

Women **WITH** Lead **WITH** **Illinois Law** **SUMMIT**



Friday, April 5, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Max L. Rowe Auditorium

College of Law

I ILLINOIS LAW

Our Mission

Illinois Law is committed to the advancement of women in the legal profession. Nationally renowned female scholars have made their home on our faculty, researching cutting edge legal topics in areas involving psychology and the law, criminal law and procedure, family law, environmental law and ethics, tax law, employment discrimination, transitional justice, and more. Our administration has boasted many successful women in dean and assistant dean positions, and Illinois Law alumnae include activists, academics, judges and justices, and leaders in public and private law.

The Women Lead WITH Illinois Law Summit aims to gather the members of our community – students, faculty, alumni, and guests – for a day of content intended to inspire and empower women to embrace positions of leadership in the law, to create meaningful connections, and to support each other's personal and professional goals. We will:

- Share knowledge about issues and challenges that are unique to women in the legal profession, as well as innovative approaches to navigating them throughout the career life cycle.
- Provide intergenerational female-to-female opportunities to network and build or enhance existing relationships.
- Promote a culture of inclusivity by cultivating diverse female voices to provide a range of lived experiences and perspectives.
- Celebrate our female students, faculty, and alumni who are either in leadership positions themselves or are actively working to advance workplace equity.



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The Agenda

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Registration & Continental Breakfast

9:30 a.m.

Welcome Remarks

Associate Dean and Professor Lesley Wexler

9:45 – 11:00 a.m.

Session 1: Leadership Development

Panelists: Prabha Parameswaran (Moderator), Suzie Saxman (Panel Lead), Betsy Farrington, Julia Rietz

11:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Morning Break

11:15 – 12:30 p.m.

Session 2: Realities of the Female Lawyer: Harassment, Bullying, Ally-Ship, and Belonging

Panelists: Professor Suja Thomas (Moderator), The Honorable Debra Walker (Panel Lead), Associate Dean Lesley Wexler, Karen Conti, Juana Barrera

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch & Keynote Address: The Honorable Lisa Holder White

Introduction by Assistant Dean Virginia Vermillion

1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Session 3: The Business Spreadsheet – Filling In Your Career

Panelists: Elena Vekilov (Moderator), Miranda Soucie (Panel Lead), Jolynn Caroline, Katherine Imp, O. Hanna Badmus

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Afternoon Break

3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Session 4: Navigating Your Career Transitions

Panelists: Ashley Kennedy (Moderator), Ramona Sullivan (Panel Lead), Jean Manning, Ellyn Bullock, Colleen Ramais, Shayla Maatuka

4:15 – 4:45 p.m.

Peer Group Breakout Sessions

4:45 p.m.

Closing Remarks & Reception

Panelist Biographies



O. Hanna Badmus '12 is Employment Counsel for Upwork Inc., a global freelancing platform where businesses and independent professionals and agencies connect. At Upwork, Ms. Badmus advises on worker classification compliance. Prior to her employment at Upwork, Ms. Badmus was an associate with Littler Mendelson, P.C., the world's largest employment and labor law practice representing management. At Littler, Ms. Badmus represented management in various areas of employment including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Prior to joining Littler, Ms. Badmus worked for a national litigation firm in Chicago.

Ms. Badmus has received recognition and honors including joining the prestigious Leadership Counsel on Legal Diversity network as a Pathfinder in 2016, and recognition as an Illinois Rising Star 2016 through 2018. Her community involvement has been extensive, highlighted by her work as member and volunteer mentor with Step Up (a professional network to inspire teen girls through mentorship) as well as being a volunteer with Public Action to Deliver Shelter of Elgin, Inc.

Ms. Badmus is a double Illini, graduating magna cum laude with her communication bachelor of arts in 2008, and her juris doctor in 2012, magna cum laude. In law school, Ms. Badmus received awards including the Rickert Award for Excellence in Oral Advocacy and Best Oralist & Executive Editor during the Frederick Douglas Moot Court Competition.



Juana Barrera '05 has followed a non-traditional road to her in-house counsel position at the global medical technology company, Hill-Rom, Inc. She is currently an Assistant General Counsel leading a team of legal professionals in support of the Canada, U.S., and Latin America sales teams, as well as the company's global manufacturing operations.

