GRIT: A WORKSHOP TO ENERGIZE, ELEVATE AND EDUCATE WOMEN IN PUBLIC DEFENSE

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE U.S. COURTS
DEFENDER SERVICES OFFICE TRAINING DIVISION

Virtual Program with Live Panels and Small Group Sessions

October 19-29, 2020

Final Agenda

**Grit** is a brand-new workshop designed and hosted by the Training Division and the Seattle Federal Public Defender’s Office. Originally conceived as an in-person program, it has been redesigned as a virtual experience. **Grit** is now a course that engages participants in multiple ways over eleven days, from Monday, October 19 – Thursday, October 29, 2020.

Synchronous learning will be composed of three live presentations by a panel or speaker and three small group sessions led by skilled co-facilitators. Asynchronous materials—videos and other media—will be posted in a learning management system called Talent LMS. As participants watch and read at their own pace, they are expected to provide feedback in a variety of ways on content and to prepare for small group discussions.

Unless it is marked in the agenda as Live session, all segments of the program will be in Talent LMS to be watched and read on one’s own. Prior to each workshop session participants shall complete segments and assignments which should be easy to follow as one moves through the course outline in Talent LMS.

Our objective is to create a rich, meaningful growth experience for each person who attends. To foster intimacy and connection, we have a limited number of spots in **Grit**. Our expectation is that each participant will complete all asynchronous segments (12-15 hours) and be present at all live sessions (9-10 hours).

As women, we must stand up for ourselves. We must stand up for each other. We must stand up for justice for all.

— Michelle Obama

Welcome to a workshop that celebrates standing up, considering the past and moving with grit and grace into the future. Let’s see where it leads individually and collectively. 🌟
15 minutes
On your own in Talent LMS

**Introduction to the Workshop**
Lisa Lunt, Attorney Advisor, Training Division, Defender Services Office, Washington, DC
Jennifer Kaplan, CJA Resource Counsel, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington, Seattle, WA
Joan Politeo, Attorney Advisor, Training Division, Defender Services Office, Washington, DC

In videos that you will access in Talent LMS, Lisa, Jennifer, Tamara and Joan—the designers and hosts of Grit—introduce you to the Workshop, share sources of inspiration for the program and outline objectives for each person individually and the group. You will also learn how Talent LMS works and how to navigate through it.

**Legal Legends: Insights and Inspiration from Impactful Women**
Davina Chen, Attorney, Sentencing Resource Counsel, Los Angeles, CA
MiAngel Cody, Executive Director, The Decarceration Collective Law Office and Consultancy, Chicago, IL
Barbara Creel, Professor of Law, Director, Southwest Indian Law Clinic, University of New Mexico School of Law, Albuquerque, NM
The Honorable Marsha Pechman, District Court Judge, Western District of Washington, Seattle, WA
Bobbi Sternheim, Attorney, Law Offices of Bobbi C. Sternheim, New York, NY
Jennifer Kaplan (moderator), CJA Resource Counsel, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington, Seattle, WA

How much energy is generated when you gather five powerhouse women in one room? Join us and find out. We are kicking off this program with a conversation among five legends: pioneering women who have made substantial contributions to our field and to the profile of women in the process. Share in their wide-ranging, personal discussion about their accomplishments, their experiences as women in the law, and their thoughts on advancing our collective interests.
Learning from the Journey
Ebise Bayisa, Senior Attorney, Office of Education and Sentencing Practice, U.S. Sentencing Commission, Washington, DC
Zainab Kahn, Attorney, Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. for the Southern District of California, San Diego, CA
Lenell Nussbaum, Attorney, Law Office of Lenell Nussbaum, PLLC, Seattle, WA
Katherian Roe, Federal Public Defender for the District of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Callie Steele, Senior Litigator, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Central District of California, Los Angeles, CA

Andrea Lyons’s wonderful book, *The Feminine Sixth: Women for the Defense*, inspired this segment. Five women, at different stages of their practices, and with different life stories and career trajectories, will each answer five questions about what attracted them to defense work, what challenges they have overcome, and how being a woman has shaped their practice of law.

Small Group Session I
Participants will share their answers to the same five questions posed in the previous segment and discuss common threads as well as divergent aspects of their journeys. The goal of this discussion is to support each woman in her reflection and commitment to future development.

