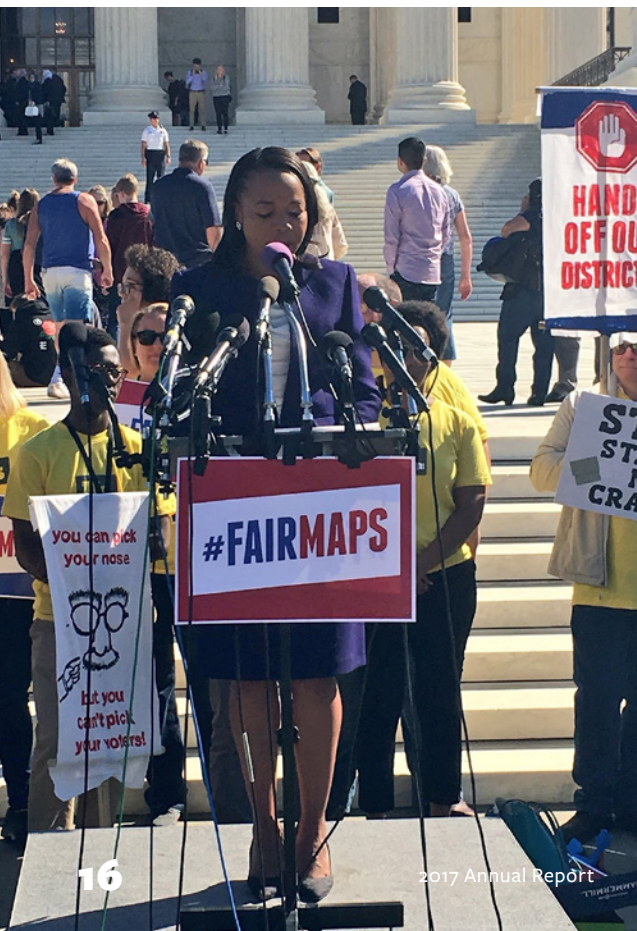
These cases included:

[GILL V. WHITFORD](#)

Although the Supreme Court has ruled that racial gerrymandering is unconstitutional, it has not provided clear guidance regarding partisan gerrymandering. Partisan gerrymandering, in which state legislators draw election maps to their favor, can also be a proxy for racial gerrymandering. This practice diminishes the voices of minority voters and the opportunity for fair representation. The Lawyers' Committee filed a brief urging the Court to provide essential safeguards to ensure that voters choose their representatives.

[HUSTED V. A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE](#)

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was enacted to increase voter participation and prohibit states from using a person's failure to vote in a single election as a trigger for removing that voter from the rolls. Yet the State of Ohio did just that in this important case about the rights of voters to remain on the rolls and engage in the electoral process. In its [amicus brief](#), the Lawyers' Committee argued that Ohio's 2015 voter purge process clearly violated the NVRA.



MASTERPIECE CAKESHOP, LTD. V. COLORADO CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

In this important civil rights case, a Colorado-based cake shop denied goods and services to a same-sex couple on religious and free speech grounds. This case is part of an alarming trend involving businesses denying goods and services to same-sex couples, and the consequences could include the nullification of civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in public accommodations.

The Lawyers' Committee, which has fought for decades to ensure the equal protection of racial minorities, led a broad coalition of nine civil rights organizations in filing an amicus brief. The brief underscored the ongoing importance of public accommodations laws that protect racial, ethnic and religious minorities from discrimination. Public accommodations laws, the brief argued, have played a vital role in ensuring that all businesses are open to everyone on a nondiscriminatory basis.



“The Supreme Court occupies a central place in American democracy. For African Americans and other disenfranchised minority groups, it has been the primary forum for seeking equal justice under the law. For the last several decades, minority groups have looked to the Court to vindicate their constitutional and civil rights.”

— KRISTEN CLARKE, PRESIDENT &
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NLRB V. MURPHY OIL USA, INC.

In the very first case of the fall 2017 term, the Supreme Court heard arguments to determine whether class action waivers are unlawful under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) – a question that carries significant implications for the civil rights community.

