

# THURGOOD FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
Thurgood Marshall School of Law



March 1, 2019



**Professor Okezie Chukwumerije** gave a presentation at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law (TMSL) 2019 Spring Faculty Lecture Series entitled, “U.S. Trade Policy Under Trump” on February 13, 2019. Okezie explained that if a country focused more on true free trade policies, goods would be cheaper, and consumers will benefit. Okezie stated that some benefits of a United States free trading system include an increase in the standard of living and the development of technology which can be dispersed globally. He contends that China should open up its markets to allow other nations an equal opportunity to compete.

Okezie does not support a plan to withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Okezie said that by withdrawing the United States from the TPP, American producers now have a difficult time competing with Japan in the steak and wheat industries. Since the withdrawal, tariffs have been placed on over 250 billion dollars’ worth of products. Okezie suggested that moving forward, America should give financial support to Americans who have lost money due to an imbalance in global trading.

**Professor Thomas Kleven** has been a professor at Thurgood Marshall School of Law (TMSL) since 1974. Kleven says that what he loves most about TMSL are the students and the law school’s mission of expanding opportunities to enter the legal profession, especially for people of color. Kleven explains that we still live in a highly racist society, where African and Latino Americans are greatly underrepresented in the legal profession. According to Kleven even though African Americans constitute about 14% of the population, African Americans comprise only 5% of the lawyers in both Texas and the United States. Kleven emphasized the contribution TMSL has made in rectifying the imbalance in Texas, where 25% of the black lawyers are TMSL graduates. In addition, Kleven said many TMSL graduates have served as federal and state judges and as elected officials at all levels of government, including the three who are now serving in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Kleven remembers how proud he was when Justice Thurgood Marshall came to the law school in 1976 for the ceremony naming the law school after him. Kleven was inspired when Justice Marshall entertained the faculty for two hours with stories about Marshall's career and life. Kleven regards Justice Marshall as the most humanitarian judge ever to sit on the United States Supreme Court. He hopes that our graduates will follow Justice Marshall’s example and devote the skills with which TMSL equips them to the on-going struggle for social justice.



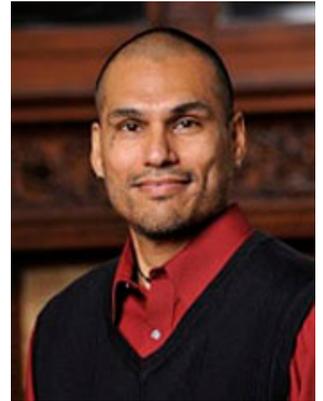
**Professor Martin Levy** presented at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law (TMSL) 2019 Spring Faculty Lecture Series entitled, “Impeachment, From Barbara to Trump” on February 20, 2019. Levy started his teaching career at TMSL in the Fall of 1972, while President Richard M. Nixon was in office. While Nixon was in office, Levy worked for Barbara Jordan a United States congressional representative from Texas. Jordan was the first African American Congresswoman to come from the Deep South. Levy said while he was working with Jordan he wrote a forty-page research paper on impeachment issues. Jordan was best known for her eloquent opening statement at the House Judiciary Committee hearings during the impeachment process against Richard Nixon. Levy discussed the impeachment process and its connection to the United States Constitution’s use of the phrase high crime and misdemeanors. Levy said there is an ongoing debate about the meaning of high crimes and misdemeanors for impeachment purposes, but he believes that presidential impeachment is actually a political process.

**L. Darnell Weeden**, Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Development and Roberson King Professor, accepted an offer from the Thurgood Marshall Law Review Texas Southern University to publish his article entitled “The Equal Protection Clause Prohibits A Public School from Stigmatizing A Student with A Diluted Fake Education That Fails to Teach Literacy.” The issue addressed in Weeden’s article is whether a predictable governmental denial of an equal opportunity for literacy to some groups of children in America because of the school district they live in or the school they attend violates the Equal Protection Clause objective of eliminating harmful governmental stigmas that serve as unreasonable obstacles to promoting personal merit. Weeden rejects the argument that regardless of its magnitude in American society that children do not have a constitutionally protected equal protection right to acquire enough skills in a public school to be able to read and write.



**Acting Dean Gary Bledsoe** has been named the winner of the 2019 Virgil C. Lott Medal, an award given every two years by the University of Texas (UT) at Austin School of Law. The Lott medal recognizes those who uphold the values of Virgil Lott ’53, UT’s first African-American graduate. Bledsoe received the award because of his contributions to the legal profession and his role in expanding tolerance among individuals in our society. Bledsoe, the President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s Texas chapter was presented with the medal on February 7, 2019. On February 12, 2019 Bledsoe delivered the Frederick Douglass Lecture at the Thomas F. Freeman Honors College at Texas Southern University (TSU). The TSU Honors College lecture series, provides practical guidance and direction to all of its honor college members. The lecture series also included the induction of the new freshmen members. The title of Bledsoe’s lecture was “Why the World needs more people like those in the Thomas F. Freeman Honor’s College.”

