

# DisOrientation 2022

## Speaker Photos and Bios

### October 22, 2022

#### Panel 1: Critical Re-Reading of Law School Cases

##### Julia Vasquez



As the first Clinical Fellow in Southwestern Law's Immigration Law Clinic and now as a Supervising Attorney, Julia Vázquez works closely with the Clinic's director, Professor Andrea Ramos, in the representation of clients, supervision of law students and development of course curricula for the clinic and the Immigration Appeals Practicum. She also participates in teaching the clinic seminars and research. She brings both professional teaching experience as well as experience as an immigration law clinic

student to her position at Southwestern Law School.

While in law school, Professor Vázquez was a Public Interest Law Program, Immigration Law Clinic, and Critical Race Studies student. She served as President of the Immigration Law Society, Co-Chair of La Raza Law Students Association, Articles Editor for the *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review* and Writing Advisor in the First-Year Lawyering Skills Course. She volunteered as Student Director for the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project's UCLA Detention Center Clinic, and UCLA's Migrant Summer Leadership Program.

Prior to earning her law degree, Professor Vázquez completed an M.A. in Education with a focus on critical pedagogy and worked for several years as a teacher-and-parent educator in South Central Los Angeles. She eventually left teaching to pursue a legal career with a focus in immigration and public interest law.

##### Maeve Glass



Maeve Glass is a legal historian who focuses on the formation of public law in early America. Her work examines the relationship between constitutional rules of partnership and private ordering mechanisms of property and contract. Glass teaches two foundation 1L courses, Constitutional Law and Property in Columbia Law School. In addition, she teaches upper-level courses in American Constitutional History and a seminar on the history of race, law, and slavery. Glass was recognized for her law teaching in 2021 as the recipient of the Willis L.M. Reese Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

Glass' scholarship has appeared or is forthcoming in the *Columbia Law Review*, *Fordham Law Review*, *Michigan Law Review*, and *The University of Chicago Law Review*, among other publications. Her forthcoming book, *The Water Ground: A New History of America's Constitution*, is based on her doctoral dissertation, which received the American Society for Legal History's William Cromwell Dissertation Prize. Currently a Fellow in the ASLH Wallace

Johnson First Book Program, Glass has held legal history fellowships at Harvard Law School and the New York University School of Law.

### **Chris Chavis**



Chris Chavis currently serves as the Executive Director of NLG-LA, where he is responsible for working with the board and staff to set and oversee the execution of the programmatic and strategic vision of the organization. Most recently, he served as the Policy Director for the National Indian Health Board, where he was responsible for analyzing health-related regulations as they related to Tribal nations. He is a sought-after expert in social justice matters. He is also a past president of the Dartmouth Native American Alumni Association and currently represents Dartmouth's Native American community on its Alumni Council. He graduated from Dartmouth College with a double major in Native American Studies and Social Policy. He also has a Juris Doctor from Michigan State University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His writing appears in multiple publications and he has also presented at multiple conferences, including the American Bar Association's Equal Justice Conference. Chris is a citizen of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

## **Panel 2: Humanizing the Disability & Unhoused Community**

### **Catherine Sweetser**



Catherine Sweetser is Deputy Director of the Promise Institute for Human Rights, and Director of the Human Rights Litigation Clinic at UCLA School of Law. Her primary research and teaching interests are international human rights law, global administrative law, and corporate and government accountability for international law and constitutional violations.

She was previously a Partner and is currently of counsel at Schonbrun, Seplow, Harris, Hoffman & Zeldes LLP where she litigates cases concerning human rights and civil rights. In particular, she has litigated cases under the Alien Tort Statute and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and other matters concerning corporate accountability, police misconduct, conditions of detention, and international and constitutional law violations. Prior to joining SSHH LLP, she practiced at Altshuler Berzon LLP in San Francisco.

Sweetser earned her B.A. *magna cum laude* with Phi Beta Kappa honors from Yale University, her J.D. *magna cum laude* (Order of the Coif) and her LL.M. from New York University School of Law. During law school, she received the George P. Foulk Memorial Award for outstanding sincerity and distinguished scholarship, and the Jerome Lipper Prize for outstanding work in the field of International Law. After law school, she clerked for the Honorable Judith W. Rogers of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

Sweetser's publications have appeared in the *European Journal of International Law*, and *New York University Law Review*.