Protection of employees' rights to pursue class actions is critical to the Lawyers' Committee's ongoing

work to attack systemic discriminatory employment practices, and to increase equal employment opportunity for racial and ethnic minorities. Class action waivers immunize employers from claims of illegality and discrimination, and effectively prevent systemic challenges to discriminatory practices. The brief filed in this impor-

tant case and signed by the Lawyers' Committee highlighted the importance of collective and class actions in rooting out systemic discrimination in the workplace.

SPECIAL EVENTS

2017 A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Corporate Leadership Award Dinner

The Lawyers' Committee's 17th annual A. Leon Higginbotham Corporate Leadership Award Dinner was its most successful to date, raising more than \$2 million for the organization and bringing supporters together for an inspirational night. Held on June 1 at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City, the 2017 gala came in the midst of the new Administration's efforts to rollback decades of civil rights progress.

The evening was a major success, due in large part to the generosity of **The Home Depot**, the corporate award honoree, and the hard work of newly-installed board co-chair and Home Depot general counsel Teresa Wynn Roseborough, and dinner co-chair Mark Wasserman. With its commitment to diversity and fair chance hiring, the Lawyers' Committee proudly recognized **The Home Depot** with the *A. Leon Higginbotham Corporate Leadership Award*. In his remarks, **Chairman, CEO and President Craig Menear** said: "Diversity and inclusion are principles that are engrained in our core values at Home Depot. Thank you to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law for your work year-round to advocate for equality, which inspires us all."

Civil rights icon **Congressman John Lewis**, the 2017 recipient of the *Robert F. Kennedy Justice Prize*, gave rousing remarks during which he urged all supporters of the Lawyers' Committee to redouble their efforts to fight for civil rights.





In video remarks, **Senator Cory Booker** praised Congressman Lewis's decades of service and thanked the Lawyers' Committee for "doing the work to make sure that the truth and the justice of our country march forward."

During the gala, Lawyers' Committee President and Executive Director

Kristen Clarke noted that "new and unprecedented challenges" confront civil rights advocates, and pledged that the Lawyers' Committee would work to address the voids in civil rights enforcement created by the Administration that leave racial minorities vulnerable to discrimination.

"In response to some of the rollbacks we are seeing at the Justice Department, we are stepping up to be the People's Justice. If they won't fil the

cases, we will. If they won't use their bully pulpit to speak out against hate crimes and other injustices, we will," Clarke said.

Clarke also honored outgoing Board of Directors Co-Chair **John Nonna** with the *Above and Beyond Award* for his decades of service to the Lawyers'

Committee, including his work serving as pro bono co-counsel in *Shelby County v. Holder* and in cases successfully challenging voter identification laws and compliance with the National Voter Registration Act.

"When you see something that's not right, not just, you have to stand up. You have to speak out. And you have to get in the way... I want to thank the Lawyers' Committee for getting us all into trouble."

— CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS

Hill Harper, award-winning actor, bestselling author and Lawyers' Committee national spokesperson, opened the evening, and actor, producer, and entrepreneur **Laz Alonso** served as Master of Ceremonies.

Annual Awards Program

The Lawyers' Committee honored the outstanding pro bono service and stellar commitment to equality and justice of lawyers, law firms and clients during its 2017 Annual Awards Reception. **New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman** served as keynote speaker for the December 14 event hosted in New York by the **New York City Bar Association**. Honorees included:



- » **Whitney North Seymour Award: John S. Kiernan**, partner, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP
- » **Segal-Tweed Founders Award: Andrew D. Kentz**, partner, Picard Kentz & Rowe LLP
- » **Robert F. Mullen Pro Bono Award: Outten & Golden LLP** team
- » **Brooks R. Burdette Best New Board Member Award: Jonathan I. Blackman**, partner, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
- » **Special Recognition Award: Stanley J. Brown**, partner, Hogan Lovells US LLP
- » **Edwin D. Wolf Award: Brenda Shum**, director for the Educational Opportunities Project at the Lawyers' Committee
- » **Frank R. Parker Client Award: Dominic Hardie**, co-founder, Triple D Hoops

Other Awards

- » In July, board member **Adam Klein of Outten & Golden LLP and the staff of the Lawyers' Committee** were [named](#) Trial Lawyer of the Year by Public Justice for successfully reaching an unprecedented national class action settlement that requires the U.S. Census Bureau to replace its arbitrary and racially discriminatory use of criminal records with a more fair hiring process that treats African-American and Latino job seekers more fairly.