Juana began her career as a Deputy District Attorney in Adams County, Colorado. She returned to her hometown of Chicago to join the Chicago Transit Authority in the commercial litigation and commercial transaction group. In 2010, Juana transitioned from the public sector to the private sector by joining US Foods, Inc., a national food distributor. Sticking with products regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, in 2017 Juana joined Hill-Rom. Juana's only law firm experience was a one-year stint as a case assistant immediately following undergrad.

Juana received her undergraduate degree from Loyola University Chicago in 1998 and her law degree from the University of Illinois in 2005. She lives in Chicago with her husband, William, and daughters Amelia (age 6) and Camila (age 4). Juana serves on the board of directors for the Association of Corporate Counsel Chicago Chapter, and as the community director is most involved with the ACC Diversity Summer Internship Program and the Street Law Program.



Ellyn Bullock '91 is a partner and owner of a law firm in Champaign, Illinois – Solberg & Bullock, LLC. Ellyn focuses on adoption and civil litigation. Ellyn's work includes assisted reproduction and surrogacy in addition to domestic and international adoptions and guardianships of minor children. She works with immigrants on issues of custody and adoption and guardianship that can lead to citizenship through special immigrant juvenile status or SIJS.

Most of Ellyn's civil litigation is representing sexually abused children against school districts and teachers. She has created common law on behalf of victims of teacher-on-student child sexual abuse in *Jane Doe-3 v. McLean School District et al.*, 973 N.E.2d 880 (Ill. S.Ct. 2012) and *John Doe v. Brady Smith et al.*, 470 F.3d 331 (7th Cir. 2006). Ellyn litigates in federal and state court and at Trial and Appellate Court levels.

Ellyn has previously clerked for United States District Judge Harold Baker and has taught legal research and writing at the University of Illinois College of Law. She is married and lives in Champaign. She and her husband have raised three children and currently have guardianship of a teenager. They enjoy nurturing children and growing trees and gardens.

Jolynn Caroline '02 is currently a Director of the Career Planning and Professional Development office at the University of Illinois College of Law. She counsels students and alumni, with a focus on students interested in securing clerkships and practicing on the West Coast. Before joining the College in 2006, Jolynn was an associate with Holland & Knight and Ungaretti & Harris (now Nixon Peabody), practicing in labor/employment law, product liability, aviation litigation, and construction law.



She is currently in her second term as president of the local alumni chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and also serves as vice-chairman of the Champaign County Extension Foundation Board. She previously served as the National Association of Law Placement Liaison to the American Bar Association's Committee on Diversity within the Judiciary and as a member of the Emerging Young Leaders Board for the United Way.

Jolynn graduated with honors with a B.S. in community health from the University of Illinois and earned her J.D. from the College of Law, where she served as notes editor for the Law Review.

Karen Conti '86 is a lawyer, educator, speaker and media personality. Since graduating from the College of Law, she has been a litigator and trial attorney for almost 33 years, handling numerous high profile and noteworthy cases across the country including an election appeal before the United States Supreme Court and the death row appeals for a serial killer. She currently runs her own law firm in Chicago.



Karen has been a legal analyst on both television and radio for over twenty years. She has hosted award winning radio shows and currently hosts a two-hour weekly talk show on WGN. She is also the designated legal analyst for the local Fox affiliate in Chicago and has appeared nationally on MSNBC, CNN, Good Morning America, Nancy Grace, The O'Reilly Factor, and truTV. She writes and speaks on many issues including current legal events, women in the law, the death penalty, and media and the law. For seven years, she has written a column in the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin called, "This Day in Legal History."

Karen's career as an educator spans over twenty years. She has been an adjunct professor at University of Illinois College of Law, DePaul University College of Law and Loyola University Chicago School of Law. She is also an instructor for Themis Bar Review.

Betsy Farrington '16 is an associate at Goldman Ismail Tomaselli Brennan & Baum LLP, a litigation boutique headquartered in Chicago. She currently represents clients in antitrust, products liability, and securities litigation cases. She also maintains an active pro bono practice, appearing on behalf of clients in connection with the National Immigrant Justice Center, the Center on Wrongful Convictions, and the Northern District of Illinois Settlement Assistance Program.



