

The CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice Presents:

## 2019 SYMPOSIUM

# Living on the Edge: Causes, Consequences and Actions

LMU|LA

CSJ Center for  
Reconciliation and Justice

Co-Sponsors: 2018-2019 Bellarmine Forum, Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, College of Communication and Fine Arts, International Relations Program, School of Film and Television, Department of Theatre Arts, Office of Mission and Ministry, Academy of Catholic Thought and Imagination, Marymount Institute, Ethnic and Intercultural Services

"CSJ" refers to "Congregation of St. Joseph" and is the set of initials used by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange for identification.



# Living on the Edge

## Monday, January 28th

### **CSJ SYMPOSIUM FILM LAUNCH**

*Reception: Foley Lobby 6:30pm – 7:15pm*

Screening of “The Florida Project” in Mayer Theater at 7:30pm

Set over one summer, the film follows precocious six-year-old Moonee as she courts mischief and adventure with her ragtag playmates and bonds with her rebellious but caring mother.

## Tuesday, January 29th

- **11:20am – 12:50pm – Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library**

### **Homelessness - It Could Happen to Anyone, a Discussion on Housing/Landlord-Tenant and Employment Law**

We are facing a housing crisis in California. Therefore, it is imperative for tenants to know their rights and obligations. The panelists will touch upon important aspects of California landlord-tenant law, discrimination in housing, rent control laws as they exist today, and eviction actions, among other issues. The topic of employment is closely related to housing. To that end, the panelists will address key issues that often arise in the employment context: wrongful termination, discrimination, workplace injuries, workers compensation laws, denial of meal and rest breaks, wage and hour violations, FMLA, etc. The moderator will take questions during and at the conclusion of the session.

**Moderator:** *Nnogo Obiamiwe, Principal at the Law Offices of Nnogo C. Obiamiwe, APC and Adjunct Professor, LMU*

**Panelist:** *Emmanuel Okojie, Law Clerk, Law Offices of Nnogo C. Obiamiwe, APC*

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- 2:40pm – 4:10pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library

## Food Insecurity on College Campuses

Food insecurity on college campuses is increasingly becoming a major concern. This panel will discuss what causes this insecurity, what choices a university can make to decrease it, and how we can all respond to provide the resources needed.

**Moderator:** *Dr. Jeanne Ortiz, Former Dean of Students, LMU*

**Panelists:** *Brooke Duplantier, Food Pantry Coordinator, LMU; Jodi Finkel, Professor, Political Science, LMU; Daniel Tamm, Program Specialist, Sanitation & Environment, City of Los Angeles*

- 4:20pm – 5:50pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library

## Young, LGBTQ, and Living on the Streets

As the cost of housing continues to surge in California and across the country, an increasing number of young people are experiencing homelessness at alarming rates. LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 25 are 120 percent more likely to experience homelessness than their straight peers, according to a national survey conducted by the University of Chicago. Panelists will discuss the many contributing factors that lead to LGBTQ homelessness, such as drug abuse, depression, family conflict, or chronic absence from school. In addition, panelists will explore what is being done to support this vulnerable population.

**Moderator:** *Lauren Moreno, Director of LGBT Student Services and Intercultural Initiatives, LMU*

**Panelists:** *Joey Hernandez, Policy and Mobilization Manager, Los Angeles LGBT Center; Mimi Hoang, Ph.D., Staff Psychologist, Student Psychological Services, LMU; Nia Clark, National LGBTQ Mentoring Coach, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*

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- 7:15pm – 9pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library  
Reception from 8pm – 9pm

## Voices of Justice Performance

Students from the Voices of Justice class will perform dramatized narratives based on the true stories of human trafficking survivors from CAST (Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking).

## Wednesday, January 30th

- 12:40pm – 2:10pm – Hilton 100

### Resilient LA – Biological and Human Interface as a Business and Social Strategy

The relationship between human structures and our local environment is fragmented, causing stress and isolation that increases suffering and environmental distress. Dr. Strauss will host a panel highlighting the work of the Los Angeles Biodiversity Project, examining their work and its impact for both business and public policy development.

**Moderator:** *Jeff Thies, Director, Institute of Business Ethics & Sustainability, College of Business Administration, LMU*

**Panelists:** *Dr. Eric Strauss, Executive Director, Center for Urban Resilience, LMU; Isaac Brown, Project Coordinator, City of Los Angeles/Isaac Brown Ecology Studio*

- 12:40pm – 2:10pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library

### How Do We Give Back Our Homeless Brothers and Sisters Their Dignity? Practical and Compassionate Suggestions

We will hear practical ways members of our homeless community receive compassion and dignity as they search for a place to call home; consider experiences and suggestions from fellow students who serve them; learn about innovative programs and integrated care provided by organizations to assist in recuperating self-dignity and attain lasting stability.

