



Dean Louis A. Berry

Civil Rights and Justice Institute



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About Us



Vision

The Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute seeks to ensure the law center's place as a center of excellence in social and restorative justice and civil and human rights research, advocacy, education and instruction. It further seeks to pursue policy initiatives and judicial outcomes that promote equal rights and justice.

Mission

The Louis A. Berry Institute for Civil Rights and Justice is committed to the advancement of civil and human rights and social and restorative justice, especially in Louisiana and the South.

News

Living Our Vision: Civil and Human Rights Lessons Shared with Local Pre-Law Club

Written By: Professor Bell



Mr. John Barrow, Istrouma High School Instructor; Professor Bell, Director of Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute

The Louis A. Berry Civil Rights & Justice Institute's commitment to its educational aims was on display when, on September 11, 2019, we met with members of Istrouma High School's newly-formed, Pre-Law Studies Club for our first in a series of educational meetings devoted to teaching about civil and human rights and restorative justice.

Students in the Pre-Law Studies Club, organized by Mr. John Barrow, came with a hearty appetite for knowledge of civil and human rights and we fed them well. We brought a replica of a solitary confinement cell and used it as a backdrop for this important foundational lesson, which began with an explanation of the meaning of "civil rights." After discussing the constitutional and statutory provisions which granted civil rights, we attempted to apply those lessons to a current event: the fact that over 80,000 individuals are currently held in solitary confinement in prisons and detention centers in the United States. Through this context, the students explored the meaning of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, both behind bars and in society.



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News (Con't)

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The session included pitstops through historical eras and episodes with the cast members who were centerstage during the civil rights era woven into the journey we took together with palpable excitement. We left knowing that, if left in the hands of this group, our struggle for civil and human rights is safe and in the care of some very capable future leaders.



Professor Bell speaking about civil and human rights.



Club members experiencing the dimensions of a typical solitary confinement cell.



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News (Con't)

Urging the Justice-Impacted Men Inside Dixon Correctional Center to Hit the Reset Button

Written By: Professor Bell



Within moments of arriving at the podium, Professor Bell placed her remarks in context by explaining that slavery was a system of mass incarceration. Thereafter, she revealed that the Louis A. Berry Civil Rights & Justice Institute was present because, in her view, the country's current state of mass incarceration is the civil rights issue of our lifetime.

Before Professor Bell's keynote address at the Distinguished Gentlemen Toastmasters Eleventh Annual Youth Forum on September 19, 2019, a number of formerly incarcerated men shared their compelling stories of transformation. Notably, Mr. Hakim Kashif, who spoke with his college degree proudly clutched by his side at times, emphasized the difference between talk and

action and stressed the necessity of a mental transformation when one is given the privilege of reentering society. He made it known to a spellbound audience that his college degree represented action, as well as a new mindset.

Professor Bell reminded the men of the sacrificial labor of the many named and unnamed civil rights fighters who fought to achieve their freedom and liberty. She challenged them to consider how they might feel knowing that the very beneficiaries of those freedoms are not experiencing it. She spoke of the part they must play in creating a new narrative and she gave specific tips to be implemented. She also denounced discouragement and delay. In doing works such as this, this Institute is engaged in the business of criminal justice reform while it is simultaneously working in defense of civil rights.



Institute Staff: Tiffany Rainey,
Chelsea Hale and
Professor Bell



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News (Con't)

Coffee & Conversation: A Memorable Evening with Civil Rights Legend Attorney Johnnie A. Jones, Sr.

Written By: Tiffany Rainey



Johnnie A. Jones, Sr. might be a month shy of one-hundred-years-old, but the man who arrived on September 26, 2019 to a capacity audience of administrators, dignitaries, students, faculty and community showed no signs of it. Attorney Jones entered the room and instantly commanded the collective attention of the group. He was dressed like a man off the page of a fashion magazine. His words and insights matched the debonair man who sat beside law student Justin Bullard as he conducted the eagerly awaited interview.

