

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Zealous Advocacy Conference at UH Law Center helps juvenile defense attorneys develop tools to represent troubled youth

Annual training seminar in September will stress importance of understanding social factors in successfully assisting their young clients.

Sept. 9, 2015 – Juvenile justice advocates will gather at the University of Houston Law Center in September for the 14th annual Zealous Advocacy Conference to discuss ways to better represent troubled youth swept up in the court system. The conference will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sept. 25 and 26, at the University of Houston Law Center, 4604 Calhoun Road.

The event, “The Intersection of Race, Gender, Adolescent Development, and Juvenile Justice,” is sponsored by the Center for Children, Law & Policy and the Southwest Juvenile Defender Center. The CLE training conference is designed to help juvenile public defense attorneys develop their tools and understanding of their young clients and the justice system.

“Recent Supreme Court decisions have emphasized the importance of taking adolescent development into consideration when deciding juvenile cases, developing programs for youth, and insuring positive outcomes for adolescents,” said Ellen Marrus, director of the Center for Children, Law & Policy and George Butler Research Professor of Law.

“Discussing race and gender can be difficult topics to approach. However, given the disproportionate number of youth of color within the juvenile system and the increase in girls entering the system, juvenile defenders have an ethical responsibility to be aware of these issues and to lead the discussion within the juvenile justice community.”

The keynote speaker for the Friday session is Judge Darlene Byrne of the 126th District Court in Austin, a 1987 graduate of the Law Center and president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Geoff Ward, associate professor of Criminology, Law & Society, and Sociology at the University of California, Irvine, will keynote the Saturday session.

Other speakers include Harris County judges Michael Schneider of the 315th District Court, Angela Ellis of the 315th District Court, and Katrina M. Griffith, CPC Family Court; Houston state representatives Armando Walle of District 140 and Gene Wu of District 137;

Malikah Marrus, assistant professor of social work at Hood College in, Frederick, MD; Pamela Vickrey and Sariah Donnahoo of the Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys; Nadia Seeratan of the National Juvenile Defender Center; David Shapiro of the Campaign Against Indiscriminate Juvenile Shackling; and Chris Phillis, director of the Maricopa County (Arizona) Public Advocate.

Attorneys attending the two-day conference will receive 14 hours of CLE credit, including 6 hours of ethics credit -The Texas Board of Legal Specialization has certified the seminar for 14 hours of specialization credit in the areas of Juvenile Law, Family law, Criminal Law, and Criminal Appellate.

For more information and to register, visit law.uh.edu/center4clp/conference.asp.

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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](http://www.uh.edu/law) 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.