**Professor SpearIt** recently published “What’s Implicit about Implicit Bias” at Race and the Law Prof Blog (2/6/19), <https://lawprofessors.typepad.com/racelawprof/2019/02/whats-implicit-about-implicit-bias.html>. SpearIt’s scholarship was recently cited in reports, including the Vera Institute for Justice’s Investing In Futures: Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Postsecondary Education in Prison(2019), <http://www.georgetownpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GCPI-ESOI-Investing-in-Futures-Report-FINAL-20190116.pdf> and Australians’ Attitudes to Violence Against Women and Gender Equality(2018), <https://ncas.anrows.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NCAS-report-2018.pdf>. SpearIt’s scholarship was also cited in a Master’s dissertation entitled, Investing in Doing Time: The Potential of Self-transformative Activities in the Prison World (University of Vienna 2018),<https://dspace.eiuc.org/handle/20.500.11825/889>.



SpearIt’s service and organizational efforts were recognized for the panel, “Critical Pedagogy in the Era of Diversity,” which took place at the 2019 AALS Annual Meeting <https://lawprofessors.typepad.com/racelawprof/2019/01/critical-pedagogy-in-the-era-of-diversity.html>; and SpearIt has been listed in the American Constitution Society’s 2019 Program Guide for Progressive Federalism as a speaker for Police Accountability, <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-Program-Guide-Progressive-Federalism.pdf>. In February 2019, SpearIt was recognized as being in the top ten percent of authors of all time by download on SSRN.com.



**Professor Lupe S. Salinas** continues his diverse scholarship by engaging in immigration and civil rights research. His pending article, Lawless Cops, Latino Injustice, and Revictimization by the Justice System is in final edits and will appear in the Michigan State Law Review during 2019. The article emanates from a March 2018 Symposium sponsored by the Michigan State Law Review that promoted the theme “Is It Time for Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Ferguson/Post-Charlottesville America?” Salinas proudly represented Thurgood Marshall School of Law as one of several scholars from around the nation.

Salinas moderated a panel on Policing Reform during the Urban Research and Resource Center (URRC) Criminal Justice Reform Symposium, on January 17, 2019. The panel included his former Thurgood Marshall School of Law student, Jules Johnson, who is with the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, Civil Rights Division; Tarsha Jackson, a community activist who led the grassroots movement to force a settlement of the Harris County bail lawsuit; Major Mike Lee, Harris County Sheriff’s Office, Mental Health and Jail Diversion Bureau; and Chief Art Acevedo, Chief, Houston Police Department, who shortly after the panel discussion became quite active with the investigation of an alleged fraudulent affidavit that led to two citizens killed in their home during a no-knock drug raid and the wounding of four officers.

That same evening, January 17th, after many years, Salinas had the honor of donning his judicial robe to swear in County Criminal Court at Law Judge Raul Rodriguez. It turns out that January 17th is a special day for Raul because on this same date in 1992 Raul was sworn in by Salinas to become a licensed attorney. Raul did not want to impose on Salinas and his court time so he asked if Salinas could just do the oath in chambers. Since Salinas realized how much of a big deal the oath represents, he replied “No, no, we’re going to do this right.” Salinas put on his robe and accompanied him to the courtroom so others could witness his taking the oath. That was January 17, 1992, and 27 years later, on January 17, 2019, the Good Lord allowed history to repeat itself. This one was even better because his proud parents got to witness this oath and the special ceremony.

Salinas thanks Professor Marcia Johnson, his colleague at TMSL, and the force behind the founding of the Urban Research and Resource Center (URRC), for inviting him to participate as a moderator. Salinas commends her as the Director of URRC and her collaboration with her son Anthony Johnson in the publication of a bail reform article in the Northwestern Law Review several years ago. In the interest of fairness, Salinas also added that Jules, a litigator and former public defender, is also Professor Marcia Johnson's son.

On November 7, 2018, as part of the TMSL Fall 2018 Faculty Research Series, Salinas presented a talk entitled “The Evolving Standards of Decency that Mark the Progress of a Maturing Society Dictate that the Time to Terminate the Death Penalty Has Begun.” Salinas will conduct a further assessment of this topic in an upcoming law journal article. Salinas’ first death penalty article, *Is It Time to Kill the Death Penalty?: A View from the Bench and the Bar*, led to this observation by Justice John Paul Stevens: “Full recognition of the diminishing force of the principal rationales for retaining the death penalty should lead this Court and legislatures to reexamine the question recently posed by Salinas, a former Texas prosecutor and judge: “Is it time to Kill the Death Penalty?” See Salinas, 34 *Am. J. Crim. L.* 39 (2006). The time for a dispassionate, impartial comparison of the enormous costs that death penalty litigation imposes on society with the benefits that it produces has surely arrived.” *Baze v. Rees*, 128 S. Ct. 1520, 1548-49 (2008).

Please send any announcements you would like to include in the next Thurgood Faculty Spotlight to Ms. Toyann Timmons (Toyann.Timmons@tmslaw.tsu.edu) and Dean Weeden (Larry.Weeden@tmslaw.tsu.edu) by 5p.m. Friday, March 8, 2019.



**Thurgood Faculty Spotlight** is a twice Monthly journal (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> during the fall and spring semester) recording the achievements, experience, and awards of The Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law faculty of distinction.

**L. Darnell Weeden, Associate Dean for Faculty Development & Research,  
is the editor of Thurgood Faculty Spotlight**