Betsy began her legal career by clerking for Federal District Court Judge Nanette Laughrey (W.D. Mo.) and Federal Court of Appeals Judge Helene White (6th Cir.). Prior to law school, Betsy was an active duty Naval Officer, serving as an engineering division officer on a warship in Japan, a platoon commander in Baghdad, Iraq, and the International Engagement Officer on a headquarters staff in Virginia. For her service, Betsy received multiple commendation medals from both the Army and the Navy.

Betsy received her B.S. from the U.S. Naval Academy, M.A. from Old Dominion University, and J.D., summa cum laude, from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Katherine (Kate) Imp '09 is a transactional entertainment attorney at DLA Piper LLP in Los Angeles, California. She represents production companies, studios, networks and independent financiers, producers and distributors in corporate transactions as well as the financing, development, acquisition, production, distribution and exploitation of motion picture, television, commercial and new media content. In the last year Kate has worked on a multitude of high-profile transactions, including elements of the \$87-million acquisition of Open Road Films by Raven Capital Management and the \$71-billion merger of Fox and The Walt Disney Company.



Kate also has experience representing brands, social media and app companies, such as LEGO, Match Group and MoviePass, in the licensing, clearance, ownership and protection of intellectual property.

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Kate's achievements in entertainment have resulted in her being named to the 2014 Illinois Super Lawyers Rising Stars List and to the 2015-2019 California Super Lawyers Rising Stars List. Kate will also be honored in this year's Up Next section of the Variety Legal Impact Report, which recognizes up and coming dealmakers in the entertainment industry.

Kate received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland-College Park, where she studied criminology and criminal justice and graduated magna cum laude. She received her juris doctorate cum laude from the University of Illinois College of Law where she was President of the Women's Law Society and associate editor of the *Illinois Law Review*.



Ashley Kennedy '19, a third-year law student, currently serves as the president of the Student Bar Association of the Illinois College of Law. Prior to law school, Dr. Kennedy received her Ph.D. in political science with an emphasis on comparative gender politics from the University of Missouri-Saint Louis and her master's degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

As the elected leader of the Student Bar Association, Dr. Kennedy initiated student involvement in the dialogue surrounding the College of Law's handling of sexual harassment allegations against Professor Kesan. Through her facilitation of the student voice, she ensured not only did students have a voice in addressing the impact of the situation, but her efforts allowed continued involvement in a systemic University resolution to preclude future occurrences of this nature.

Dr. Kennedy also represented indigent prisoners in the Federal Civil Rights Clinic and low-income veterans in the Veterans Legal Clinic at the Illinois College of Law. She also served as the treasurer of the Illinois Student Bar Association, chair of the Student Leadership Council, and vice president/treasurer of the Health and Elder Law Society. Most notably, Dr. Kennedy gave birth to her son during her second year while her husband was deployed overseas for the United States Army. Dr. Kennedy will join Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP in Saint Louis this fall.



Shayla Louise Maatuka '03 established a sole-ownership law firm in Champaign County in 2004. Shayla then transitioned her private practice into the partnership of Dodd & Maatuka in 2009. Throughout her life, she has successfully established four distinctive businesses, and those experiences within child care, real estate, marketing and promotion, as well as journalism and mass communication, have been paramount to her success in law.

She is a former board member of the East Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association and the Executive Club of Champaign County. She currently serves as the managing partner for Dodd & Maatuka Attorneys at Law. She combines her expertise in entrepreneurship and the practice of law, concentrating on civil and commercial litigation, personal injury and civil rights litigation.

Since 2004, Shayla has been a member of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association ISBA, Champaign County Bar Association, and Illinois State Bar Association. She is a seminar instructor for real estate, as well as estate planning. She currently serves as a board member for Mettler Studios, Inc., Visit Champaign County and Epsilon Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

Shayla received a bachelor of science in speech communications, as well as her juris doctor from the University of Illinois. Shayla is a member of Leadership Illinois, class of 2013, as well as a member of Class of 2011 of CIB's 40 under 40.