## Aisha Novasky



Aisha C. Novasky is a Lecturer at UCLA School of Law and is co-teaching the Veterans Legal Clinic this year. She is currently a supervising attorney in the Civil Rights Practice Group at Disability Rights California, where she focuses on the intersection of people with disabilities and their disproportionate interactions with law enforcement. Prior to joining Disability Rights California, Novasky was a staff attorney at Manhattan Legal Services, where her work included representing tenants and tenant associations in housing matters, and litigating against landlords for violations of the Fair Housing Act, warranty of habitability and rent stabilization laws.

In 2020, Novasky was appointed to the San Bernardino Superior Court's Elimination of Bias Committee, where she works closely with judicial officers, court personnel, and attorneys from the public and private sectors to eliminate bias in the justice system and ensure court processes are accessible and equitable to all. She is licensed to practice in California and New York. Novasky received her B.A. from California State University, Fullerton, in Philosophy and Political Science. She graduated from New York Law School in 2013, where she was a Carbonell Law & Policy Fellow with the Justice Action Center.

## **Panel 3: Presentations on Financial Empowerment**

### Sparky Abraham



Sparky Abraham is a debtors rights attorney in California. He is the founder of Jubilee Legal and Legal Strategist for the Debt Collective, the nation's first union of debtors. Before stepping into these roles, Sparky has worked in a number of public interest spaces including but not limited to, Bet Tzedek, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, fiercely advocating for economic justice.

Sparky Abraham has been helping people with debt problems for nearly a decade. Since graduating from Yale Law School, where he led the Mortgage Foreclosure Litigation Clinic, Sparky has helped hundreds of people with creditor harassment, foreclosure, student debt, credit reporting issues, and discriminatory lending. Sparky founded Jubilee Legal to help his fellow Californians escape burdensome debt, recognize their shared struggles, and work toward a more joyful and equal society.

## **Stacey Loomis**



Stacey Loomis is absolutely delighted that she actually gets to get paid to spend her days advocating for the rights of health consumers at the offices of Community Legal Aid of Southern California. Ms. Loomis began her legal career after graduating from the UC Davis School of Law with the Sacramento County Office of the Public Defender, advocating for clients who had been placed under conservatorship. In 2012, Ms. Loomis was still working as a public defender, for the Los Angeles County Office of the Alternate Public Defender, where she enjoyed conducting jury trials, hanging out in various jails and prisons, and visiting crime scenes, while generally acting as a thorn in the side of law enforcement. Late in that year, Ms. Loomis suffered life threatening injuries in a vehicle v. pedestrian accident, where Ms. Loomis was, unfortunately, the pedestrian, and not the vehicle. After more than 15 surgical procedures, including but not limited to titanium rod placements, bone grafting, muscle transplants, skin grafting, blood transfusions, PICC lines, wound vacuums, external fixators and more casts than she can shake a stick at, Ms. Loomis' legs were successfully rebuilt, and she now walks unaided. Ms. Loomis also changed her career path entirely, and now enjoys working as a health care advocate with Community Legal Aid SoCal, much to the relief of local law enforcement. In her spare time, Ms. Loomis greatly enjoys hanging out at the beach with William and Hannah, her two (almost always) adorable children, reading trashy mystery novels, and napping.

## **Joelle Eliza Lingat**



Joelle Eliza Lingat (she/they) is a nonprofit detention and deportation defense attorney based out of the unceded and occupied Lenape land of Jersey City, New Jersey. They currently serve as the Treasurer of the National Lawyers Guild and has previously served as a Student National Vice President and National Vice President. They are also a dual degree student in nonprofit leadership and social work at the University of Pennsylvania. They have been involved in grassroots, anti-imperialist organizing for the past decade. They enjoy comic books, spicy food, and spending time (especially at the ocean) with the young human and small canine in their life.

## Panel 4: Movements, Organizing, and Building Collective Power

### Jordan Palmer



Jordan Palmer is a staff attorney with Unite Here Local 11, the hospitality workers' union which represents over 32,000 workers employed in hotels, restaurants, airports, sports arenas, and convention centers in Southern California and Arizona. She is a graduate of UCLA School of Law and is a current member of the California State Bar Association. At UCLA, she served as the chair of the Labor and Economic Justice Clinic, for which she is now a supervising attorney, and a board member of the school's chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, of which she is now an attorney member. She also served as the Jane Kahn Prison Law and Policy fellow.

