

DC CHAPTER NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD NEWSLETTER

July 11, 2020 (Vol. I, No. 3)

2020-2021 Board Members:

- Anitra Ash-Shakoor (Co-Chair)
- John McCoy (Co-Chair)
- Ann Wilcox (Executive VP/Secretary)
- Turna Lewis (Past Chair)
- James Drew
- Quentin Driskell
- Jim Klimaski
- Bill Montross

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NEWS FROM THE CO-CHAIRS:

From Anitra Ash-Shakoor: DC NLG Board to Form New Standing Committees

At its monthly board meeting on June 17, 2020, the DC NLG Chapter Board approved forming three new Standing Committees to respond to current events and promote the programmatic values of NLG. Current active committees include the Mass Defense Committee (report below) and Private Practitioners Roundtable.

The new Standing Committees are:

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE: Inspired by the NLG's National Police Accountability Project the Police Misconduct Committee will be a network of plaintiffs' attorneys, paralegals and advocates who work on law enforcement misconduct cases, including civil actions against prison and jail personal. Contact information to follow.

MASS INCARCERATION COMMITTEE: The NLG is committed to the dismantling and abolition of systems and institutions that support, create, fill or protect prisons, including public and private prisons, jails, police lockups, juvenile detention facilities, immigration detention centers, and involuntary psychiatric treatment centers. The Mass Incarceration Committee will support grassroots organizing efforts, policy and litigation that promotes prison abolition. This includes the rights and organizing of prisoners; defunding and closure of prisons and redirection of prison and police budgets into social and human services; re-entry support; legalization of drug use and sex work; release of prisoners serving life without parole and other inhumane sentences; decreased use of solitary confinement; and preventing construction of new prisons. Contact information to follow.

HOUSING COMMITTEE: The Housing Committee will work to advance the principle that housing is a human right. The committee will support the efforts of communities advocating for and creating access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing for all people. The committee aims to provide legal support to grassroots movements organizing around self-determination, tenants' rights, foreclosure resistance, squatting/homesteading, homelessness rights, property redistribution, and other housing and land use issues. Contact information to follow.



Welcome to new DC NLG members!

Over the past month, DC NLG has had over 100 new members sign up: we hope to get YOU involved in our committee work, legal observing, and membership events of the chapter. Please reach out to contacts in this newsletter, to get involved. Welcome!

From Co-Chair John McCoy: Training for Attorneys Handling Protest Cases Presented by DC NLG and the DC NLG Litigation Fund

DC NLG Sponsors Training for Attorneys Handling Protest Cases: On June 24, 2020, DC NLG sponsored a 90-minute training for attorneys interested in handling protest cases in DC. The webinar was organized by Board members John McCoy and Turna Lewis and included presentations by lawyers Andrew Clarke and Mark Goldstone (a long-time NLG member and Board member). Topics included approaching a protest case; motions; and working with protest clients, among other areas. Over 75 persons registered for the webinar.

DC NLG Member Advises on Employee Rights During Covid-19:

DC NLG member (and former Board member) Richard Renner's law firm has been a leading advocate for the rights of employees during the Covid-19 changes in work-life. Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch, P.C. has stepped up its intake of employees who are concerned about working conditions and employment rights. Richard posted the following resources on the DC NLG list-serve:

I am available to do a Know Your Rights presentation to federal employees. I am a partner in a DC employment law firm that handles many federal employee cases. Our associate attorney, Sarah Martin, just posted a blog about the right of federal employees to engage in protests:

<https://kcnfdc.com/blog/your-right-to-protest-as-a-federal-employee/>

I did a blog about the rights of federal employees to raise workplace health and safety issues:

<https://kcnfdc.com/blog/pandemic-whistleblowing-for-federal-employees/>

We also have a resource page about COVID-19 issues at:

<https://kcnfdc.com/covid-19-resources/>

Our firm is handling the lawsuit that seeks hazard pay for all federal employees who have had public-facing duties:

<https://kcnfdc.com/covid-19-hazard-pay/>

You are welcome to share these resources now without waiting for a program.

Richard R. Renner
Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch, PC
818 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 1000
(202) 331-9260 (office)
www.kcnfdc.com

Friday Night Film Series:

DC NLG will launch a short Friday Night Film Series this summer, providing members and supporters an opportunity to gather virtually, network & socialize, and view a short film on NLG history & leading attorneys. Among the films we plan to show are:

“Doing Justice: The Life and Trials of Arthur Kinoy”

“Soft Vengeance: Albie Sachs and the New South Africa”

Complete schedule and registration details forthcoming! Board member Ann Wilcox is coordinating this program; volunteers needed & welcome (please contact AnnWilcox@gmail.com to get involved).

