

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UH Law Center's Criminal Justice Institute and Houston Law Review host symposium on federal sentencing

Experts examine changes in criminal sentences since Supreme Court relaxed guidelines

Sept. 18, 2013 – Eight years ago the U.S. Supreme Court significantly changed criminal law in the federal courthouse by deciding 20-year-old Federal Sentencing Guidelines were advisory rather than mandatory. Critics claimed the decision broadening judicial discretion would result in a wide disparity in sentencing, and statistics reported to Congress by the United States Sentencing Commission bear that out as more and more sentences fall outside the federal guidelines.

The Criminal Justice Institute at the University of Houston Law Center and the Houston Law Review are sponsoring a symposium Nov. 14 - 15 to examine the consequences of the Court's decision in *United States v. Booker*, recommendations for change, and the outlook for federal sentencing.

"This event will be incredible," says Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson, director of the UH Law Center Criminal Justice Institute. "I can think of no better forum for addressing the issues than to have federal prosecutors, federal public defenders, federal judges, and the country's leading sentencing scholars share the stage to discuss cutting-edge sentencing issues in the post-Booker world," she said.

U.S. District Judge William K. Sessions III of Vermont, former chairman of the Sentencing Commission, will deliver the keynote address "The Relevance of Offender Characteristics in a Guideline System" at an opening reception. Other speakers at the day-long symposium include Melissa Hamilton, a visiting scholar at the Law Center, federal judges, assistant U.S. attorneys, federal public defenders and academic experts.

The symposium, *Federal Sentencing Challenges Post-Booker*, will be held from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nov. 15, at the University of Houston Law Center. The reception at the Coronado Club, 919 Milam, downtown Houston, will be held at 5:30 p.m., Nov. 14. Attorneys attending all events will receive five hours of Participatory CLE credit, including one hour of Ethics. Cost is \$50 for all symposium events, breakfast, and lunch. Judicial and student registration is complimentary. For further information, please contact Charlette Jefferson at 713.743.2072 or cmjeffer@Central.uh.edu.

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About the University of Houston

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About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) is the leading law school in the nation's fourth-largest city. Founded in 1947, it is a top-tier institution awarding Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees. The Law Center is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.