Following heartfelt opening remarks by Vice Chancellor Shawn Vance and Professor Bell, the crowd listened intently as Mr. Jones, the first African American lawyer to be admitted to the Baton Rouge Bar Association, reflected on his military career and his fifty-seven-year legal career. Mr. Jones recalled that his first encounter with racism came on American soil when he, as a member of the United States Army, was forced to give up his seat to captured German soldiers while riding in a convoy once they crossed the Mason-Dixie line because of the color of his skin. He also shared that, while en route to New Orleans to have a piece of shrapnel removed from his neck, a law enforcement officer stopped him, pushed him onto the ground and beat him for no reason. It was moments such as this that led him to pursue a law degree, which he earned the semester SULC gained its accreditation in 1953.



Vice Chancellor Shawn Vance



Professor Bell, Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute Director



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Mr. Jones spoke of his decision to serve as the lawyer for the 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott effort a mere fifteen days after graduating from law school. Not long after that, Mr. Bullard challenged Mr. Jones to present his best argument in support of what a legend would have to have accomplished in order to be deserving of a key to the city of Baton Rouge. Seconds thereafter, Mayor Sharon Weston-Broome approached the unsuspecting guest and presented him with a well-deserved key to the city. Mr. Jones was elated. Through the remainder of his interview, Mr. Jones made it clear that he felt it was his civic duty to advocate for needed social changes. He discouraged the idea of expecting others to do things that need to be done. He also discussed his role in successfully: fighting for pay equity for teachers; suing to de-segregate local parks, pools, amusement centers, schools and courtrooms; representing Southern University student-protesters during the civil rights era; guarding the constitutional rights of countless, indigent defendants; and, challenging voter discrimination practices.



Johnnie A. Jones, Sr. and Justin Bullard (3L)



Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome, Johnnie A. Jones, Sr.



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Mr. Jones received special recognition from the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he once served. This was presented by Representative Ted James. This was followed by an Official Statement presented to Mr. Jones on behalf of Governor John Bel Edwards. It acknowledged his "lifetime commitment to civil rights and to embodying the courage to fight for equal rights for all citizen." Former Chancellors Bhishma K. Agnihotri and Freddie Pitcher expressed their gratitude to Mr. Jones for paving the way for them to excel in their professions. They also praised him for living the mission of Southern University Law Center. Professors Gail Stephenson and Wendy Shea shared that they both use some of his award-winning cases to teach valuable legal writing and persuasive advocacy lessons, such as the *Miller v. Amusement Enterprise* case. This segment ended with remarks from the following cherished family and friends: Patricia Woods, Russell Kelley, and Mada McDonald. During this segment of the program, some audience members were moved to tears.



Former SULC Chancellor
Bhishma K. Agnihotri



Former SULC Chancellor
Freddie Pitcher



Professor Gail
Stephenson



Professor Wendy Shea





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News (Con't)

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Patricia Woods,
family member



Russell Kelly, family friend



Mada McDonald, family friend



Just when everyone including Mr. Jones thought the program was over, the vivacious voice of Stevie Wonder caused the audience to rise. Soon a chorus formed. Bodies moved as the words to "Happy Birthday" rung loudly. Mr. Jones couldn't conceal the smile that covered his face for this early birthday celebration (he will be one-hundred-years-young on November 30, 2019).



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Mr. Jones captured the attention of every person in attendance by not only sharing the challenges he endured, but with his revelations about how he overcame a lifetime of obstacles to become a man with a local, national and international footprint who has lived the mission of Southern University Law Center to the fullest. The mission of the Institute involves a commitment to the advancement of civil and human rights and social and restorative justice, especially in Louisiana and the South. That's exactly what Mr. Johnnie A. Jones, Sr.'s life is a testament to.

To view special documentary produced by Dr. Rani Whitfield, member of the Southern University System Board of Supervisors: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ec1TbQy0P_oQsjrlzF0ceT2yXRpprRzL/view



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News (Con't)

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Written By: Tiffany Rainey



Johnnie A. Jones, Sr., Chelsea Hale (3L), Eleanor Collins, Justin Bullard (3L), Professor Bell, Tiffany Rainey



Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome, Professor Bell



SULC students with Mr. Jones



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News (Con't)

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Johnnie Jones, Sr. and family



