

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**UH Law Center's Professor Thompson to discuss state of forensic science at Houston Museum of Natural Science**

**Dec. 17, 2019** - University of Houston Law Center Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson will explain how forensic science in Houston has dramatically changed during the past decade in a lecture presented in partnership with the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

"The Real CSI: Getting Forensic Science Right" will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 11 in the Wortham Giant Screen Theatre.

"DNA evidence has uncovered that innocent people have been convicted of heinous crimes by jurors who have trusted the opinions of expert witnesses in forensics," Thompson, director of the Law Center's Criminal Justice Institute, said. "How could forensic science get it wrong if it is 'science?'"

"How can judges distinguish good science from junk science to prevent miscarriages of justice? Ideally, analysts should be able to point to data about the test's reliability. But what if that data doesn't exist? "

Thompson, the author of "Cops in Lab Coats," will explain how Houston's forensics lab has transformed to become the only forensic laboratory in the world where analysts in six fields are regularly monitored through an ambitious blind proficiency testing program, which checks whether they reached the expected result in mock forensic tests.

"Exploring new ways of applying science to traditionally non-related topics is a wonderful way to transform folks into science fans," said Amy Featherston Potts, director of adult education at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. "In this capacity, the museum is thrilled to partner with the Criminal Justice Institute at the University of Houston Law Center to highlight Sandra Guerra Thompson's work in transforming questionable forensics into scientifically valid evidence."

The Houston Forensic Science Center, established by the city of Houston in 2014 to replace the Houston Police Department Crime Lab, has instituted a vast blind proficiency testing program for quality assurance. Over time, the program will generate the statistical data needed to calculate the "error rates" of six forensic science disciplines: forensic biology (DNA), latent prints, firearms, toxicology, digital and multimedia evidence, and seized drugs. Five years after its creation, the HFSC has risen to national and international prominence for its quality assurance program, which promotes accuracy in the testing of crime scene evidence.

Continuing legal education credit for the lecture is pending.

[Click here to RSVP](#) to the event or visit [www.hmns.org/lectures](http://www.hmns.org/lectures).

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The [University of Houston](#) is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian-American-Serving institution with enrollment of more than 46,000 students.

### **About the University of Houston Law Center**

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) (UHLC) is a dynamic, top tier law school located in the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> largest city. UHLC's Health Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 11 centers and institutes which fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.