JUSTICE IN THE SOUTHWEST

PANELISTS, SPEAKERS & MODERATORS

CMCJ TEAM

Alphabetical order
KEYNOTE

The Hon. Robert Brutinel
The Hon. Robert Brutinel was appointed to the Arizona Supreme Court in November 2010 and was elected as Vice Chief Justice in January 2018. He became Chief Justice on July 1, 2019. Prior to his appointment to the Court, Justice Brutinel served as the Presiding Judge of the Yavapai County Superior Court, where he presided over cases involving civil, criminal, juvenile, mental health, drug court, probate and domestic relations matters. Justice Brutinel currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices. A past president of the Arizona Judges Association and the Yavapai County Bar Association, he has served as an Advisory Board Member for the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections. In 2010, Justice Brutinel was chosen as the National Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Judge of the Year. Justice Brutinel graduated from Arizona State University with a B.S. in Economics in 1979, and received his law degree from the University of Arizona in 1982 and an LL.M. in Judicial Studies from Duke University in 2018. Justice Brutinel was admitted to practice law in Arizona in 1982. Prior to serving as a judge he practiced law in Prescott, Arizona, primarily in the areas of business and real estate, and Indian Law.
Margie Balfour

Dr. Margie Balfour is a psychiatrist and national leader in quality improvement and behavioral health crisis services. She is the Chief of Quality and Clinical Innovation at Connections Health Solutions, which provides 24/7 access to mental health and substance use care throughout Arizona, and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona. Dr. Balfour was named the Doctor of the Year by the National Council for Behavioral Health for her work at the Crisis Response Center in Tucson and received the Tucson Police Department’s medal of honor for her efforts to help law enforcement better serve the mentally ill population. She is a co-author of the book *People with Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System: Answering a Cry for Help* and a contributor to numerous SAMHSA and DOJ expert panels on crisis systems and police responses to people with mental health and substance use needs. She received a BA in Biology at Johns Hopkins University, her MD and PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Cincinnati, and completed residency and fellowship in Public Psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Valena Elizabeth Beety

Valena Elizabeth Beety is Professor of Law at Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law and the Deputy Director of the Academy for Justice, a criminal justice center connecting research with policy reform. Her experiences as a federal prosecutor in Washington, D.C., and as an innocence litigator in Mississippi and West Virginia, shape her research and writing on wrongful convictions, forensic evidence, the opioid crisis, and incarceration. Prof. Beety has successfully exonerated wrongfully convicted clients, obtained presidential grants of clemency for drug offenses, and served as an elected board member of the national Innocence Network, an invited board member of the Research Center on Violence, and an appointed commissioner on the West Virginia Governor’s Indigent Defense Commission.
Carmen Brooks
Deputy Public Defender Carmen J. Brown, of the Colorado State Public Defender’s Colorado Springs office, fell in love with indigent defense during her criminal law clinic at Georgetown University Law Center, her alma mater. After earning her doctor of jurisprudence, she worked for a year in the Nashville (Tennessee) Public Defender’s Office, then returned to her hometown, Denver, where she spent two years as a paralegal in death penalty post-conviction matters. After that, she joined a three-attorney firm devoted to indigent clients, representing adults and juveniles with the Office of Alternate Defense Counsel and Office of Respondent. A faculty member for Colorado’s statewide, mandatory public defender trial advocacy program, she is an instructor for and 2012 graduate of MacArthur “Genius” Prize-winning Gideon’s Promise, which trains and support public defenders across the country.

