

EMPLOYMENT

Law Office of the Southern Center for Human Rights, Atlanta, Georgia

Aug. 2020-present Senior Counsel
2015-Aug. 2020 Managing Attorney, Impact Litigation Unit
2007-2015 Senior Attorney
2003-2007 Staff Attorney

- Engage in strategic individual and class action litigation to work toward equality, dignity, and justice for people in the criminal legal system in Georgia and Alabama.
- Extensive experience with class actions, civil rights litigation, and habeas corpus.
- Practice areas include rights of incarcerated people, bail reform, right to counsel, public records litigation, probation and parole, representation of adults with developmental and/or psychiatric disabilities, criminal registration laws.
- Experience supervising and training attorneys, investigators, paralegals, and law students.

Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, Georgia

Lecturer (2021-present)
Adjunct Professor (2020-2021)

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, Georgia

Adjunct Professor (2020-present)

Office of the Appellate Defender, New York, New York

2002-2003 Staff Attorney. Represented indigent persons convicted of felonies in New York City. Briefed and argued cases in the New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division.

Hon. James B. Zagel, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois

2000-2002 Law Clerk

EDUCATION

University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, Michigan

1999 Juris Doctor

University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan

1998 Master of Social Work

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

1996 Bachelor of Arts with departmental honors in comparative literature.

HONORS/PROFILES

Named “Attorney of the Year,” *Fulton County Daily Report* (awarded to the “attorney who in 2019 had the biggest impact on the law or the Georgia legal community or who did the most to advance the cause of justice”), <https://www.law.com/dailyreportonline/2020/06/24/here-are-the-recipients-of-the-georgia-legal-awards/>, June 24, 2020

Recipient of 2020 Legal Legend Award, American Constitution Society, Georgia Lawyer Chapter

Richard Fausset, *Bail Was \$500, Money He Didn't Have. Atlanta Faces Calls for Change*. NY Times, Jan. 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/us/atlanta-bail-courts-reform.html> (profiling work on bail reform in Atlanta)

Emory University School of Law Public Interest Committee (EPIC) Inspiration Award, Unsung Devotion to those Most in Need (2017)

Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Indigent Defense Award (2011)

Fulton County Daily Report, “On the Rise” Georgia Lawyer Under 40 (2006)

PUBLICATIONS

Sarah Geraghty, Keynote Remarks: How the Criminalization of Poverty Has Become Normalized in American Culture and Why You Should Care, MICH. J. OF RACE & LAW (2016)

Sarah Geraghty and Melanie Velez, *Bringing Transparency and Accountability to Criminal Justice Institutions in the South*, 22 STANFORD LAW & POLICY REVIEW 455 (2011)

Sarah Geraghty, *Challenging the Banishment of Registered Sex Offenders from the State of Georgia*, 42 HARVARD CIVIL RIGHTS-CIVIL LIBERTIES LAW REVIEW 513 (2007)

Sarah Geraghty and Miriam Gohara, *Assembly Line Justice: Mississippi's Indigent Defense Crisis*, published by NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (2003)

SIGNIFICANT CASES LITIGATED

- *Jones, et al. v. Hill, et al.*, Civil Action No. 1:20-cv-02791-JPB-CCB (N.D. Ga.) (represent certified class of detainees challenging conditions of confinement related to COVID-19 infections at Clayton County Jail)
- *Georgia Advocacy Office v. Jackson*, Civil Action No. 1:19-cv-1634-WMR-RC (N.D. Ga.) (represent certified class of women with serious mental illness in South Fulton Jail; secured preliminary injunction requiring reforms to benefit women with psychiatric disabilities subjected to solitary confinement and inhumane conditions)
- *Gumm v. Sellers*, Civil Action No. 5:15-cv-41-MTT-CHW (M.D. Ga.) (appointed by federal court to represent prisoner subjected to prolonged solitary confinement; obtained consent

order in January 2019 requiring comprehensive reform of conditions at Special Management Unit at Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison)