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**Moderator:** Tom King, Campus Liaison, UCLA Blood and Platelet Center

**Panelists:** Caroline Horstmann, Director of Volunteers & Community Engagement, Illumination Foundation; Gina Marie Seriel, Foundress & CEO, Our Father's Table; Donovan Moini, MAGIS Service Member, LMU; Matt Harper, Community Member and Organizer, Los Angeles Catholic Worker

- 2:20pm – 3:50pm – Hilton 100

## A Home Instead of the ER: There IS Enough Money Available To End Homelessness

Chronically homeless individuals often experience serious chronic health conditions and must resort to utilizing hospital emergency rooms. This overdependence on expensive and temporary intervention is an inefficient use of limited healthcare resources, and does not provide for the long-term solutions of housing and services.

**Moderator:** Jeff Thies, Director, Institute of Business Ethics & Sustainability, College of Business Administration, LMU

**Panelists:** John Maceri, Chief Executive Officer, The People Concern; Heather Tarleton, Associate Professor, Health & Human Sciences, LMU

- 4:30pm – 6pm – McIntosh Center

## Steps Out of Homelessness

This panel will detail the critical steps people take to get out of homelessness. This will help make tangible and concrete a process unfamiliar to most. In addition, the panel will also include practical examples of ways everyday people can help.

**Moderator:** John Paul Ramirez, Campus Minister for Regional Services, LMU

**Panelists:** John Maceri, Chief Executive Officer, The People Concern; Edward Seim, Software Engineer, Embrace Mobile, LMU Alum '17; Lauren Konchan, Technical Specialist, IBM, LMU Alum '17; DeSeree Seja, Survivor

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- 4:30pm – 6:30pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library  
Reception from 5:30pm – 6:30pm

## Collaborative Artists Bloc Performance – BEASTS (Act 1) by Aurin Squire

When a tent city of homeless people is given a 3-day eviction notice by the government, they must scramble to find a way to escape the encroaching bulldozers that will destroy their encampment.

## Thursday, January 31st

- 11:20am – 12:50pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library

### Causes of Homelessness

In this session, the panelists will discuss causes of homelessness, trends over time, and debunk common myths about homelessness. They will review the findings of recent studies on the causes of homelessness in Los Angeles and Orange County and how the results have been used (and can be used) to inform policy-making on homelessness. We will also hear profound testimony from a former member of our homeless community.

**Moderator:** *Rebecca Sager, Associate Professor, Sociology, LMU*

**Panelists:** *Peter Lynn, Executive Director, The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority; David Snow, Distinguished Professor, Sociology, UC Irvine; Rachel Goldberg, Assistant Professor, Sociology, UC Irvine, Denise Smith, Advocate & Homeless Survivor, Downtown Women's Center*

- 1pm – 2:30pm - Von der Ahe Family Suite, Hannon Library

### Jovenes: Past, Present, Future

Eric Hubbard, Jovenes Director of Development, and several representatives of Jovenes youth will present the mission and history of Jovenes, and its programs to find solutions for youth homelessness; how it began as a single shelter for young men in Boyle Heights and grew into a permanent and necessary institution serving communities throughout Southeast LA, focusing not only on housing for youth, but also healthcare, education, employment and trauma recovery. The

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youth from Jovenes will give personal accounts of the struggles and changes they experienced. Of special interest to the LMU community is a new Jovenes program, The College Success Initiative, to provide housing options and support for homeless community college students.

**Moderator:** *Doris Baizley, Adjunct Professor, Theatre Arts, LMU*

**Panelists:** *Eric Hubbard, Director of Development, Jovenes Inc.; Jovenes Inc. youth speakers*

- **6:30pm – 9:30pm – Von der Ahe Family, Hannon Library**

*Reception from 6:30pm – 7:30pm*

## **Crossing the Line**

Featuring Dennis Apel, founder of Guadalupe Catholic Worker and Deborah Tobola, founding artistic director of Poetic Justice Project.

In 2016, Dennis Apel served four months in federal prison for crossing the “green line” during a protest at Vandenberg Air Force Base marking the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and then refusing to comply with probation. In “Crossing the Line,” Deborah Tobola weaves together a narrative using journal entries written by Apel during his imprisonment that were originally published by the Santa Barbara Independent. Formerly incarcerated actors from the Poetic Justice Project help bring the story of this longtime peace activist to life in a play that is authentic and accessible.