Jean Manning '83 is the former Head and Chief Counsel of the Office of the United States Senate Chief Counsel for Employment (SCCE), a non-partisan office that defends and advises all Senate offices in employment law and constitutional matters. In 1993, the U.S. Senate hired Jean to set up and to manage the SCCE, which she headed for 21 years. Jean has argued dozens of cases before trial courts, appellate courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. Jean is one of only four people the U.S. Senate has honored with Emeritus status.

Prior to joining the Senate, Jean was a defense attorney for 10 years in Los Angeles representing corporations and providing legal advice to executives of major organizations worldwide. She specialized in employment law.

Jean holds three degrees from the University of Illinois, a B.A., an M.B.A., and a J.D. As a student at the College of Law, Jean was a member and Articles Editor of the *University of Illinois Law Review*, received the Rickert Award for Excellence in Legal Writing, and the Appellate Advocacy Best Brief Writer Award by selection of the faculty.

Jean is a recipient of the Distinguished Graduate Award of the College of Law and the Distinguished Graduate Award of the College of Business. Jean is a member and former president of the board of advisors of the College of Law, a member of the board of directors of the University of Illinois Foundation, and a member of the board of advisors of Illinois in Washington. Jean served on the University of Illinois Provost Visioning Committee and the Law Dean Search Committee. In 2001 and 2012, Jean was the Convocation Speaker of the University of Illinois M.B.A. graduation, and in 2001 Jean was the Convocation Speaker of the University of Illinois College of Business International Master Program graduation.

Prabha Parameswaran '93 is a Senior Manager in the Complex Transactions team within Accenture's Global Legal Group. As part of a global team, Prabha negotiates large (typically over \$50M) global business process and IT outsourcing and digital service agreements with Fortune 500 clients in the banking, consumer goods and high-tech industries, as well as a wide variety of master services agreements for management consulting, robotics and other technology services. Prabha's work also touches a myriad of issues pertaining to areas such as employment, privacy, IP and tax law. Prior to joining Accenture, Prabha was the Associate General Counsel of the Business Law Unit of the Legal Group of US Foods where her focus was primarily in the areas of commercial transactions, government contracting, and dispute resolution. Prior to joining US Foods, Prabha served as Senior Counsel in the Office of General Counsel at Aon Hewitt (formerly Hewitt Associates) for 10 years. She started her legal career at the law firm of Pedersen & Houpt in Chicago working in the areas of commercial real estate, mergers & acquisitions, private equity, franchising, and commercial lending.

Prabha presently serves on the board of the University of Illinois Alumni Alliance where she serves as the audit committee chair. She was the founder and first president of the University of Illinois Law Alumni Association. She served as the president of the South Asian Bar Association of Chicago Foundation from 2015-2016. She is an active member of the South Asian Bar Association where she serves as a member of the SABA Chicago Advisory Board. She volunteers with the Constitutional Rights Foundation Lawyers in the Classroom program and is a member of a USTA amateur women's tennis team.

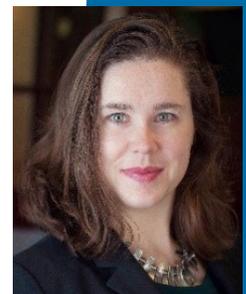
Colleen Ramais '10 is an Assistant Federal Public Defender who specializes in criminal appeals, taking cases from throughout the Seventh Circuit. She is also the director of the moot court program at the College of Law where she coaches students in appellate advocacy. Ms. Ramais is also an active member of the East Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association, after serving on the board from 2014 through 2019.

Ms. Ramais received bachelor's degrees in economics and French and her juris doctorate from the University of Illinois. She also holds a master's degree in French-English translation from the University of Liège, in Belgium.

Before joining the Federal Defender's office in 2016, Ms. Ramais served as a law clerk to Justice Rita Garman of the Illinois Supreme Court and Magistrate Judges David G. Bernthal and Eric I. Long in the Federal District Court in Urbana, Illinois. During 2012-2014, she worked in private practice for Meyer Capel, in Champaign, Illinois, handling primarily civil matters. When not working, Ms. Ramais keeps busy feeding and chasing her four children, and volunteering as PTA treasurer and room mom at their elementary school.

