LAWYERS CANNOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE AMERICAN LEGAL LANDSCAPE WITHOUT STUDYING THE IMPACT OF RACE.

The Law School founded the Center for the Study of Race and Law in 2003 to provide opportunities for students, scholars, practitioners and community members to examine and exchange ideas related to race and law through lectures, symposia and scholarship.

The center also coordinates with the Law School to offer a concentration of courses on race and law, and serves as a resource for faculty whose teaching or scholarship addresses subjects related to race.

CURRICULUM

Virginia offers courses in civil rights and anti-discrimination law, but equally important is a wide array of courses in constitutional law and history. These offerings reflect the ways in which the struggle for civil rights shaped — and continues to shape — our country and institutions.

Each year the CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RACE AND LAW brings a visiting professor to teach a short course. PAST VISITORS INCLUDE:

RICHARD BANKS, JACKSON ELLI REYNOLDS PROFESSOR OF LAW, STANFORD LAW SCHOOL

DOROTHY BROWN, PROFESSOR OF LAW, EMORY LAW SCHOOL

DEVON CARBADO, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND FORMER VICE DEAN OF THE FACULTY, UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

ADRIENNE DAVIS, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND VICE PROVOST AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

MICHAEL KLARMAN, KIRKLAND & ELLIS PROFESSOR OF LAW, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

BEFORE BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION, the early civil rights movement explored avenues to create equality for African-Americans that have mostly been abandoned today, argues DEAN RISA GOLUBOFF in her groundbreaking book on the history of civil rights law. “The Lost Promise of Civil Rights” explores the fight for black economic and labor rights from the 1930s until the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing “separate but equal” schools. The decision set the stage for looking at race through the lens of integration in education. The result of abandoning this path to civil rights, Goluboff claims, is an inability to resolve the troubling legacy of racial economic inequality that remains today. “Brown isn’t only the end of segregation, it’s the end of an era of experimentation. In pushing us in that one direction, we lose the other possible directions that had existed before Brown. And in particular we lose images of civil rights and civil rights claims that were more concerned with economics, that were more concerned with material inequality than with stigma or classifications on their own.”
FOR PROFESSOR
DAYNA MATTHEW ’87,
HEALTH DISPARITY
IN THE U.S. DUE TO
RACE AND INCOME
is both a bigger-
picture issue and a
personal one.

Matthew, who
has studied the
connection between
living environments
and longevity, grew
up in the crumbling,
crime-stricken
South Bronx of the
1960s and ’70s.

Her father,
Vincent E. Bowen Jr.,
at one point worked
four jobs to help
the family make
ends meet. He died
at 49, her mother,
Marion Bowen, at
61. Both were lost to
preventable diseases,
exacerbated by the
stress of societal
inequities.

“My parents died
very, very young,”
Matthew said.
“They died, as many
African-Americans
do, because of a
limited access to the
social determinants
of health in their
neighborhoods.”

Now Matthew
applies her
experiences to
her scholarship.
She is the author
of the book “Just
Medicine: A Cure
for Racial Inequality
in American Health
Care,” which looks
at how implicit bias
affects health out-
comes. Previously
as a law professor
at the Univer-
sity of Colorado,
she co-founded the
Colorado Health
Equity Project, a
medical-legal
partnership whose
mission is to remove
barriers to good
health for low-
income clients.

AS PRESIDENT OF
THE SOUTHERN
POVERTY LAW
CENTER, ALUMNUS
RICHARD COHEN ’79
HAS CONFRONTED
the most challenging
problems in civil
rights and social
justice. Since
joining the center
in 1986 as its legal
director, Cohen has
battled hate groups
fueled by changing
demographics and
immigration, and
has defended legal
measures designed
to promote racial
equality before the
U.S. Supreme Court.

“A lawsuit
summons people
before a neutral
arbiter and forces
them to answer,”
Cohen said. “That
is an incredible
thing, and lawyers
are incredibly
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