Laura Conover
Laura Conover has a unique perspective on Southern Arizona’s criminal justice system. She was elected as the Pima County Attorney in 2020. As the third woman to hold the office, second defense attorney, and first victims’ rights attorney, she has assembled a diverse senior leadership team and plans to revolutionize operations. Reform, transparency and accountability are Laura’s core objectives. She endeavors to reform cash bail, end all use of capital punishment, divert cases of substance use and mental illness to treatment, and protect people with vulnerable immigration statuses. She is fortifying units in Conviction & Sentencing Integrity and Fraud & Consumer Protection to safeguard against unethical and exploitative behaviors. She is building the first adult restorative justice program in the state. Laura was raised in Tucson and earned her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Arizona, and is proud to serve the community she calls home.
Henry F. Fradella

Henry F. Fradella, Ph.D., is a Professor in and Associate Director of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University. He earned a B.A. in psychology, a master’s in forensic science, a J.D., and Ph.D. in justice studies. His research focuses on the legal aspects of criminal justice. He is the author or co-author of 11 books, including *Punishing Poverty: How Bail and Pretrial Detention Fuel Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System* (University of California Press), *Stop and Frisk* (NYU Press), and *Mental Illness and Crime* (Sage), as well as more than 90 scholarly articles, reviews and commentaries.

Sarah Hawkins

Sarah Hawkins is Chief Deputy Public Defender with the Clark County Public Defender’s Office and has been for the better part of a decade. She is also the President of Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice (NACJ), a statewide coalition of public and private defense attorneys. In 2020, she was named Nevada’s Top Criminal Defense Attorney.

The Hon. Ginger Lerner-Wren

Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren was elected Broward County Court Judge in 1997. Judge Lerner-Wren pioneered the first problem solving Mental Health Court in the United States, dedicated to the decriminalization and treatment of persons arrested with mental illness and co-occurring disorders. The Court is a national and international model. Judge Lerner-Wren speaks nationally and internationally and is an adjunct Professor for Nova Southeastern University, College of Psychology and Neuroscience. Judge Lerner-Wren is also an author, *A Court of Refuge: Stories from the Bench of America's First Mental Health Court*.
Erik Luna
Erik Luna is the Amelia D. Lewis Professor of Constitutional & Criminal Law and Faculty of Law. In 2000, he served as the senior Fulbright Scholar to New Zealand at Victoria University Law School (Wellington, NZ). In 2016-17, he was the Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of Birmingham (UK). Luna has also been a visiting scholar with the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law (Freiburg, DE), a visiting professor with the Cuban Society of Penal Sciences (Havana, a visiting professional in the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (The Hague, NL), and a research fellow with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn). Earlier, Luna served as a prosecutor in the San Diego District Attorney’s Office, and as a fellow and lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.

Tina Mattison
Tina Mattison is the Deputy Court Administrator for the Pima County Juvenile Court, where she oversees Juvenile Probation, Detention, Court, Children and Family Services, Facilities and Security. Her prior experience included working 27 years for the California Superior Court system, in both Orange County and Riverside County. She began her career in Juvenile Court, and has managed a wide array of special courts. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Public Administration from California State University Fullerton, and is a 2012 graduate fellow from the National Center for State Court’s Institute for Court Management. From 2015 to 2018, she served on the Supreme Court of Arizona’s Court Security Standards Committee and was appointed to the Task Force on Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court by Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Brutinel.
**The Hon. Stephanie Pitcher**

Rep. Stephanie Pitcher, a Democrat, has represented District 40 in the Utah House of Representatives since 2019. Among her legislative assignments, she is a member of the Utah House Judiciary Committee. Prior to her election, she worked as an Associate City Prosecutor in Salt Lake City. In 2015, after observing a critical need for collective action on women’s issues at the state legislature, Stephanie started the Utah Women’s Coalition (UWC) – a statewide, nonpartisan group working to advance the status of Utah women through public policy. Stephanie worked as a Fair Housing Advocate with the Disability Law Center, and, before that was the Immigrants’ Rights Policy Advocate at Comunidades Unidas. She also worked at the Legal Aid Society of Utah, assisting survivors of domestic violence through the court process and interpreting for Spanish-speaking clients. Stephanie is an International Candidate Master in chess and is the eight-time Utah Women’s State Chess Champion.