Julia Rietz '93 was elected Champaign County State's Attorney in November 2004. She is currently serving her 4th term in office. Julia received her undergraduate degree in business management and international relations from Boston University in 1990, and her law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1993. She began her legal career in the Champaign County State's Attorney's Office in 1993 as an Assistant State's Attorney. In 1999, she went into private practice with the Urbana law firm of Beckett & Webber, P.C., concentrating in family law prior to being elected State's Attorney.

As State's Attorney, Julia serves as the chief prosecutor for Champaign County and legal counsel for Champaign County government. In addition to her duties as State's Attorney, she is an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois College of Law teaching Trial Advocacy, and serves as chair of the county's Children's Advocacy Center Governing Board. Julia lives in rural Urbana with her horses and dogs and her husband, Al Johnston, a retired Urbana Police Officer. Between them they have 3 children; Evan, who lives in California, Alice, a middle school language arts teacher in St. Louis, and Rachel, an undergrad at Mizzou.





Suzie Saxman '81 is an equity partner at Seyfarth Shaw LLP with over 35 years of experience representing privately held businesses and entrepreneurs. She is in the Corporate Department and is chair of Seyfarth's Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) Practice Group. Suzie is a member of Seyfarth's Corporate Department Leadership Team, and serves on the firm's Pension Committee and Client Intake Committee. Suzie began her career at D'Ancona & Pflaum, which merged into Seyfarth Shaw LLP in 2003.

Suzie is a graduate of the University of Michigan (1977) and the University of Illinois College of Law (1981), and Managing Editor of Illinois Corporate Practice and Forms - The Seyfarth Shaw Manual (DataTrace Publishing 2002, Supplements 2003-2018). Suzie serves on the board of ACG - Chicago and is a past president. She also serves on the University of Illinois College of Law Dean's Advisory Board.

Suzie has 3 adult daughters, 2 grandsons, and lives in Oak Park, Illinois with her husband Peter Labadie (Illinois MBA 1982).



Miranda L. Soucie '10 is a partner at Spiros Law in Champaign. She focuses her practice in the area of serious personal injury cases, including automobile accidents, defective drugs and devices, trucking accidents, birth injuries, medical negligence, and workplace injuries. She is licensed to practice in both Illinois and Florida.

Miranda was named by the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin as a Leading Lawyer in the State of Illinois since 2018. In addition, she has also been recognized since 2015 as a Rising Star by Super Lawyer. In 2015, she was named on both the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and the Central Illinois Business Magazines' forty under 40 lists, recognizing her professional achievements, leadership, innovation, experience and community involvement of young professionals in Illinois.

Driven by a ceaseless desire for intellectual and creative growth, Miranda has been published by the AAJ Trial Magazine, ILTLA Trial Journal, and various other publications. Miranda will serve as a seminar planning co-chair in 2019 for the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association's (ITLA). She has served as the president of the East Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association (ECIWAA) since 2014. In addition to her work with ITLA and ECIWAA, Miranda is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) and the American Association for Justice (AAJ) where she serves as the New Lawyer's Division Publication Committee co-chair and as a member of the Legal Affairs Subcommittee on Platform Lawyer Referral Services.

Miranda is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Illinois College of Law. During law school, Miranda received accolades for her performance in the area of Advanced Legal Research, receiving the highest grade in her class for her legal pathfinder. She was one of ten members chosen to the law school's traveling trial team. She was a recipient of the Pro Bono notation for volunteering numerous hours of legal services to those in need, including service to Champaign County Court Appointed Special Advocates and Louisiana's Resurrection after Exoneration. She earned her B.A. with High Honors from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

Locally, Miranda volunteers internationally with Meet Malawi, traveling to Malawi, Africa to volunteer her time helping local women engage their community and improve living conditions through water and educational programming. She volunteers locally with the Copper Creek Presbyterian Church where she heads the Guest Services team and the Eastern Illinois Food Bank where she was honored as the 2018 Prom Court Queen for raising over \$11,500.00 to help combat food insecurities in Central Illinois.