- *K.A. v. Sheriff of Worth County*, Civil Action No. 17-cv-00099-LJA (M.D. Ga.) (served as class counsel in litigation brought on behalf of 800 high school students subjected to illegal, invasive bodily search by sheriff’s deputies; class settlement negotiated)
- *Walker v. City of Calhoun*, Case No. 17-13139 (11th Cir. 2018) (represented plaintiff class in class action challenging City of Calhoun’s bail policy, which, at time of filing, permitted incarceration of indigent people unable to pay small bail sums for up to six days)
- *Harrison v. Consolidated Government of Columbus*, Civil Action No. 4:16-cv-329-CDL (M.D. Ga.) (obtained class damages settlement and ordinance repeal for survivors of domestic violence who were charged a “victim fee” if they declined to assist with prosecution and threatened with incarceration for nonpayment of “victim fee”)
- *Adams v. Sentinel Offender Serv., LLC*, No. 1:17-cv-2813-WSD (N.D. Ga.) (served as lead counsel in certified class action challenging unlawful probation supervision fees imposed by private probation company; obtained class damages settlement)
- *Davison v. Nicolou*, Civil Action No. 6:16-cv-39-JRH (S.D. Ga.) (represented the estate of a man who died of sepsis at Georgia State Prison after prison medical personnel failed to treat an infection; negotiated settlement)
- *Luse v. Sentinel Offender Services LLC*, Civil Action No. 2:16-cv-30-RWS (N.D. Ga.) (obtained class damages for persons subjected to private probation company’s policy of requiring people to submit to and pay for drug tests not authorized by any court)
- *Edwards v. Red Hills Community Probation LLC*, Civil Action No. 15-cv-67-LJA (M.D. Ga.) (represented five plaintiffs in a case challenging probation company’s practice of detaining and incarcerating people who could not afford to pay municipal fines and supervision fees; negotiated settlement, including revisions to probation policies secured by consent order)
- *King v. Consolidated Government of Columbus*, Civil Action No. 4:16-cv-372-CDL (M.D. Ga.) (represented plaintiffs in a case challenging the Columbus Recorder’s Court’s failure to provide public court records to citizens; negotiated resolution requiring appropriate reforms) (case removed from state court)
- *SCHR v. Commissioner, Georgia Department of Corrections*, Civil Action No. 2013-cv-229436 (Fulton County Superior Court) (represented Southern Center for Human Rights in litigation against the Department of Corrections for violations of state open records law, including the requirement of a \$250,000 fee to produce a limited number of public documents regarding prison conditions)
- *Jones v. Grady County*, No. 1:13-CV-156-WLS (M.D. Ga.) (served as lead counsel in a class action case challenging court policy of assessing large, unauthorized “administrative costs” on people convicted of misdemeanors; obtained class settlement requiring reimbursement and damages)

- *Miller v. Deal*, Civil Action No. 2011-cv-198121 (Fulton County Superior Court); *Miller v. Deal*, 295 Ga. 504 (2014) (represented class of thousands of indigent Georgia parents facing incarceration, without counsel, for child support debt, in cases prosecuted by State attorneys; Supreme Court ultimately found no categorical right to counsel under these circumstances)
- *Hicks v. Hetzel*, Civil Action No. 2:09-cv-155-WKW (M.D. Ala.) (obtained settlement requiring significant reforms in prison conditions case for men subjected to overcrowding and systemic, excessive violence at Donaldson Correctional Facility)
- *Allen v. Barksdale*, 32 So.3d 1264 (Ala. 2009) (represented prisoner-plaintiffs in this open records act case; Alabama Supreme Court held that prison incident reports regarding deaths and assaults in Alabama prisons are subject to state open records law)
- *Whitaker v. Perdue*, Civil Action No. 06-cv-140-CC (N.D. Ga.) (served as lead counsel for plaintiffs in seven-year, certified class action challenging certain residency, employment, and religious restrictions for persons on the state sex offender registry)
- *Nwakanma v. Clark*, Civil Action No. 4:11-cv-188-HLM (N.D. Ga.) (obtained settlement for Georgia prisoners subjected to excessive force by officers at Hays State Prison)
- *Department of Human Resources v. Hatley*, Civil Action No. 08-cv-171 (Cook County Superior Court) (secured release of indigent man incarcerated for failure to pay child support for a child who was not his son)
- *Barker v. Jones*, Civil Action No. 4:11-cv-188-TMH (M.D. Ala.) (obtained settlement, as court-appointed counsel, for prisoner subjected to excessive force at Bullock Correctional Facility)
- *Reece v. Donald*, Civil Action No. 82-cv-1251-RLV (N.D. Ga.) (represented plaintiff class challenging the high rate of sexual assault in prison housing Georgia’s youngest prisoners)
- *Sentence Review Panel v. Moseley*, 284 Ga. 128 (2008) (represented amicus party/intervenor, a Georgia prisoner whose sentence reduction was eliminated in violation of double jeopardy clause)
- *Thomas v. City of Gulfport*, Civil Action No. 05-cv-349-LG-RHW (S.D. Miss.) (represented plaintiffs in debtors’ prison case alleging systemic, longstanding practice of illegal incarceration for inability to pay municipal fines)
- *Williams v. Clinch County*, Civil Action No. 04-cv-124-HL (M.D. Ga.) (obtained injunctive relief and reimbursements for pre-trial detainees charged unlawful “room and board” for jail stays and threatened with further incarceration for nonpayment)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Volunteer, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Saturday Lawyer Program (represented numerous individuals in need of legal assistance with housing, eviction, and wage-related matters) (2012-2016)
- Volunteer, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Safe and Stable Families Project (represented women experiencing domestic violence who sought temporary protective orders in Fulton County Superior Court) (2014-2015)
- Member, Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS, LECTURES & PANELS

