

Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail
10th Annual Spring Symposium

The Coloring of Law and Punishment:

Exploring Race, Ethnicity & Class in Incarceration



Featuring

Founder & Director of A New Way of Life, **Susan Burton**
US District Attorney New Hampshire, **John P. Kacavas**
Jeff Bolster, Courtney Marshall, Brenda Lett, & Andrew Smith

Saturday, May 3, 2014 [8 am - 3 pm]

Discover Portsmouth Center

www.portsmouthhistory.org Phone: 603-436-8433

\$25 Registration Fee includes Lunch

*Event Sponsored by Prudential Insurance Company of America, Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail,
Discover Portsmouth Center & Portsmouth Historical Society*

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10th Annual Spring Symposium

May 3, 2014

The Coloring of Law and Punishment: Exploring the Role of Race, Ethnicity and Class in Incarceration.

Prisons and Jails have become familiar fixtures in our communities so much so that we take them for granted and often dismiss the larger role that race, ethnicity and class plays in incarceration. The United States has seen an increase of more than 500% in the number of people incarcerated in the nation's prisons and jails since the 1970's resulting in a total of 2.2 million people behind bars. This growth has been accompanied by an increasingly disproportionate racial composition, with particularly high rates of incarceration for African Americans, who now constitute 900,000 of the total 2.2 million incarcerated nationally. New Hampshire is not immune from the staggering racially slanted statistics. A 2011 study done by the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies showed that the arrests of black/African-American youth was more than 3 times higher than that for white non-Hispanic youth.

Through productive dialogue, this symposium will explore the history of law and punishment in our state, the disproportionate incarceration of minorities and the range of social problems associated with incarceration. We will examine the impact of incarceration on communities of color, the generalized criminalization of those communities most affected by poverty and racial discrimination and what a shift from punitive to restorative justice in the way our criminal system addresses crime would look like.

PRESENTERS

Opening Address

John Kacavas, United States District Attorney for the State of New Hampshire
Smarter on Crime: Shifting Federal Prosecution Priorities in New Hampshire.

Keynote Address

Susan Burton, Director & Founder A New Way of Life
The Road to Reentry

Presentation

Jeff Bolster, Associate Professor University of New Hampshire
The Scholar and the Sailor

Panel Discussion

Law and Punishment

Courtney Marshall, Assistant Professor University of New Hampshire

Brenda Lett, Corrections Councilor

Andrew Smith, State Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator

EVENT SCHEDULE

- 8:00 – 9:00 Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 9:10 Welcome Address
9:10 - 9:45 Opening Address, John Kacavas, *Smarter on Crime: shifting federal prosecution Priorities in New Hampshire*
9:45 - 10:25 Q&A
10:25 - 10:30 Break
10:30 - 11:30 Keynote Address, Susan Burton, *The Road to Reentry*
11:30 - 12:00 Q&A
12:00 - 12:30 Lunch
12:30 - 1:00 Jeff Bolter, Film and Commentary, *The Scholar & The Sailor*
1:00 - 1:30 Panelist Presentation
1:30 - 2:00 Q & A
2:00 - 3:00 PBHT Tour (Law & Punishment)

PRESENTERS BIOGRAPHIES

Susan Burton is a formerly incarcerated woman who understands the challenges people face upon leaving prison. After more than 20 years cycling in and out of the criminal justice system, unable to find work, housing, or drug treatment, Susan finally gained freedom and sobriety in 1997 and made it her life's work to help other women walking in her shoes. Challenging all of the rules, laws, policies, and attitudes Susan came to understand that real change could only happen through a powerful, grassroots community organizing effort—one that could amass enough political power to bring an end to discriminatory practices, and shift public attitudes in a way that would break the cycle of mass imprisonment.

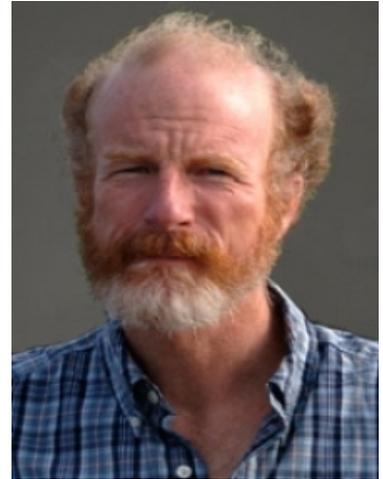


Susan was recently nominated as a CNN Top 10 Hero in the category of “community crusader.” She was also awarded the Citizen Activist Award from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in 2010. She has been a Soros Justice Fellow, a Women’s Policy Institute Fellow, and a former Community Fellow under the Violence Prevention Initiative of The California Wellness Foundation. Susan is a longtime Board Member of the Los Angeles Sober Living Network that provides housing for thousands of people in in Los Angeles who would otherwise be homeless. <http://anewwayoflife.org>

John P. Kacavas was appointed United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire by President Barack Obama on August 13, 2009. As U.S. Attorney, he is responsible for federal criminal prosecutions, civil litigation, and federal law enforcement initiatives in the State of New Hampshire. John is Chairman of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee (AGAC) Forensic Science Working Group, and he is the U.S. Attorneys' representative on the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Subcommittee on Forensic Science. He is a member of the AGAC Subcommittee on Criminal Practice, and the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Working Group. He also serves on the New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Executive Board. <http://www.justice.gov/usao/nh/meetattorney.html>



W. Jeffrey Bolster has been an Associate Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire for over 14 years. He has published widely on the interaction of people with the sea and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2013 Bancroft Prize for his most recent book, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*, a gripping and eloquent history of the human impact on the ocean. His best-selling book *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* was published in 1997 to critical acclaim, including recognition as a New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year. *Black Jacks* reconstructed the experiences of black mariners throughout the Atlantic world during the age of slavery. After graduating from college, he bought a one-way ticket to the West Indies where he would spend the next 10 years as a ship's captain on all manner of boats. There was only one nine-month break, the time it took for him to earn a master's degree in history at Brown University. He would later earn his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins



Courtney Marshal is an Assistant Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of New Hampshire. She specializes in critical race feminism, law and literature, and prison studies. Fusing these interests, her current book project theorizes crime and punishment as the center of African-American women's literary and cultural production. This fall, she is teaching a seminar on race, gender, and technology. Her current blog can be seen at "This (Covered) Bridge Called My Back: New England's Radical Women of Color."



Brenda Bailey Lett currently works at the NH Department of Corrections as a Corrections Counselor and is studying to become a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC). She is the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Black Women Health Project currently focusing on mental health and how internalized oppression stunts the growth and development of people of African descent. Her second Masters' thesis topic "The Effect of Racism on the Mental Health of the African Descent Community" is the motivation for the book she is co-authoring to be published in 2014. With her focus on education, health, criminal justice and community building Brenda stays committed to the goal of justice and equity for all people.