SULC student (1L), Associate Vice Chancellor Shenequa Grey



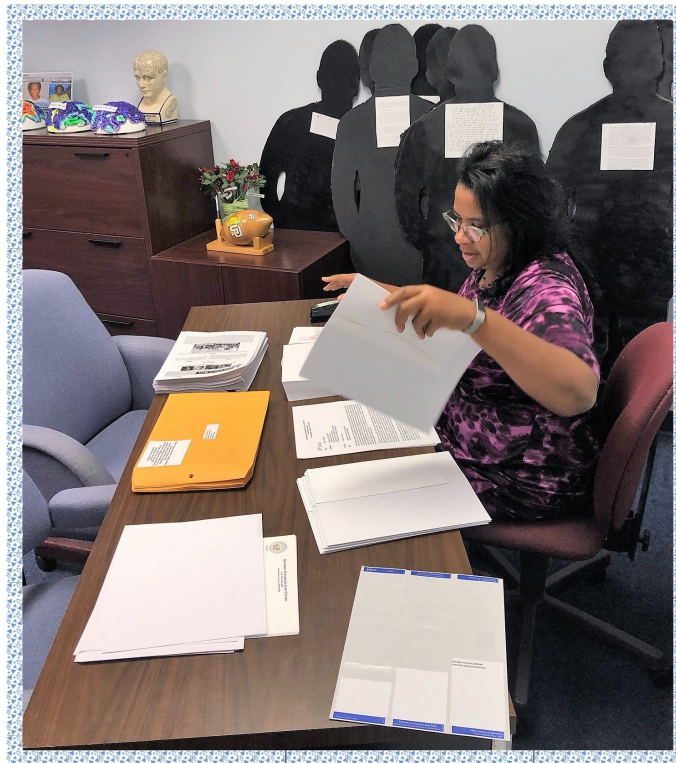
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News (Con't)

What is Professor Bell Up To Now? Enquiring Minds Want to Know



Last month, we showed this picture and asked what Professor Bell was up to. We promised to reveal the answer to all of our subscribers. Professor Bell is trying to gain insights into challenges that face incarcerated parents as they attempt to continue their role as parents. Who better to ask than those experiencing this unique challenge? You will learn more about this initiative in our November newsletter, but only if you sign up. Subscribe now!

If you wish to continue receiving newsletters, use this link to subscribe:

<http://www.sulc.edu/form/subscribe-to-the-louis-a-berry-civil-rights-and-justice-institute-enewsletter>



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**DID YOU
KNOW?**



Children with a Parent Behind Bars Face Deeper Struggles with Mental Health

A study last month in JAMA Network Open, a journal published by the American Medical Association, found that parental incarceration was associated with a number of problems starting in early childhood and continuing into adulthood. Over twenty-three years, researchers followed 1,420 children from eleven rural areas of North Carolina, assessing them annually until they turned sixteen and again at ages nineteen, twenty-one, twenty-five and thirty. By age sixteen, 475 of those kids had a parental figure who had been incarcerated. As children, that group had a higher prevalence of depression, behavioral problems and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. As they reached adulthood, they were more likely to suffer from anxiety, social isolation, use drugs or themselves.

For more information: <https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2019/09/13/children-with-incarcerated-parents-mental-health/>



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Reading Assignment



More than 1600 Polling Places Have Closed Since the Supreme Court Gutted the Voting Rights Act

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted a core provision of the Voting Rights Act: the requirement for certain states with a history of voter discrimination to “preclear” changes in their election rules with the federal government. For decades, the 1965 law helped secure the right to vote for hundreds of thousands of people in nine states, as well as certain jurisdictions in six other states, which had such a history of discrimination against minority voters. But in the 5-4 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the court ruled that the coverage formula for determining those jurisdictions subject to pre-clearance was outdated and therefore unconstitutional.

For more information: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2019/09/report-more-than-1600-polling-places-have-closed-since-the-supreme-court-gutted-the-voting-rights-act/>

The Former Slave Who Sued for Reparations and Won

The story of Henrietta Wood, a formerly enslaved woman who sued for restitution and won, is missing from the discussion. Her little-known victory offers lessons for today, both about the impact restitution can make and about the limited power of payment alone. In 1853, Wood was a free black woman living and laboring as a domestic worker in Cincinnati when she was lured across the Ohio River and into the slave state of Kentucky by a white man named Zebulon Ward. Ward sold her to slave traders, who took her to Mississippi. A cotton planter bought her there and later took her to Texas, where she remained enslaved through the Civil War.