Panelist, Association of Pro Bono Counsel Academy (discussing prison conditions and bail reform) (October 2018)

Panelist, Decriminalizing Race and Poverty Symposium, Georgia State University College of Law (September 2018)

CLE Presentation, “Bail Reform: Coming to a Courtroom Near You,” Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Spring Seminar (April 2018)

Academic Presentation at Symposium, “Misdemeanor Machinery: The Hidden Heart of the American Criminal Justice System,” Boston University School of Law (Nov. 3-4, 2017)

CLE Presentation, “Fines, Fees and the Treatment of Indigent Criminal Defendants,” Institute for City & County Attorneys (Sept. 16, 2016)

Panelist at Academic Conference, “Privatized Probation & Modern Debtors’ Prisons,” Practicing Public Interest Law in the South Conference, Vanderbilt Law School (Sept. 9-10, 2016)

Keynote Speaker, “How the Criminalization of Poverty Has Become Normalized in American Culture and Why You Should Care,” Annual Symposium of the *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* (February 2016)

Panelist, “Jail and Money: Bail Reform, Debtors’ Prisons and Private Probation,” NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc., Annual Civil Rights Training Institute (October 2015)

Panelist (with Leader Stacey Abrams and Georgia Supreme Court Justice Michael Boggs), “Georgia Case Study,” United States Department of Justice Convening on Fines and Fees (December 2015)

CLE Presentation, “Litigating Injunctive Relief,” Institute of Continuing Legal Education in Georgia, Litigating Under 42 USC § 1983, Atlanta, GA (April 2011)

CLE Presentation, “Residence and Employment Restrictions for People on Georgia’s Sex Offender Registry,” Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Seminar, Young Harris, GA (Nov. 7, 2009)

CLE Presentation, “Debtors’ Prison: Shifting the Cost of the Criminal Justice System to the Poor,” Institute of Continuing Legal Education in Georgia, Litigating Under 42 USC § 1983 (Dec. 12, 2008)

Conference Speaker, “Civil and Human Rights of People on the Sex Offender Registry: A Legal Perspective on Banishment, Civil Commitment, and Other Penalties,” Plenary Presentation, 27th Annual Research and Treatment Conference, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (Oct. 23, 2008)

CLE Presentation, “Current Issues in Criminal Justice,” Federal Bar Association Annual Meeting & Convention, Huntsville, AL (Sept. 19, 2008)

CLE Presentation, “Georgia Sex Offender Registry: What You Need to Know,” Seminar, Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (Oct. 11, 2006)

CLE Presentation, “The Prison Litigation Reform Act: Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies as a Pre-Condition of Suit,” Institute of Continuing Legal Education in Georgia, Litigating Under 42 USC § 1983 (Dec. 9, 2005)

BAR MEMBERSHIP

Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, New York