The settlement created a new Records Assistance Program to support African American and Latino class members who were rejected for employment based on flawed background information. This records expungement program, administered by Cornell University's College of Industrial and Labor Relations and supported by the Lawyers' Committee's pro bono network, will ensure the U.S. Census Bureau engages in fair hiring for the 2020 decennial census.

- » Also in July, **PREP Director and Senior Counsel for the Educational Opportunities Project [Natasha Quiroga](#)** graduated from the Presidential Leadership Scholars program



60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1957

Sixty years after President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 into law, establishing the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice, former Assistant Attorneys General of the Division at the [National Press Club](#) to discuss the state of civil rights. The panel discussion, organized and promoted by the Lawyers' Committee, featured board member **Stephen J. Pollak**, who led the Civil Rights Division during the Johnson administration. Pollak, who is of counsel at Goodwin Proctor LLP, was joined by a bipartisan group of speakers who each shared their deeply held concerns about the rollback of civil rights enforcement under Attorney General Jeff Sessions.



"The great civil rights acts of the 1950s and 60s remain on the statute books. The nation needs a Civil Rights Division and an Attorney General committed to perform the federal government's responsibility to enforce them."

— **STEPHEN J. POLLAK**, LAWYERS' COMMITTEE BOARD MEMBER AND FORMER ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

Joining Pollack were former government officials from Republican and Democratic administrations, including: **Stan Pottinger** who led the Civil Rights Division from 1973 to 1977 during the Nixon administration; **John Dunne** who served as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights from 1990 to 1993 during the George H.W. Bush administration; and **Vanita Gupta** who was appointed to lead the Civil Rights Division by President Obama in 2014 and served until 2017, when she became President and Chief Executive Officer of sister civil rights organization, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Media Highlights

The work of the Lawyers' Committee, which is leading the way on civil rights litigation nationwide, garnered national attention in 2017 in a wide range of traditional and online media.

Lawyers' Committee staff, board members, pro bono partners and clients were quoted and featured in the [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [USA Today](#), [Newsweek](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Reuters Law360](#), [ProPublica](#), [Entrepreneur](#), [The Marshall Project](#), [Slate](#), [BuzzFeed](#), [Mashable](#), [Mother Jones](#), [ESPN](#), [HuffingtonPost](#), [Talking Points Memo](#), and others. Members of the staff were featured in television interviews airing on MSNBC, CNN, Fox News, National Public Radio, C-SPAN and TV One, among others.

Several litigation matters earned significant media attention, including: the [lawsuit against the](#)

Presidential Advisory Commission on Election

Integrity for its failure to operate in a transparent manner under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), and [the lawsuit challenging Texas' discriminatory voter ID law](#). The Lawyers' Committee's work to stop hate speech online, including [its successful attempt to temporarily shut down the white supremacist site stormfront.org](#), garnered significant media attention, notably in online and technology-focused publications. The work of pro bono partners, including dedicated board members, received significant attention on a host of issues including higher education, voting rights, and criminal justice reform.

President and Executive Director Kristen Clarke and staff members also participated in press conferences and public rallies on important civil rights issues on the steps of the Supreme Court, in the halls of

FEATURED ON/IN



MSNBC



The New York Times



THOMSON REUTERS

Slate

Congress, outside of the White House, and elsewhere to bring attention to the alarming rollback in civil rights enforcement in Washington.

The Communications Team worked strategically to raise the Lawyers' Committee's national profile and to reach supporters through creative means. Using social media to educate the public and quickly respond to breaking news events, the organization significantly grew its following on Twitter and expanded its presence on Facebook and Instagram. Social media also supported the work of the Election Protection Coalition on Election Day 2017, boosting the team's work ahead of the midterm election cycle in 2018.



Leadership

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*Lawyers' Committee board co-chairs serve overlapping two-year terms. John M. Nonna finished his two-year term on June 1, 2017, when Teresa Wynn Roseborough became the new board co-chair.

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A photograph of a man in a dark suit and white shirt, seen from the side and back, speaking at a podium. A microphone is positioned in front of him. The background is dark and out of focus, with some greenery visible. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the man's profile.

“When you see something that’s
not right, not just, you have to stand
up. You have to speak out.”

- JOHN LEWIS

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