For more information: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/04/opinion/henrietta-wood-reparations-slavery.html>

15 American Landmarks That Were Built by Slaves

In 2016, former first lady Michelle Obama declared as a sign of how far the nation has come: “I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves.” She was talking about the White House. And as the first African American first lady speaking to the Democratic National Convention, she struck a chord. Some fact checkers and political pundits may have raced to their history books, ready to dispute the claim. But she was right.

For more information: <http://www.businessinsider.com/american-landmarks-that-were-built-by-slaves-2019-9>



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Reading Assignment (Con't)



A Secret 1950s Strategy to Keep Black Students Out

In the summer of 1955, administrators at the University of Texas at Austin had a problem: the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, handed down the previous year, required educational institutions to integrate their classrooms. But the regents overseeing the state university system's flagship campus, the old alumni who formed the donor base, and the segregationist political forces that pulled the purse strings were all determined to find ways to keep African Americans from stepping foot on campus.

For more information: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/how-ut-used-standardized-testing-to-slow-integration/597814/>

Trolls and Consequences: A Racially Motivated Doxing and Social Media Assault is Ruled a Compensable Offense

We've previously written about doxing and how it can be used by both vigilante social activists and malicious cyber bullies. Recently, in a first-of-its-kind ruling, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia concluded that white supremacists using social media to target and harass American University's first female African-American student body president were liable to her for over \$725,000 in damages.

For more information: <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/trolls-and-consequences-a-racially-95659/>



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Giving

The Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute is seeking monetary donations to support the continuation of our work. If you wish to contribute, use this link and select the Louis A. Berry Institute from the list of options: <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=416825>

Payments can also be mailed to:

Office of Development
PO Box 9294
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

We are also soliciting donations of civil rights era documents, memorabilia and/or artifacts. If you wish to donate, please email our director at: ABell@sulc.edu.

Announcements:

October 4, 2019

Daughters Beyond Incarceration

Daughters Beyond Incarceration (DBI), a group led by two women who have experienced parental incarceration, seeks to break the cycle of poverty and crime amongst daughters with incarcerated fathers. DBI advocates for girls with incarcerated dads by pursuing policy and legislative improvements. In addition to providing mentorship services, DBI works directly with daughters of the incarcerated on leadership and character development. Please attend their legislative agenda reveal. The Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute is a proud partner.

St. Bernard Center
1500 Lafreniere Street
New Orleans, LA
6:00p.m.—9:00p.m.

Free and open to the public

October 5, 2019

Nigerian Independence; A Pan-African Celebration

Keynote Speaker: Freddi Williams-Evans
Nigeria and New Orleans: A Historical Relationship

SUNO-Conference Center
6400 Press Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70126
8:30p.m. - 1:00a.m.

Hosted by: Center For African And African American Studies and
The Association of Nigerians in New Orleans



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Announcements (Con't)

October 6, 2019

Sugar Cane Fest

Join the staff of West Baton Rouge Museum for: fabulous food; hands-on history; folk art; demonstrations; sweets contest; live music; living history; gallery exhibits; historic houses and a plantation store and barn.

West Baton Rouge Museum
845 N. Jefferson Avenue
Port Allen, LA 70767
11:00a.m.— 4:00p.m.

Free and open to the public

October 19 & October 22, 2019

30th New Orleans Film Festival

For many months, local film director Ben Donnellon followed members of the advocacy team who successfully fought to end the use of non-unanimous juries in Louisiana criminal trials. His film, "Non-Unanimous" was selected in the "Louisiana Shorts" category and it will have its world premiere at the 2019 New Orleans Film Festival this October. Ben Donnellon is co-founder of the non-profit organization, The Filmshop, a group of independent filmmakers and media producers dedicated to developing new, groundbreaking work through collaboration and collective development. Ben has filmed short documentaries all over the world including Israel, Cuba, Morocco, Poland, Czech Republic, and the Ukraine. He served as cinematographer on the documentary "The Revival of Jewish Poland," winner of Best Feature Documentary at The Los Angeles Cinema Festival of Hollywood.