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## **Doris Baizley**

### **Adjunct Professor, Theatre Arts, Loyola Marymount University**

Doris Baizley is a playwright and documentary story editor whose newest play, *SISTERS OF PEACE*, will premiere at the History Theatre in St. Paul, MN this March. Her published works include *MRS. CALIFORNIA*, *SHILOH RULES*, *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* and *TEARS OF RAGE* developed and produced by the Mark Taper Forum, ACT Seattle,

Salt Lake Acting Company, LA Theatre Works and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Documentary and community-based plays include *ONE DAY/SARAH HOUSE: Living and Dreaming in Hospice*, winner of a Santa Barbara Independent Press Award for playwriting; and *SEX STING*, winner of the first Guthrie Theatre/Playwrights' Center Two-Headed Challenge grant. She is currently working on a grant from the Sundance Institute as dramaturg and story editor with experimental filmmaker Rodrigo Reyes on his new documentary *SANSÓN AND ME*. She leads a playwriting workshop at the David Henry Hwang Writers' Institute at East West Players, and with Judith Royer at LMU, teaches "Voices of Justice" a documentary playwriting course.



## **Isaac Brown**

### **Project Coordinator, City of Los Angeles/Isaac Brown Ecology Studio**

Isaac Brown is a nationally recognized landscape ecologist and planner specializing in urban biodiversity and ecosystem management. Mr. Brown has applied these concepts in professional urban planning and green infrastructure projects worldwide for clients such as the San

Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority and a variety of other public and private sector entities. He is currently coordinating an urban biodiversity strategy for the City of Los Angeles with the Bureau of Sanitation and Environment. His research includes the development of comprehensive urban ecosystem health indicators for Los Angeles that integrate biodiversity, ecosystem services, pollution management, and environmental hazards. This is the first attempt to create a comprehensive urban ecosystem framework for LA's built environment and represents a promising new direction for sustainability of cities worldwide. Mr. Brown holds a master's and bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment and is a doctoral candidate in Environmental Science and Engineering at UCLA's Institute of Environment and Sustainability.

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## **Brooke Duplantier**

### **Food Pantry Coordinator, Loyola Marymount University**

Brooke Duplantier is the Food Pantry Coordinator on the Community Relations and Engagements (CRE) Team at the Center for Service and Action, a third-year resident advisor for upper division housing, member of the University Honors program and member and past Vice President of Social Justice for the Sursum Corda service organization,

which addresses issues related to food injustice and hunger. Each week, she volunteers for the Food Recovery Network, which works to reduce food waste on campus by taking unsold items from the cafeteria to an off-campus community center. Last semester, she attended an Alternative Break trip to Puerto Rico, where she learned about agricultural sustainability and permaculture. The past summer, she was an Adult Agricultural Apprentice at Grow Dat Youth and Organic Farm in New Orleans. Currently, she is President of the LMU Oxfam Chapter, an organization that advocates for anti-poverty programs and policy. Ms. Duplantier is a senior studying English and political science in the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts at LMU, currently pursuing a political science honors thesis on immigrant communities and ethnic restaurants. She is particularly interested in the intersections between food, identity, culture and politics and hopes to attend a post-graduate program in food studies.



## **Nia Clark**

### **National LGBTQ Mentoring Coach Big Brothers Big Sisters of America**

Nia Clark has an extensive background in child welfare; first as a transgender youth of color growing up in foster care and as an adult now working on behalf of at-risk youth. With over 20-years of non-profit training and consulting experience, she primarily focuses on systems of care, one-on-one mentoring, and LGBTQ youth.



## **Jodi Finkel**

### **Professor, Political Science, Loyola Marymount University**

Jodi Finkel researches political institutions, human rights, and democracy in Latin America. Her current work examines indigenous women's voting rights in southern Mexico and role of Mexico's Federal Electoral Court (FEC) in balancing respect for traditional practices with the protection of individual rights. She has published several articles on supreme courts and judicial reform in Mexico and Argentina (in LARR, JLAS, and LAPS) and her book, *Judicial Reform as Political Insurance: Argentina, Peru, and Mexico in*

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the 1990s, was published with the University of Notre Dame Press. She is a founder of MUJER (an empowerment and community organizing program for sex workers in Guatemala). Professor Finkel received the American Political Science Association's National Award for Mentoring Latino/a Undergraduates, UCSD's Visionary Alumni Award, and LMU's Distinguished Teaching Award.