Ramona Sullivan '96 is an attorney with the Champaign County Public Defender's Office. She earned her B.A. in creative writing from the University of Illinois in 1993 and her J.D. from the College of Law in 1996. She has served the community as a legal aid attorney for over 20 years. For almost 14 years, she worked for Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, the organization that provides civil legal services for low-income individuals in the southern 65 counties of Illinois. She was a staff attorney, pro bono coordinator, and supervising attorney for law students in the Domestic Violence Clinic. Ramona has also worked for the Champaign County Public Defender's Office for over 7 years, representing indigent clients in juvenile, criminal and traffic cases in Champaign County. For two years, Ramona worked in private practice in Edgar County.

During her career, Ramona helped to establish legal self-help centers and pro bono networks in several counties in Illinois, trying to make sure that people who cannot afford to hire attorneys can still have

access to justice. Ramona is a founding member of the Sixth Circuit Pro Bono Committee and the Fifth Circuit Pro Bono Committee. She has also been a leader in bar associations, including serving as chair of the Statewide Committee for Delivery of Legal Services for the Illinois State Bar Association, president of the Edgar County Bar Association for several years, chair of the Pro Bono Committee for many bar associations, vice president of the East Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association, and a member of the board of governors of the Champaign County Bar Association.

Ramona's volunteer activities include service as a board member for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank, regularly donating blood and organizing blood drives at Community Blood Services, and volunteering in classrooms to create and teach programs to help students better understand the legal system, possible legal careers, and relevant legal issues. For many years, Ramona has been volunteering to teach a class about domestic violence to high school students to show young people how to avoid becoming abusers or victims in their personal relationships.

Ramona married her college sweetheart, Lionel Williams, in 1994. Their son, Matt, is a graduate of the Illinois Math & Science Academy and the University of Illinois. Their daughter, Katherine, was born three weeks after Lionel's death in 2000. She graduated from University Laboratory High School and is a freshman at the University of Illinois. After being a single parent for 10 years, Ramona married Anthony Ortega in 2010, and their son, Michael, is now four.

Suja A. Thomas is the Peer and Sarah Pedersen Professor of Law at the University of Illinois College of Law. Professor Thomas's book *The Missing American Jury: Restoring the Fundamental Constitutional Role of the Criminal, Civil, and Grand Juries* was published in 2016 by Cambridge University Press. It was the sole book awarded High Distinction for the 2019 Pound Civil Justice Scholarship Award and was reviewed by federal judge William Young who asserted it is "akin to Tom Paine's Common Sense." More recently, Professor Thomas's co-authored book *Unequal: How America's Courts Undermine Discrimination Law*, published by Oxford University Press in 2017, was discussed in the New York Times Magazine and reviewed by federal judge John McConnell who stated it "offer[s] compelling evidence that courts deal with discrimination cases by essentially rewriting statutes, disregarding legislative intent, imposing hurdles on litigants, and usurping the role of the jury." For several years, her article "Why Summary Judgment Is Unconstitutional," which was published by the *Virginia Law Review*, has been the basis of legal arguments in briefs to the United States Supreme Court and other courts.



Professor Thomas received her B.A. in mathematics from Northwestern University and her J.D. from NYU School of Law where she graduated with honors and was on the Law Review. After clerking, she practiced in New York City at Cravath, Weil, Gotshal, and the Vladeck firm.

Elena Vekilov '13 is an attorney for TransUnion LLC, one of the three largest American consumer credit reporting agencies. TransUnion collects and aggregates information on over one billion individual consumers in over thirty countries including 200 million files profiling nearly every credit-active consumer in the United States. Its customers include over 65,000 businesses. At TransUnion, Ms. Vekilov serves as general counsel to several subsidiaries and advises on data acquisition, privacy, and regulatory compliance. Prior to her employment at TransUnion, Ms. Vekilov was Commercial Counsel for KONE, Inc., an \$8 billion global leader in elevator and escalator construction and maintenance. At KONE, Ms. Vekilov represented the North American new construction business in negotiating agreement terms and advising on risks and liabilities for major projects with airports, stadiums, government entities, and sky scrapers valued at over a billion dollars in total revenue. Prior to joining KONE, Ms. Vekilov worked for Exelon Corporation, the nation's leading competitive energy company, joining their in-house legal department straight out of law school.



