



DC NLG Chapter Newsletter

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Law4thePeople NLG 2020 Convention goes Virtual!

Due to the COVID crisis, the 2020 Law4thePeople National Convention (to be held in Detroit) was taken on-line: sessions were stretched out over 2 weeks, to ensure viewership from different time-zones. Major panels, CLE’s, committee meetings, and awards events were scheduled via zoom, with each participant receiving a daily “schedule” of their zoom links. Kudos to the national NLG staff & consultants, for pulling off a successful convention! Highlights include:

Activist Dr. Angela Davis was presented with the Arthur Kinoy Award, in an evening entitled “The Road to Abolition.” Dr. Davis discussed an intersectional approach to movements for global solidarity, prison abolition, and anti-carceral feminism. She also gave her thoughts on the current political moment, and the struggles ahead.

The **NLG Cuba Subcommittee**, led by longtime chair Art Heitzer, reviewed the current restrictions on travel to Cuba; the state of US-Cuba relations; the committee’s defense of travel ban cases; and other committee work.

A day-long CLE program by **Prisoners Legal Advocacy Network (PLAN)** featured telephone presentations from federal and state prisoners, discussing lack of COVID protections in their facilities, and other conditions. Presenters discussed legal advocacy on sentencing, parole and other areas, where lawyers and law students are advocating for prisoners nation-wide.

The final **Awards Banquet** featured awards to Jeanne Mirer (Ernie Goodman Award), Jodi Hill (C.B. King award), Sara Kershner (Legal Workers Award), and Yale law professor Michael Wishnie (Carol Weiss King Award). The prestigious Law for the People Award went to the Minnesota NLG chapter for their work defending protesters following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. The awards banquet is traditionally a major fund-raising opportunity for NLG – but over \$50,000 was pledged on-line, during the event! Participants contributed to celebrate the honorees, and to honor long-time members who are no longer with us, such as Karen Weill of Washington State NLG.

National NLG Elections and Resolutions: Check the national website (www.nlg.org) for information on voting on resolutions that were proposed at the Convention (voting is done on-line). Members should also look for ballots to vote for contested elections for officers and NEC (National Executive Committee) positions.

The **President-elect position** was uncontested: Chicago-based attorney **Suzanne Adely** is the president-elect – and will follow the term of current president Elena Cohen. A native New Yorker, Suzanne (pictured below) has been a legal advocate in Arab-American communities, working on global labor and human rights issues. She is a chair of NLG’s International Committee; and active on the NEC.



The Treasurer position was also uncontested: **NEC member Joelle Lingat** was elected by acclamation. She is a Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative staff attorney with the American Friends Service Committee

NLG First Vice President: there is a contested election for First V.P. (one seat available); voting will be online. Candidates include:

Jilisa Milton is a newly-minted lawyer in Alabama, working as an Equal Justice Works Fellow. She graduated from Univ of Alabama with a joint JD/MSW degree and has been active in BLM and mass defense work in Alabama. (she is supported by former Pres David Gespass, a lawyer in Birmingham).

Ken Montenegro is currently First Vice President; he has been on the NLG National Executive Committee for several years, and recently relocated from Los Angeles to New York City where he is on the staff of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Check the National NLG website for voting details. (www.nlg.org)

Transformative Justice Coalition holds voter protection forums:

The Transformative Justice Coalition has held a number of informational forums and voter protection trainings, in the months leading up to the November election. TJC was founded by Barbara Arnwine, the former President & CEO of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The TJC seeks to be a catalyst for transformative institutional changes that bring about justice and equality in the United States and abroad. Projects include a Democracy and Voting Rights project; Youth Voter Leadership Program; Policing and International initiatives; and more.

Check the website www.tjcoalition.org for more information, and to get involved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Housing Committee: DC NLG's newly-revived Housing Committee held an initial meeting on Sept 22 (via zoom). The interim chair is longtime NLG member Renee Bowser; members include Marc Borbely, founder & Senior Attorney of the DC Tenants Rights Center (www.dctenants.com). The committee has several priorities: 1) publicizing trainings for Landlord & Tenant legal assistance, so that NLG members can assist with the upcoming "wave of evictions" which could occur, after COVID-related eviction bans have expired. 2) engaging in policy discussions with the DC City Council and rental housing authorities, to have a voice in crafting better tenant protections, supporting public housing residents, and other priorities. Our next meeting will be in Nov (to be posted on the list-serve).

Upcoming L&T Training to be held at DC Bar: SEE BELOW (UPCOMING EVENTS) for notice about Landlord & Tenant Pro Bono training, at the DC Bar (Nov 5, via zoom).

Mass Defense Committee: The Mass Defense Committee continues its work of responding to the current movement moment by providing legal support for groups around the DMV. Our legal observers are showing up on the streets week in and week out in collaboration with Law for Black Lives D.C. and we are as ever thankful for their commitment to this vital part of our chapter's work. In October, we elected Katie Steinberg and Sachiko Hanamura co-chairs of the committee. We are grateful for their willingness to take on leadership. Both are experienced members of mass defense, and bring many skills to the role. As the election approaches next month, we are preparing for that moment of both local and national import. We appreciate the support of the chapter as we show up in our green hats, protecting the rights of activists and connecting them with legal resources.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

DC Jobs with Justice hosts "I'll Be There" Awards on Nov 18 (virtual)

DC NLG is a supporting member of the DC Jobs with Justice coalition, Board member James Drew and former Board member Richard Renner represent DC NLG, on the JWJ Steering committee and monthly meetings. This year's "I'll Be There" awards gala will be held on-line, on Weds, Nov. 18, free of charge. Register at: www.dcjwj.org/bethere2020 More from DCJWJ:

"Every year our I'll Be There awards are a chance to come together, honor some of the outstanding leaders in our work, and remind ourselves of our values as a community. It is our single largest event of the year, and our most important community gathering.

This year we'll gather in the midst of some of our most challenging times as a city. In the year ahead our work will be more important than ever before. We are ready to rise to that occasion and **we want you to be with us.**"

D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Training: The Impact of COVID-19 on Landlord Tenant Practice in the District of Columbia Webinar

Thurs, Nov. 5, 2020 – 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Register at: www.DC Bar.org: look under Pro Bono Center - Resources and Training

Shockingly, more than 90% of the tenant defendants in D.C.'s Landlord/Tenant Court routinely appear in court without counsel. Evictions lead to homelessness. With such high stakes, legal representation in landlord/tenant matters can make a huge difference in the lives of individuals and families.

This training will feature a pre-recorded training on Landlord Tenant Practice in D.C. and a live webinar to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on landlord tenant matters. It is designed to equip attorneys who have had little or no experience in landlord tenant matters to competently and comfortably handle these matters for pro bono clients. The training will focus primarily on proceedings in the District of Columbia involving indigent or low-income families.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Landlord Tenant Practice training will cover:

- Overview of Landlord/Tenant Court
- Overview of Substantive Landlord and Tenant Law
- Complaints, Pleadings and Pre-trial Procedures
- Eviction Procedures
- Public and Subsidized Housing Issues
- Rent Control
- Impact of COVID-19 on Housing Matters

Format of the Training:

This training will incorporate pre-recorded training videos and a live webinar: No particular expertise is required to participate, but attendees are required to view all materials. In addition, attendees must agree to **accept 2 pro bono referrals** from a monitoring committee.

Sponsors: Bread for the City; Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia; Rising for Justice.

Co-Sponsors: D.C. Affairs Community, Litigation Community; Real Estate, Housing, and Land Use Community; Catholic Charities Legal Network of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Register at: www.DC Bar.org: look under Pro Bono Center - Resources and Training