## **Rachel Goldberg Ph.D.**

### **Assistant Professor, Sociology, University of California, Irvine**

Dr. Rachel Goldberg's research spans the areas of health, children and families, the transition to adulthood, homelessness, and emerging methods in survey research. She was co-PI with Dr. David Snow on the OC Homelessness and Housing Cost Study. Prior to joining the faculty at UCI, she was a postdoctoral associate at Princeton University. Dr.

Goldberg received her doctorate in sociology from Brown University and her master's in public health from Columbia University.



## **Matt Harper**

### **Community Member & Organizer, Los Angeles Catholic Worker**

Following in the LA Catholic Worker's long tradition, Matt Harper works to meet many of the immediate needs of the Skid Row community. Recognizing this as only part of the Gospel demand to "love your neighbor," Matt also works to challenge the cultural and systemic marginalization (and criminalization) of the unhoused as well as to

create and support alternative practices and structures to the dehumanizing, power-heavy, arm's length charity/volunteer work that is so popular among class-privileged liberal institutions and communities. In his free time, Matt organizes with White People for Black Lives to educate and mobilize white people to take personal and collective responsibility for dismantling white supremacy on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural, and systemic levels. To the best of his ability, Matt tries to ensure his work is accountable to grassroots organizations of color, people who have been doing this work (and receiving little attention, support, and resources) on this stolen land since the start of settler colonialism in North America.



## **Joey Hernández**

### **Policy & Mobilization Manager, Los Angeles LGBT Center**

Joey Hernández manages the LA LGBT Center's mobilization efforts to protect and expand the rights of the LGBT community along with managing the Center's child welfare and youth housing policy advocacy efforts. Mr. Hernández has dedicated nearly a decade on grassroots organizing and mobilizing of LGBTQ youth, supporting

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educational staff and parents to bring change to school communities. He has worked on California legislation to ensure the rights of transgender and non-binary students in public schools, mandate LGBTQ-inclusive comprehensive sexual health education, reform discriminatory student discipline processes, and expand protections for LGBT immigrant communities. He has also organized with over a thousand volunteers to stop the federal administration's attack on the Affordable Care Act and other life-saving social services funded by the federal government. Previously, Mr. Hernández worked at the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU SoCal). He earned his bachelor's in sociology and LGBT studies from UCLA and a master's in public administration from CSU Long Beach.



## **Mimi Hoang, Ph.D.**

**Ph.D., Staff Psychologist, Student Psychological Services  
Loyola Marymount University**

Dr. Mimi Hoang is a nationally-recognized psychologist, educator, author, and grassroots activist specializing in the LGBTQ+ and Asian Pacific Islander communities. Licensed as a psychologist since 2008, she has worked primarily in community and university settings due to her passion to serve the young and underserved. Dr. Hoang's diverse clinical experience includes working with API immigrants and refugees, high risk and homeless/runaway teens, Native American foster youth, and first generation college students. Since the 1990s, she has co-founded three organizations in Los Angeles for bisexual, pansexual, fluid, and other nonmonosexual (AKA "bi+") individuals, authored multiple publications, and earned a seat at the landmark 2013 White House Bisexual Community Roundtable. Dr. Hoang currently works as a Staff Psychologist at LMU's Student Psychological Services, Adjunct Professor at Antioch University Los Angeles, and as a consultant/trainer on diversity issues.



## **Caroline Horstmann**

**Director of Volunteers and Community Engagement  
Illumination Foundation**

Caroline Horstmann is the Manager of Volunteers and Community Engagement with the Illumination Foundation, where she manages the organization's recruitment and cultivation of volunteers across all programs, obtaining corporate/private in-kind donations and mobilizing community engagement efforts in Southern California. Ms. Horstmann began her career in non-profit in 2009 with the Illumination Foundation, assisting homeless families with housing intakes and referrals. She completed her undergraduate degree at Loyola

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Marymount University, where she discovered her passion for serving the homeless through service projects and volunteerism.



## **Eric Hubbard**

### **Director of Development & Strategic Partnerships, Jovenes Inc.**

Eric Hubbard is the head of the Development Department for Jovenes, in addition to donor development, website/social media content, public relations, and research, advocacy, and storytelling initiatives. He has served as the elected representative for Boyle Heights/East LA on the Los Angeles Continuum of Care Coordinating Council and has been instrumental in planning the LA Taco Festival, a major event that draws thousands of people to Boyle Heights each year as a fundraiser for Jovenes. Mr. Hubbard looks forward to continuing to use fundraising and development as tools to help his generation thrive in a society that is undergoing rapid and fundamental changes. Since arriving at Jovenes in 2008, the organization has more than tripled in size and capacity. He graduated from Occidental College as a politics major and enjoys writing, teamwork, and empowering those around him.