Ms. Vekilov graduated with honors from the University of Texas at Austin, double majoring in government and psychology with a certification in business foundations in 2010, and from the University of Illinois College of Law in 2013, cum laude. In law school, Ms. Vekilov served as Associate Editor of the Law Review, secretary of the SBA, president and co-founder of the Lone Star Law Students Association, and vice president of Phi Alpha Delta. She received honors including a Rickert Award for Excellence in Legal Writing, several CALI awards, and Honors in Legal Research and Legal Writing.

Ms. Vekilov is married to a fellow Illini from her law school class, is a fur-mom to two senior pugs, and recently added a brand-new baby boy, Stevie, to the family. She enjoys trying new restaurants, traveling to her hometown in Texas, and spending time with her growing little family.



Virginia M. Vermillion '86 is the Assistant Dean for Academic Administration and the Dean of Students at the University of Illinois College of Law. She works on developing and articulating academic policies for matters pertaining to students, facilitates bar examination enhancement programs and initiatives with other senior administrators, and oversees specific academic programs such as Orientation, Graduation, and Rickert Awards. She serves as an advocate for students and student organizations, manages the many student awards, implements the College's academic policies, assists with the administration of course and examination schedules, and, most importantly, counsels with the College of Law students. She also serves on various University-wide committees, including the Clery Act, Public Safety Advisory, Emergency Call Center Committees among others.

She earned her B.S.W. with honors from the University of Illinois College of Social Work in 1982 and her J.D. from the College of Law in 1986. As a law student, she was a Harno Scholarship recipient, a Rickert Scholar for Oral Advocacy, a finalist in the Frederick Green Moot Court Competition and in the Thomas Competition for Oral Advocacy, a third-place recipient in the Client Counseling Competition, a member of the Moot Court Board of Editors, a Tribune for the Delta Theta Phi Legal Fraternity, and the recipient of the American Jurisprudence Award for Remedies. Dean Vermillion practiced law in Chicago from 1987 to 1999, serving as an Associate and Partner with firms involved in national and international litigation. She decided to return to her alma mater in 1999, serving as the College's Director of Career Services and Assistant Dean for Career Services before moving to her present position in 2003.



The Honorable Debra Walker '87 was elected judge for the Circuit Court of Cook County in 2008. She sits in the Domestic Relations Division, where she hears complex disputes pertaining to custody, visitation, property division, maintenance, child support, and domestic violence.

Judge Walker has been a commissioner of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism since its inception in 2006 and was a member of the special Supreme Court Committee on Civility which preceded it. She served as chair of the Commission for the past six years. Judge Walker has facilitated numerous educational programs for lawyers and judges on topics of professional responsibility including civility, diversity and inclusion, and sexual harassment. She has also authored articles on these topics, most recently on #MeToo.

From 2012-2018, Judge Walker served on the Access to Justice Commission by appointment of the Illinois Supreme Court. She serves as the treasurer for the Illinois Judges Foundation board of directors and has served on the board of the National Conference of Bar Foundations from 2013 to 2016. She is a past president of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Illinois Bar Foundation, and the North Michigan Avenue Business & Professional Women's Network, and an active member of the Illinois State Bar Association, the Illinois Judges Association, and the Economic Club of Chicago.

Judge Walker received both her accounting and law degrees from the University of Illinois and serves on the Dean's Advisory Board for the College of Law.



Professor Lesley Wexler is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She joined the College of Law as faculty member in Fall 2010. She specializes in sex discrimination, human rights law, and international humanitarian law. Her latest article, "#MeToo and Theories of Justice," co-authored with faculty members Jennifer Robbennolt and Colleen Murphy was just published in the *Illinois Law Review* and future #MeToo articles are forthcoming in the *University of Chicago Legal Forum* and the *Richmond Public Interest Law Review*. Her articles on passive discrimination, Wal-Mart v. Dukes, and sex selection in China have appeared in the *Chicago Law Review*, the *Wake Forest Law Review*, and the *Chicago Legal Forum*.

Before coming to Illinois, Professor Wexler taught at the Florida State University College of Law. Prior to teaching at Florida State, she spent two years at the University of Chicago Law School as a Bigelow Fellow and Lecturer on Law. Professor Wexler clerked for Judge Thomas Reavley of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and for Judge William Wayne Justice of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. Professor Wexler earned her J.D. with honors from the University of Chicago Law School, where she served on the board of both the *Chicago International Law Journal* and the *Chicago Legal Forum*.