Race, Women and Powerful Voices
Premal Dharia, Founder & Director, Defender Impact Initiative, Washington, DC
Desiree Lassiter, Assistant Federal Defender, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Maryland, Baltimore, MD
Vanessa Pai-Thompson, Assistant Federal Defender for the Western District of Washington, Seattle, WA
Juval Scott, Federal Public Defender, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
Mia Yamamoto, Attorney, Los Angeles, CA

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor famously attributed her wisdom to her richness of experience as a Latina woman. Indeed, diversity in leadership is a rising tide that lifts all boats. This panel discussion will be a celebration and acknowledgment of the contributions of five diverse female defenders who have pioneered, led, and invigorated. They will discuss achieving equity in leadership at the intersection of race and gender, surviving the spotlight, and mentorship.

90 minutes
Empowering Attorneys to Live and Work as Their Authentic Selves
The Honorable Bernice Bouie Donald, Circuit Court Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, Cincinnati, OH
Andrea George, Executive Director, Federal Defenders of the Eastern District of Washington, Spokane, WA
Susan Lin, Partner, Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg & Lin, Philadelphia, PA
The Honorable Rosemary Marquez, District Court Judge, District of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

“A woman in harmony with her spirit is like a river flowing. She goes where she will without pretense and arrives at her destination prepared to be herself and only herself.” — Maya Angelou.

How do we begin to discover our potential and nurture it? Are we in our own way? This session will explore the journey of four amazing champions of our profession and their journey to realizing their full authentic selves.

Each participant will have an opportunity to complete a strength assessment and will view A Word: Alopecia, Rep. Ayanna Pressley’s video in which she reveals her bald head and talks about identity, vulnerability, authenticity, and public perception.

Small Group Session II
Participants will explore their own journey toward authenticity by completing a strengths assessment. Participants should complete the assessment before the small group session (ideally a day before). In session, we will discuss our strengths, how to lean in to those strengths, embracing vulnerability, and overcoming any fears we might have in
realizing our strengths. Finally, participants will identify three ways they can manifest those strengths in their professional identity.

120 minutes
You Can’t Pour From an Empty Cup; Taking Care of Yourself First
Dr. Debra Austin, JD, PhD, Professor of the Practice, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO

“Self-care is how you take your power back.” — Lalah Delia

Public defense is a profession that inspires great pride and purpose, but it also takes a physical and emotional toll. Practicing may have never been more difficult than today, as we roil in a pandemic. In this fascinating and motivational segment of Grit, you will understand in a deep way the importance of stepping back to take care of yourself.

Dr. Debra Austin has dedicated her career to teaching well-being skills for the effective lawyer. In this session she will focus on the neuroscience of brain health, which together with mental strength, serves to enhance one’s overall performance. Dr. Austin presents a holistic approach to wellness, recognizing that an absence of illness is not the same as being fully well. She will offer specific recommendations for promoting both health and happiness as well as strategies to bolster cognitive well-being and contentment. A segment of her presentation is devoted to those among us who have struggled to maintain an aerobic health routine, one that directly enhances our cognition and well-being.

Participants will have an opportunity to complete self-assessments at various intervals in the process. These tools focus on predispositions which may influence our overall well-being and effective performance. We hope that taking the time for some physiological self-analysis inspires everyone to recommit to self-care.

Small Group Session III
This small group session provides an opportunity for participants to delve more deeply into insights gained from self-assessments on mindset, perfectionism, and stress. In this supportive setting, participants will have an opportunity to discuss experiences on self-care which serve women in the highly stressful work of public defense maintain balance, well-being and cognitive health.

Oct. 29, 2020
2:00 – 3:45 pm PT
105 minutes
Live session

Grit, Grace and Gratitude: Wisdom from Christina Swarns
Christina Swarns, Executive Director, Innocence Project, New York, NY

Christina Swarns’s profound and vast experiences will ground this session. Ms. Swarns has dedicated her entire career to serving others. She has stood
in the gap for the disenfranchised as a former staff attorney for Legal Aid, Assistant Federal Public Defender, Litigation Director for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and head of the Office of the Appellate Defender in New York.

Her successes as lead counsel in some of the United States’ highest profile death penalty cases prompted her to be dubbed the “Lady of the Last Chance” in a 2012 American Bar Association Journal profile. In that vein, Ms. Swarns argued and won *Buck v. Davis*, a Texas death penalty case challenging the introduction of explicitly racially biased evidence at trial. Ms. Swarns is one of only a handful of Black women to have argued before the Nation’s highest court.

Ms. Swarns’s successes are not without a cost. Participants will be able to draw inspiration from Ms. Swarns, who was honored in 2014 as an attorney who makes “significant contributions to the ends of justice at the cost of great personal risk and sacrifice.” Ms. Swarns will share the struggles and triumphs of her journey and the joys she found along the way.

**Closing Remarks / Adjournment**