## **Tom King**

### **Campus Liaison, UCLA Blood & Platelet Center**

Tom King is currently the Campus Liaison for the UCLA Blood and Platelet Center. Previously, he worked as the Assistant Director of Student Engagement at LMU for 14 years. In this role he advised the university's 10 Service Organizations and two residential serve-themed communities, partnered with Campus Ministry to co-lead the annual Service Retreat and direct students on LMU's Silent Retreat, and he served as the university's post-grad service advisor, which included directing LMU's Ignatian Service Corps, a year-long volunteer program he founded in 2014. Mr. King has a bachelor's in theology from St. Joseph's University, a master's in counseling/college student personnel administration from Shippensburg University, and a master's of divinity from the University of Notre Dame. He served on the Board of Directors for the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and is currently on the Board of Directors for the Catholic Volunteer Network (CVN) and the IMPACT National Service Conference. His past board memberships include the Advisory Boards for Ascension Catholic School in Los Angeles, LMU's Casa de la Mateada study abroad program in Argentina, and the PLACE Corps.

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**Lauren Konchan**  
Technical Specialist, IBM,  
Loyola Marymount University Alum '17

Lauren Konchan is an alumni of Seaver College at LMU, studying computer science and dance. Currently, she works as a Technical Specialist at IBM, helping companies innovate their businesses. One of her passions is uncovering how technology can act as a helping agent.



**Peter Lynn**  
Executive Director,  
The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is the lead agency of the LA Continuum of Care, managing more than \$300 million in Federal, City and county funding. As Executive Director, Mr. Lynn has led LAHSA through a period of tremendous growth and transformation, with funding commitments from the City and County of Los Angeles increasing from \$42 million to \$280 million in three and a half years. He serves on the National Alliance to End Homelessness Leadership Council, the Home for Good Leadership Team, and the Los Angeles County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Housing Advisory Board.



**John Maceri**  
Chief Executive Office, The People Concern

The People Concern was formed in 2016 as a merger of two trusted social service organizations (OPCC and Lamp Community). The People Concern is one of the largest social services organizations in Los Angeles County. With more than fifty years of work in the community, they provide a comprehensive and fully integrated system of care, including outreach, housing, mental and medical healthcare, substance use services, and wellness programs, tailored to the unique needs of homeless individuals, survivors of domestic violence, and others who have nowhere else to turn. Previously, Mr. Maceri had served as the Executive Director of OPCC since 1999. As a long-time community volunteer, he served on the board of the Business Alliance of Los Angeles (formerly the Valley Business Alliance) as a member, Vice President and two-term President. He is a Past Chair of the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition, and also served as a member of the Board of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce. He is also a past Vice President of the Board of North Valley Caring Services and is a former member of the governing board of the Children Affected by AIDS Foundation.

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## **Donovan Moini**

### **MAGIS Service Member, Loyola Marymount University**

Donovan Moini is currently an undergraduate junior pursuing a degree in computer science and a minor in philosophy at LMU. In addition to his academics, Mr. Moini is a part of LMU's MAGIS service organization. Through his time in MAGIS, he is a regular volunteer at Blessed Sacrament Church pantry where he coordinates the volunteers and trays served, builds intentional connections with the workers and clients, and leads reflections with the volunteers. This experience has allowed him to gain a greater connection and knowledge of the homeless population within Los Angeles.



## **Lauren Moreno**

### **Director of LGBT Student Services and Intercultural Initiatives Loyola Marymount University**

Lauren Moreno began their role as Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Student Services office and Intercultural Initiatives in July of 2018. After having worked as the Assistant Director since 2017 and previously the Program Coordinator for LGBTSS since 2016, Lauren has since become an Alumni of LMU, getting their degree in the master's program of educational studies. Lauren also serves as the advisor of the registered student organization Transcendence, which caters to the needs and development of Trans\* Non-Binary student populations, the Gender Sexuality Alliance, and the Queer Film Club. Lauren has worked extensively within the LGBT community ever since graduating with her bachelor's in philosophy and double minor degrees in pre-law and sociology at Mount St. Marys University, where they were acting president of the Gay Straight Alliance for Junior and Senior years. Since then they have worked for the SEIU-USWW Janitorial Unions education based non-profit Building Skills Partnership, where they acted as a programming assistant for various life skills courses. Lauren also works extensively with the LGBT Center of Los Angeles, primarily within their youth education department Lifeworks. They have been training with the Community Action Network out of the LGBT Center for over two years, engaging LGBT youth populations in LAUSD area in storytelling, resonance building, leadership development, and educational attainment. Needless to say, Lauren loves all things LGBT and education and hopes to pursue their Ph.D. in queer theory and if they're feeling ambitious their law degree.