Keynote Address

Justice Lisa Holder White '93, Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District



Lisa Holder White, a Decatur, Illinois, native, is the daughter of Marvin and Corinne Holder. She graduated from Macon Community High School in 1986. Judge White obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1990 from Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, where she graduated magna cum laude. In 1993, Judge White earned her juris doctor degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in Urbana-Champaign. Judge White received an honorary doctorate from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Assistant State's Attorney for Macon County was the first legal position held by Judge White. During her tenure in the State's Attorney's office, she handled various matters ranging from traffic to criminal felonies. Subsequent to serving as an Assistant State's Attorney, Judge White worked as an Assistant Public Defender litigating on behalf of those charged with criminal offenses and representing abused and neglected children.

Immediately prior to being appointed to the bench, Judge White enjoyed a thriving private practice at the firm formerly known as Brinkoetter & White. Her private practice focused on the areas of family and criminal law. In 2001, Judge White was sworn in as an associate judge, becoming the first African-American judge in the Sixth Judicial Circuit. During her term as an associate judge, she was instrumental in securing and implementing the Redeploy Illinois grant aimed at reducing the incarceration rate for non-violent juvenile offenders. In 2008, she became a circuit judge, being appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to fill a retirement vacancy. In 2010, she was elected to the position. In Macon County, Judge White served as Supervising Judge of the Criminal Law Division. On January 14, 2013, Judge White was sworn in as the first African-American justice on the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District. In 2014, she was elected to the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District.

Judge White previously served on and chaired the Illinois Supreme Court Judicial Conference Committee on Education. The Committee on Education is charged with planning and providing continuing judicial education for Illinois judges. As former chair of the New Judge Seminar Workgroup, she led the group responsible for planning the seminar attended annually by all new Illinois state court judges. She has also served as faculty for the new judge seminar. Judge White frequently teaches at the bi-annual Education Conference, which provides all Illinois state court judges with mandatory continuing judicial education. She currently serves as vice chair of the Illinois Judicial College Board of Trustees and board liaison to the Committee on Judicial Education (formerly Committee on Education). Judge White is also a peer reviewer for the Committee on Judicial Education Criminal Law Benchbook. She has presented to many groups including, Leadership Illinois, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Illinois Continuing Legal Education Institute, the Central Illinois Women's Bar Association, and the Decatur Leadership Institute.

Judge White is a member of the Decatur Bar Association and the Illinois Judges Association. She previously served on the board of the Decatur Public Schools Foundation, the Mid-Illinois Chapter of the American Red Cross, and the Illinois Judges Association. She currently serves on the board of the Community Foundation of Macon County and Millikin University, and is a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice Appellate Court Committee and the Juvenile Justice Leadership Council.

In addition to her work on various court related matters, Judge White is dedicated to giving back to the community. She enjoys utilizing the courtroom to host mock trials to allow school children to learn about the justice system. She routinely allows young people who have expressed an interest in a career as an attorney or judge to spend a day with her to gain an understanding of what being an attorney or judge involves. Judge White has also allowed college and law school students to complete internships and externships in her office. In addition, she has planned and hosted activities to provide Girl Scouts the opportunity to meet and learn from women who serve as judges, police officers, attorneys, court reporters, and probation officers.

In April 2013, Judge White was named "Woman of the Year" at the 2013 Women of Excellence Awards, hosted by the Decatur YMCA and United Way of Decatur and Mid-Illinois. She has also been the recipient of a Lewis University Alumni Achievement Award, the Joe Slaw Civil Rights Award from the Decatur branch of the NAACP, the Illinois Jaycees Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award, the University of Illinois College of Law Black Law Students Association's James Seaberry Award for Excellence, and the Harold Sullivan Award from the Illinois Judges Association.

Judge White is a member of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church where she enjoys singing in the choir. She and James, her husband of thirty years, are the proud parents of two children, Brett, and Myah.

The University of Illinois College of Law would like to extend a special thank you to the members of the planning committee for this inaugural **Women Lead WITH Illinois Law Summit**. Your input and insights have been invaluable.

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