Saturday, October 19, 2019 4:00p.m.
Contemporary Arts Center Ranch Theater 900 Camp St, New Orleans, LA 70130
OR

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 6:00p.m.
CAC Black Box Theater

Tickets & details: <https://neworleansfilmsociety.org/attend/>

Tickets are required

November 8-9, 2019

Slave Rebellion Reenactment

Slave Rebellion Reenactment (SRR) is a large-scale, community-engaged art performance and film project reimagining the largest rebellion of enslaved people in the United States. Set along the River Parishes in Louisiana, this 26-mile roving performance will travel from LaPlace to Kenner, LA, retracing the route of the historic 1811 Slave Uprising and concluding in New Orleans at Congo Square—a location instrumental for preserving African culture in America, with a celebration. The Reenactment will transform the violent suppression of the freedom fighters into a celebration of their achievements. The Reenactment will take place upriver from New Orleans in the locations where the German Coast Uprising, or what is often referred to as the 1811 Slave Revolt, occurred.

Details: <https://www.slave-revolt.com/>

Volunteers are needed

Contact: revolt@antennaworks.org

Free and open to the public



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Announcements (Con't)

November 14–15, 2019

Benin Republic Exhibition

Ashé Cultural Arts Center

1712 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.

New Orleans, LA 70113

10:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. & 12:00p.m - 2:00p.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies

November 18, 2019

A Choreographed Interpretation of AKOBEN: Calling the Students of New Orleans to Cultural Action!

Mack J. Spears Auditorium

McDonogh No. 35 High School

4000 Cadillac Street

New Orleans, LA 70122

11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Hosted by: Traditional African Dance Company

January 17, 2020

Anthony Bean presents "Celebrating 20 Years of Black Community Theater in New Orleans!"

Millie M. Charles School of Social Work Auditorium

New Orleans, LA 70122

6:00p.m. - 10:00p.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies

February 3, 2020

Charles Frye Memorial Lecture

The Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS) at Southern University at New Orleans will commence its African American History Month Celebration with Professor Bell's presentation: *"When Law & Injustice Become Bedfellows: Justice Becomes the Business of the People."*

SUNO

New Orleans, LA

11:00am - 2:00pm

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies



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Announcements (Con't)

February 7, 2020

Disrupting the Injustice Narrative: The Inaugural Underground Railroad to Justice Summit

At this advocacy summit, grassroots activist will teach people to navigate obstacles that they face as victims of Louisiana's criminal justice system or advocates for justice-impacted individuals.

Southern University Law Center

2 Roosevelt Steptoe Drive

Baton Rouge, LA 70813

9:00a.m - 2:00p.m.

Jointly Hosted By: Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute and
Center For African And African American Studies

February 15, 2020

Afro-Carnival Ball

SUNO-Conference Center

6400 Press Dr.

New Orleans, LA 70126

9:00p.m.-1:00a.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies and
African American Music Heritage

February 17, 2020

Commemorating African American Carnival History and Celebrating 50 Years of the Black Indians of New Orleans

SUNO-Conference Center

6400 Press Dr.

New Orleans, LA 70126

11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies

March 2020

The History of Danielle Metz "From Pep Rallies to Prison."

Danielle Metz was granted clemency by President Obama in 2016.

St. Katharine Drexel School Auditorium

5116 Magazine Street

New Orleans, LA 70115

11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies



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Announcements (Con't)

March 7, 2020

Roots Camp

RootsCampLA is the convening of activists in the state. It has been the progressive event of the year for the past nine years whether your issue is maintaining democratic control of schools, worker's rights, #BlackLivesMatter, voting rights, women's rights, transit, racial equality, LGBTQIA, disability rights, healthcare, or housing. This isn't your usual gathering; it's an "unconference." Instead of PowerPoints and "expert" panels, participants design sessions and decide the program. This doesn't mean "experts" aren't in the room. They are - many of them are you. RootsCampLA is about fostering homegrown talent.

Southern University Law Center

2 Roosevelt Steptoe Drive

Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Jointly Hosted by: Solidarity Project Advocacy Network and

Louis A. Berry Civil Rights and Justice Institute

March 16, 2020

Sharon Weston-Broome, Mayor-President East Baton Rouge Parish

"All Women, Especially African Americans, must be Motivated to Pursue Political, Civic, and Social Action!"

SUNO-Conference Center

6400 Press Dr.

New Orleans, LA 70126

11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Hosted by: Center For African and African American Studies





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"All too often, when we see injustices, both great and small, we think—that's terrible—but we do nothing. We say nothing. We let other people fight their own battles. We remain silent because silence is easier. Qui tacet consentire videtur is Latin for 'Silence gives consent.' When we say nothing, when we do nothing, we are consenting to these trespasses against us."

Roxane Gray





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