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## **Nnogo Obiamiwe**

**Principal at the Law Offices of Nnogo C. Obiamiwe, APC, and Adjunct Professor, Loyola Marymount University**

Nnogo Obiamiwe is an Adjunct Professor of Business Law at LMU and practicing civil rights attorney with over 16 years of comprehensive experience in employment and housing-related matters. Ms.

Obiamiwe has a high rate of success in resolving these types of cases.

Since 2002, she has prosecuted over 200 civil rights cases involving state and federal fair housing litigation against employers and housing providers. She also handles wage and hour disputes on behalf of employees. Ms. Obiamiwe is a 1999 graduate of Loyola Law School, Los Angeles. Prior to moving to the U.S., she spent six years in Hungary where she obtained a bachelor's in economics and a master's in foreign trade from the internationally recognized Corvinus University in Budapest, Hungary. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, cycling, cooking and dancing.



## **Emmanuel Okojie**

**Law Clerk, Law Offices of Nnogo C. Obiamiwe, APC**

Emmanuel Okojie is a law school graduate and Civil Litigation Law Clerk who is well-versed in Employment Law, Housing Matters, Contracts, and Family Law. Mr. Okojie assists lawyers with litigation tasks such as client intakes, deposition preparation, calendaring, drafting legal briefs and motions, and assisting in trial preparation.



## **Jeanne Ortiz, Ph.D.**

**Former Dean of Students, Loyola Marymount University**

Dr. Jeanne Ortiz served students as a faculty member and student affairs professional for over 40 years. She began her career as a faculty member at the State University College at Buffalo. She transitioned to Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residential Life at Houghton College (NY) and Director of Residence Life and Dean of Student

Services at the University of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX). She served students as the Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs at Notre Dame University of Maryland, Whittier College and Loyola Marymount University before retiring in 2018. During her career, she was responsible for providing leadership to the development of special programs for undocumented students, students of concern, commuter students, and students who experience food insecurity. She led international alternative break programs and provided support for mothers returning to university study. Dr. Ortiz earned her doctorate from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



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**John Paul Ramirez**  
**Campus Minister for Regional Service,**  
**Loyola Marymount University**

John Paul (J.P.) Ramirez is a native Angelino and proud son of two immigrant parents. Currently, he has the privilege of overseeing the monthly De Colores student trips to Tijuana, Mexico and the weekly Feed the Hungry program. He also helps coordinate the annual Latino/a

Spiritual Retreat & Service Immersion Retreat in Downtown LA. Prior to LMU, he served as Christian Service Coordinator & theology teacher at his alma mater, St. Francis High School, an all-boys Catholic school. Prior to working at the high school, he was a parish Confirmation & Youth Ministry Coordinator from 2008-2013 in Los Angeles. He earned his bachelor's degree in urban studies & planning from CSUN. After he graduated, he was an intern for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the official domestic anti-poverty agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops at the Office of Justice and Peace for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He earned his master's degree in pastoral theology from LMU. In his "spare" time, he enjoys spending time with his family, reading, traveling, photography, and basketball.



**Rebecca Sager, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor, Sociology, Loyola Marymount University**

Dr. Rebecca Sager's work looks at the intersection of religion, politics, and social movements. She has published a number of articles on this topic and her book, *Faith, Politics, and Power: The Politics of Faith-Based Initiatives* (Oxford), looks at the role conservative evangelical movement actors played in promoting the faith-based initiative at the

state level. Her project, "Are You Better Off Alone?: Religious and Secular Partnerships in Social Service and Political Outreach" researches the partnerships between Catholic and secular groups in political organizing and social services. Dr. Sager holds a doctorate and masters of sociology from the University of Arizona.

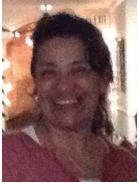


**Edward Seim**  
**Software Engineer, Embrace Mobile**  
**Loyola Marymount University Alum '17**

Edward Seim builds server backend systems that help client developers discover what they can do to improve their mobile app's user experience. Before working at Embrace, Mr. Seim attended LMU as a computer science major. While at LMU, he worked on a number of

projects that serviced the needs of others, from aiding LMU's onsite clients to building a system to help TA's manage large numbers of students. He enjoys evening consuming board games (Catan, anyone?) and working on side projects involving Raspberry Pis and other IoT.