**Nora Sydow**

Nora Sydow is a Principal Court Management Consultant at the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). She works on a variety of projects improving court organization, process and operations, with special attention to those involving children and families. She has also directed all of NCSC’s pandemic and public health projects since 2014. Prior to joining NCSC in 2008, Ms. Sydow worked as a college instructor in a criminal justice program. Ms. Sydow received her J.D. from the West Virginia University College of Law and dual B.S. degrees from Old Dominion University in political science and criminal justice. She is a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management.
Nate Wade
Nate Wade has been an Assistant Public Defender in Pima County, Arizona for seven years, where he serves a dual role as a felony trial attorney and as the Legislative and Policy expert for the office. Nate is also an active board member of Arizona Attorneys for Criminal Justice, serving as co-chair of the Legislative Committee. He is a member of the Southern Arizona Inn of Court and a member of the Criminal Practice and Procedure Committee of the Arizona State Bar. Nate graduated from law school at the University of Arizona in 2013. He worked as a law clerk at the public defender’s office beginning in 2011. Additionally, Nate spent a semester as a legal intern for the Arizona House Democratic caucus at the State Capitol, and clerked for Pima County Superior Court Presiding Judge Sarah Simmons in from 2013-2014. He is also a board member of several organizations, including the Law College Association and the local Democratic Party.

OUR TEAM

Stephen Handelman
Stephen Handelman is director of the Center on Media, Crime and Justice and editor-in-chief of The Crime Report. A former prize-winning former columnist, foreign correspondent and senior writer/columnist for TIME magazine and The Toronto Star, he is the author of Comrade Criminal: Russia’s New Mafiya, the first account of the rise of organized crime in post-Soviet Russia. In a follow-up book, Biohazard, he unraveled the Soviet bio-weapons program. A frequent commentator and lecturer on criminal justice issues, transnational crime and organized crime, he has trained investigative journalists in Eastern Europe, Russia and Latin America. Steve earned his Masters in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School at
Harvard University. He is a member of the board of communications alumni of the City College of New York, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Katti Gray

Katti Gray is the journalism coordinator for the Justice in the Southwest Webinar series. A contributing editor for The Crime Report, the Center on Media, Crime and Justice’s national news & resources site, she specializes mainly in health and criminal justice news. Her work also has been published by The Washington Post, Reuters, Pulitzers, New York Newsday, Los Angeles Times, Health Affairs, dailyRX, CNN, Chicago Tribune, CBS, ABC News and AARP, among others. Among other prizes, she shares a Pulitzer with a Newsday team. She has been a fellow of, among others, the Association of Health Care Journalists (where she is the mental health topics leader), Fund for Investigative Journalism, National Institutes of Health Medicine in Media, National Press Foundation and Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Journalism programs. She runs New York University’s Urban Journalism Workshop.

Christopher Graham

Christopher Graham is the producer of the CMCJ’s fall-winter series of programs on criminal justice. He serves as technology coordinator and web designer for the International Thriller Writers (ThrillerWriters.org), Evil Eye Concepts (1001DarkNights.com), and several bestselling authors. He consults for a wide variety of companies and organizations that require technical, design, programming and various other IT services. He is the former founder of Backspace, LLC, and co-host of the Backspace Writers Conferences in New York City and the Bahamas, as well as online workshops and classes, and a subscription-based online discussion forum with over 2,000 members.
Emily Riley

Emily Riley is a junior at the University of Maryland, College Park pursuing a double-major in multi-platform journalism and criminology and criminal justice. On campus, she is the Vice President for UMD’s chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and writes for the campus publication *Stories Beneath the Shell*. Over the summer, Emily worked with UMD on Rostros Físicos, a video project that tells the stories and struggles of representation in the STEM field for Hispanic and Latin Americans. Emily hopes to pursue a career that combines her passion for journalism and criminal justice issues.

Michael Gelb

Michael Gelb is a rising senior at Cornell University, where he majors in Human Development and double minors in Law & Society and Inequality Studies. On campus, he is a member of a research lab that codes jury selections of death penalty cases to determine if and what effect the demographics of jurors have on the outcome of the case. He is co-president of a club that mentors incarcerated youth. In 2019, Michael interned for the Rockland County District Attorney's Office. Most recently, he conducted a mixed-methods research study on self-censorship in Rwandan media. Michael is focused on the intersection of media and law.

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