Mass Defense Committee Report:

June was very busy for the DC NLG Mass Defense Committee (MDC). We have been providing around the clock support for demonstrators. When the uprising began, Law for Black Lives (L4BL) got the first requests to provide legal support to demonstrators in the DC area and across the country. Because of the MDC's working relationship with L4BL we were in a position to help uplift our Black led legal partners, and the MDC took a support role to L4BL's leadership. In June we vetted the applications of over 600 new legal observers, and have been providing near weekly legal observer training to make sure we had enough qualified people on the streets to support demonstrators. Legal Observers are being advised to adhere to the COVID best practices, provided to us by NLG National. We are Legal Observing on foot for most actions, and have added car caravan legal observing in conjunction with a National NLG pilot project. We are working to meet the needs of various communities, and rise to the challenges presented by protest in a pandemic. We also have had a 24hr jail support hotline up for the entire month, been doing court support, and have been connecting people with pro bono legal assistance.

MDC plans to hold an election at the end of July to elect a new Chair of the committee, details to come.

Black and Brown Activism Defense Collective:

Over two years ago, DC NLG and its chair Turna Lewis, were instrumental in forming the Black and Brown Activists Defense Collective, a coalition was formed to respond to FBI and other government surveillance of so-called “Black Identity Extremist” activists (growing out of the Ferguson protests in 2014), BBADC has held several events, including a panel entitled “Stop Spying: FBI Surveillance of Black and Muslim Communities,” in June 2019 at UDC Law School, and a December program in Baltimore. Speakers at these panels included attorneys Nkechi Taifa, Barbara Arnwine, NLG member Adjoa Aiyetoro and others.

In Other Very Important News...

News from National NLG:

LEONARD WEINGLASS MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP: The National Lawyers Guild Foundation and NLG National Office announced the recipient of the 2020 Leonard I. Weinglass Memorial Fellowship, Zsea Bowmani from the NLG San Francisco/Bay Area Chapter, The Weinglass Fellowship is awarded annually to a NLG member and recent law school graduate to spend 10 weeks working on a project in line with the mission of the NLG. As a Weinglass Fellow, Zsea will be developing an environmental justice legal defense and action plan with the NLG San Francisco/Bay Area Chapter and the community group Green action for Health and Environmental Justice.

Zsea is a civil rights attorney and legal scholar with a focus on race, gender, human rights, environmental justice. He received his B.A. in History from Stanford University and his J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law. While at Santa Clara Law, Zsea was active in street law programs and progressive lawyering, serving as Co-Vice President of the school's NLG chapter, and teaching underserved students through the Marshall Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project. He has also held fellowships with the National LGBTQ Task Force in Washington DC, the ACLU of Illinois, and the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, studying distinct approaches of US and Cuba toward the climate crisis. An impressive young man!

NLG-Sponsored Webinars & CLEs Now Available For Viewing on [NLG.ORG](https://www.nlg.org) Website:

National NLG Chapters and Committees have sponsored webinars & CLE's in recent weeks, on topics such as Release of Detained Immigrants, Covid-19 Know your Rights, and Digital Security. Most are available for viewing on the national website (look under "Public Webinars"). For example, on June 24 the following CLE was held:

[CLE: Fighting for the Release of Detained Immigrants During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Posted on [June 17, 2020](#)

Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 Time: 12-2pm PST/ 1-3pm MST/ 2-4pm CST/ 3-5pm EST

REGISTER: bit.ly/ImmigrationCLE

Description: The detention of immigrants who are in removal proceedings, fighting to remain in the US with their faith their families, or seeking a safe haven from government repression, gang violence or domestic abuse in their home countries, is unjust.,(see [nlg.org](https://www.nlg.org) for more)

Have You Paid Your NLG Dues This Year?

Please be sure to keep your dues current and be counted among active NLG Lawyers, law students and legal workers. Go to [NLG.org](https://www.nlg.org): Look for "Join/Renew" drop-down. Note that in addition to basic dues, some national committees have small "add-on" dues, to support committee work and list-serves (these include Mass Defense, International Committee, Labor & Employment committees).

From the DC Bar Association: DC Bar dues were due July 1, 2020 (late fees apply after July 1). Go to [DCBar.org](https://www.dcbar.org), to renew your dues. and join Communities or other special programs.

Board member Ann Wilcox elected to DC Affairs post: Our DC NLG member and Board member Ann Wilcox, was elected to the Steering Committee of the DC Affairs Community of the DC Bar; this group of Bar members plans programs related to DC policies such as campaign finance, DC Statehood & the budget.

New DC Bar Exam Dates: The DC Court of Appeals has announced that the bar exam will be administered remotely on October 5 and 6, 2020. The bar exam is managed exclusively by the D.C. Court of Appeals Committee on Admissions. For questions or concerns, please visit or email coa@dcapeals.gov.

Contact to Get Further Involved in the DC NLG Chapter:

Co-chairs: Anitra Ash-Shakoor (Anitra@nlgdc.org) & John McCoy (thejohnmccoy@gmail.com)

Newsletter contributions: Ann Wilcox (Ann1Wilcox@gmail.com)

Black and Brown Activism Defense Collective: Turna Lewis (trlewis2@verizon.net)

Summer Film Series: Ann Wilcox (Ann1Wilcox@gmail.com)