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## **Deseree Seja** **Survivor**

Deseree Seja is homeless advocate, recipient of multiple awards and graduate of transitional programs such as WisePlace and Bethany. She became an alcoholic 10 years ago when her mom passed away and quickly spiraled into homelessness shortly after that. For over two years, Ms. Seja roamed the streets drinking and slept in vacant graves at cemeteries. On one of those nights, she went through a spiritual awakening where she surrendered her fate to God. She purposely got arrested for a new beginning. In those three months in jail, she began to read the Bible and pray for guidance. Ms. Seja's sobriety date is July 30, 2018. She graduated from WisePlace in 2009 and Bethany in 2010. Her story was featured in LMU's Voices of Justice - Around the Table: Stories from Bethany 2011. She is a trained Phlebotomist and currently works at Starbucks. Ms. Seja is currently active in the Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP), Witness Speaker, and is a facilitator on spiritual retreats. She received the OC Sheriff's Department's Client Transformation in 2010 and was nominated for the 2018-2019 ISP Ambassador of Hope Award.



## **Gina Marie Seriel** **Foundress & CEO, Our Father's Table**

Gina Marie Seriel is the founder of Our Father's Table (OFT), a groundbreaking homeless intervention program for chronic homeless with a common-sense approach for ending homelessness that focuses on mentorship, advocacy and navigation of homeless service provider systems. The program has a 95% success rate - fostering dignity, self-worth and healing. OFT has aided over 170 individuals in breaking their cycle of chronic homelessness. Ms. Seriel is a motivational speaker giving lectures on homelessness and dignity. She authors workshops with a focus on understanding homelessness, mental illness and homelessness, and how you can make a difference in a homeless person's life in five minutes. She trains business owners on positively interaction with neighboring homeless. Originally, Ms. Seriel is from South Florida. She is a fine artist, a published decorative artist and muralist who has been working in the decorative arts field for the past 20 years. Her inspiration to minister to the homeless came to her as a divine calling at an early age, which she honored as a dutiful conviction.

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## **Denise Smith**

### **Advocate & Homeless Survivor, Downtown Women's Center**

After Denise's long-term partner left her to raise their three children on her own, she was devastated. Alone and overwhelmed, she turned to drugs to self-medicate. As a result, her children were taken from her. At this point, Denise felt like she'd truly lost everything. She spent her days and nights getting high on the streets of Skid Row for more than 15 years. She enrolled in a recovery program, which connected her with the Downtown Women's Center. At DWC, Denise was able to continue her recovery process. She learned the sadness she felt after giving birth to her third child had a name—postpartum depression—and she began receiving appropriate treatment. Today, Denise is housed and a graduate of DWC Advocates program. She continues to advocate for women experiencing homelessness and frequently speaks to groups and donors visiting DWC. She works in the Women's Health Clinic with a goal of becoming a community health counselor.



## **David Snow, Ph.D.**

### **Distinguished Professor, Sociology University of California, Irvine**

Dr. David Snow joined UCI in 2001, previously teaching at Southern Methodist University, the University of Texas, Austin, and the University of Arizona, where he was head of the Department of Sociology for nine years. His teaching and research interests include social protest and movements; socioeconomic marginality with an emphasis on homelessness and poverty; social psychology focusing on changes in cognitive orientation and interpretive perspectives, with an emphasis on framing processes, conversion, and identity work; religion and the persistence of belief; and qualitative field methods. He is the author or co-author of over 100 articles and chapters on various topics and books. Dr. Snow is past President of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction and the Pacific Sociological Association, and Vice President of the American Sociological Association. He has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, a recipient of the Society for the Study of Social Problems 2008 Lee Founders Award for career contributions to the study of social problems, the UCI Alumni Association's 2012 Faculty Achievement Award, the 2013 John D. McCarthy Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Scholarship of Social Movements and Collective Behavior, and the 2016 George Herbert Mead Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. Dr. Snow led the recent study of the cost of homelessness in Orange County in collaboration with OC United Way and Jamboree

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Housing, serves as UCI's Faculty Athletic Representative and as Co-Director of the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding, and is a member of the Board of Directors of several Orange County non-profit organizations. He earned a bachelors from Ohio University, a master's in urban studies from the University of Akron, and his doctorate in sociology from UCLA.