Jordan has also been a volunteer organizer with Strippers United (SU) since 2019 and the volunteer head of the Strippers United legal department since 2021. Jordan works closely with SU's campaigns to support strippers who want to understand and enforce their rights at work and fight for better working conditions, including at the Star Garden strip club in North Hollywood, where strippers are currently unionizing.

### Jane Kim



Jane Kim served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, representing a diverse district in San Francisco, including the lowest-income residents and the wealthiest zip code in the City. Further, she represented the downtown district absorbing close to 80% of all residential and commercial development in San Francisco. She is a member and top voter getter for the San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee in 2016 and 2020.

Her landmark initiatives include leading San Francisco to be the first city in the Nation to make Community College free for all residents; the Fair Chance Act (removing unnecessary barriers to employment and stable housing for the millions of Californians who have a conviction record); passing the strongest and most progressive minimum wage law in the nation raising our minimum wage to \$15/hour; securing full-time nurses for homeless shelters and establishing a medical respite shelter for aging and sick homeless residents. Kim also led the single largest investment any U.S. city has made towards childcare- a tax on multi-million dollar commercial real estate to raise \$140M+ per year to make universal affordable childcare a reality.

## Matt Pillischer



**Matt Pillischer** (he/him) is a revolutionary organizer, a filmmaker, an artist, a JD and former attorney, and a Dad of an almost 7yo (being a father drives him to leave a good world for his son). He is creator of the acclaimed documentary, *Broken On All Sides: Race, Mass Incarceration & New Visions for Criminal Justice in the U.S.*, which he used as an organizing tool against mass incarceration and for abolition.

He currently serves as Logistics Coordinator for Poor People's Army ([poorpeoplesarmy.com](http://poorpeoplesarmy.com)), also known as Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, whose mission is "to build a nonviolent Poor People's Army to keep people alive and to build a cooperative economy and society." Poor People's Army is led by poor people and formerly homeless people, and recognizes the unique lessons the *organized poor* have to teach *working class revolutionary movements*, such as collective survival and unity across varying racial and identity backgrounds. Matt has worked in and out of the nonprofit and legal worlds, and part of his role in Poor People's Army is to coordinate lawyers working within the movement. He also focuses on communications and education. As a lawyer, Matt worked in legal services and divorce mediation, before finding a more perfect role that combines movement organizing and legal system know-how.

## Cristina Pineda



Cristina is a first generation Latina from a Salvadoran-Mexican Immigrant household. She was born and raised in Los Angeles. She attended UC Santa Barbara for her undergrad and became a part of student organizing while at UCSB. She later decided to attend Southwestern Law School where she interned at the Day Labor Organizing Network and later at the ACLU in New York. She took part in the Community Lawyering Clinic and Youth Offender Parole Clinic while in law school. Once she passed the bar, she worked as an immigration attorney and eventually became a Public Defender where she has been working for the last year and a half. She is also a board member for a non-profit organization, Homies Unidos, which is an organization that works with communities through gang prevention and empowers youth through positive alternatives to gang involvement.

## Closing Session:

### Ameena Qazi



Ameena Mirza Qazi's work focuses on police misconduct, First Amendment and policing, and open government issues. Ameena has extensive experience as an attorney and community advocate in Southern California. As Executive Director of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, Ameena worked on protecting our rights to political protest and dissident speech, as well as movement building after the Presidential Election in November 2016. Formerly the Deputy Executive Director and Staff Attorney for the Council on American-Islamic Relations—Greater Los Angeles Area Chapter (CAIR-LA), the largest American Muslim civil rights and advocacy group, cases she worked on include co-counseling a wrongful death action and §1983 claim against LAPD that resulted in a \$1.7million verdict (*Chaudhry v. LAPD*), and co-counseling a class action lawsuit with the ACLU of Southern California and Hadsell, Stormer and Renick, LLP against the FBI for unlawful surveillance of the Southern California Muslim community. A member of the California State Bar, Ameena graduated with Cum Laude honors from Wayne State University School of Law, and graduated Magna Cum Laude from UCLA with a BA in Political Science. She has also proudly served on the boards of the ACLU of Southern California, the Public Law Center, and the National Lawyers Guild, Orange County.