

2024 CJA Panel Attorneys Training Seminar

December 6, 2024 - Gulfport, Mississippi



AGENDA

8:30 - 8:45, Registration

8:45 - 9:00, Opening Remarks

-Omodare Jupiter

9:00 - 10:00, Calculating and Challenging Criminal History

-Cherrelle Herbert

-Cristen Thayer

10:00 - 11:00, Current State of Bruen and 2nd Amendment Challenges

-Matthew Wright

11:00 - 11:15, Morning Break

11:15 - 12:15, The Ethical Need for an Independent Defense Function

-Melody Brannon

12:15 - 1:15, Lunch (on your own)

1:15 - 2:15, Challenging Sentencing Guidelines for Methamphetamine

-Carlos Tanner

2:15 - 2:30, Afternoon Break

2:30 - 3:30, A Holistic Approach to Sentencing Advocacy

-Townsend Myers

3:30 - 4:30, Ethical Issues with Mentally Ill Clients

-Richard Bourke

Omodare Jupiter has been the Federal Public Defender for the Northern & Southern Districts of Mississippi since April 1, 2019 and was the Federal Public Defender for the U.S. Virgin Islands for the six years preceding that. Prior to that appointment, he was an Assistant Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Mississippi. He is a frequent speaker at training seminars around the country for criminal defense attorneys practicing in federal courts. Omodare earned his undergraduate degree from Loyola University of New Orleans and his J.D. from Howard University School of Law.

Cherrelle Herbert is a litigation attorney with the National Sentencing Resource Counsel (SRC), a project of the Federal Public and Community Defenders. Prior to working with SRC, Cherrelle worked as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the District of Puerto Rico and as an Assistant Public Defender in Miami-Dade, Florida. Cherrelle earned her J.D. from Cardozo Law School and her B.A. from Stanford University. She is originally from the Virgin Islands, where she now resides. Cherrelle has presented at the National Seminar for Federal Public Defenders, the Multi-Track Federal Criminal Defense Seminar, Winning Strategies, and for various CJA panels.

Cristen Thayer is an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the District of Nevada and is currently on detail with the National Sentencing Resource Counsel. She joined the Nevada Federal Public Defender's office in 2015 and specializes in direct appeals to the Ninth Circuit. She also has experience in all other stages of federal criminal cases including detention hearings, pretrial litigation, evidentiary hearings, trials, sentencing, and post-conviction. Before joining the FPD, she served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Judge Philip M. Pro, U.S. District Court Judge, D. Nev., and the Honorable Kristina Pickering, Nevada Supreme Court.

Matthew Wright is an Assistant Federal Public Defender and Deputy Chief of Appeals at the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Texas, where he has been employed for fifteen of the last sixteen years. In that time, he has served as lead counsel in hundreds of appeals and post-conviction actions at all levels of the federal court system, including the U.S. Supreme Court. In the fall of 2023, he briefed and argued one of the most famous—some might say notorious—cases of the Supreme Court's term. After graduating from the University of Arkansas School of Law, he clerked for the Honorable Kenneth M. Hoyt in the Southern District of Texas.

Melody Brannon is the Federal Public Defender for the District of Kansas. She has been with the FPD for 26 years and served as Defender for the last 11 years. The Kansas FPD manages the CJA panel of about 65 attorneys. Ms. Brannon began her career as a public defender in the Oklahoma County Public Defender Office in 1990 and worked in death penalty defense at both trial and habeas levels in Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. As Federal Defender, she has developed a holistic defense paradigm and created extensive CLE, mentoring, and internship programs. She is on the faculty and the board of the National College of Criminal Defense and teaches at national and regional conferences. She is also the Defender Chair of the Defender Services Advisory Group (DSAG) and serves on the ABA Task Force for Public Defense Independence.

Carlos Tanner, a former federal prosecutor, is the founder and principal of Tanner & Associates, LLC, a boutique law firm based in Jackson, Mississippi. Carlos handles complex criminal and civil litigation matters in federal and state courts in Mississippi and other jurisdictions across the country. Carlos has won civil trials for plaintiffs and defendants and secured favorable settlements for millions of dollars. He has also successfully handled federal and state criminal cases, winning numerous not guilty verdicts and negotiating great outcomes for his clients accused of criminal offenses. Carlos is a member of the CJA Panel for the Southern District of Mississippi.

Townsend Myers is a 1993 graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, with an undergraduate degree in history from the University of South Carolina Honors College. After graduation, he began his career with the Cook County Public Defender's Office in Chicago. In 1996, Townsend returned to New Orleans with the Orleans Parish Public Defender's Office. Two years later, he established NOLA Criminal Law. Townsend has been the CJA Panel representative for the Eastern District of Louisiana since 2019 and the 5th Circuit Defender Services Representative since 2022.

Richard Bourke is the director of the Louisiana Capital Assistance Center. He graduated from the Melbourne University School of Law in Australia where he also gained a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Criminology. Richard came to New Orleans to volunteer and then worked at the LCAC after pursuing a successful career as a criminal barrister in Australia. In 2007, Richard was awarded the Sam Dalton Capital Defense Award by the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Before his legal career, Richard worked as a youth counselor and social worker with adolescent victims of physical and sexual abuse. Richard is certified as lead capital trial, appellate, and post-conviction counsel.