**Eric Strauss, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director, Center for Urban Resilience**  
**Loyola Marymount University**

Dr. Eric Strauss, winner of several National Science Foundation Grants for urban ecology, is the President's Professor of Biology at LMU and Executive Director of the new LMU Center for Urban Resilience.

With research specialties in animal behavior, endangered species management, urban ecosystems and science education, Dr. Strauss has extended the model for faculty scholarship by engaging interdisciplinary collaborative teams to attract multiple national funding streams and provide education, research, and restoration programs to underserved neighborhoods and their residents. The center brings together students, faculty and members of the community to work on the problems that confront the 21st century city. Its work includes intensive and far-reaching initiatives such as the investigation of the role of green space and urban forests in supporting healthy neighborhoods, science education using their national curriculum *Urban EcoLab*, and restorative justice programs for schools and municipalities. It also marshals international action like the Mediterranean Cities Climate Change Consortium (for which LMU is the lead organization). In addition to his work with the Center for Urban Resilience, Dr. Strauss has co-written multi-media textbooks in biology and urban ecology and has hosted multiple video series on the life sciences and ecology. He received his bachelor's in mass communication from Emerson College and doctorate in biology from Tufts University. Dr. Strauss is also director of the Ballona Discovery Center and Editor in Chief for the influential *Cities and the Environmental Journal*.



**Heather Tarleton, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Professor, Department of Health & Human Services**  
**Loyola Marymount University**

Dr. Tarleton is an expert in chronic disease epidemiology, public health, metabolism and endocrinology, nutrition and behavior, psychosocial health and wellbeing, health services, cancer survivorship, and medical bioethics. She is a member of the National Institutes of Health Network of Minority Health Research Investigators (NIH NMRI) and a member of the American

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Public Health Association Committee on Health Equity (APHA CHEQ). Currently, she is working with students at LMU on a project to examine musculoskeletal health among homeless young adults. Dr. Tarleton teaches courses on issues faced by individuals living the homeless experience. Both classes are community-based so that students work hand-in-hand with community partners to deepen conceptual frameworks of social justice, empathy, solidarity, and ability to enact social change. She received a doctorate of philosophy in molecular biology from Princeton University, a master of science in epidemiology from UCLA, and a master of public affairs and politics degree from Rutgers University.



## **Jeff Thies**

**Director, Institute of Business Ethics & Sustainability, College of Business Administration, Loyola Marymount University**

Jeff Thies is a clinical assistant professor at the College of Business Administration at LMU. Prior to joining LMU full-time, Mr. Thies worked in the area of applied ethics as a mission integration executive, most recently serving as vice president of the Leadership Institute for St.

Joseph Health in Irvine. In that role, he oversaw system initiatives which focused on individual and organizational values formation as well as training in clinical and organizational ethics. Additionally, Mr. Thies oversaw governance development programs and was executive staff to the St. Joseph Health Board of Trustees and the Governance and Nominating Committee of the St. Joseph Health Board of Trustees. Past leadership positions include board chair of the Ministry Leadership Center (providing leadership formation for senior executives of six west coast health systems); a member of the Leadership Development Committee of the Catholic Health Association; vice chair of the Board of Trustees, Mailing and Fulfillment Service Association (now Idealliance), board member, St. Joseph Hospital, and chair of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality. He holds a bachelors, masters and master of divinity from St. John's College in Camarillo, California and a D.Min. from the Claremont School of Theology with an emphasis on Mexican immigrant culture and religious practices.



## **Daniel Tramm**

**Sanitation and Environment, City of Los Angeles**

Daniel Tramm worked as an aide to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, 2013-2018, to empower neighborhoods with access to city government, raise the minimum wage, end homelessness, and develop young people's experience of civic engagement — building an ongoing capacity for a strong democracy. Currently, he's working full-time to protect the public health and environment of Los Angeles, engaging communities in sustainability practices and services of Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment.

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*\*Planning Committee*

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CSJ Center for  
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### **SUPPORT OUR CENTER**

The Center develops its annual programming with a focus on social justice issues, often intersecting the power of the arts. This year we have launched an official scholarship drive. The scholarship will be awarded to students whose academic and/or extracurricular activities focus on social justice.

For more information on how to support the CSJ Center, please visit our website at [www.lmu.edu/csjcenter](http://www.lmu.edu/csjcenter) or contact Yvonne Wehrmann, Director of Development, at [Yvonne.Wehrmann@lmu.edu](mailto:Yvonne.Wehrmann@lmu.edu) or 310.338.7706.





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