2019 Report

The William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law

Pursuing the Promise

Of full inclusion in the legal profession and equal justice under the law through cutting-edge empirical research
Pursuing the Promise

At the American Bar Foundation (ABF), we are dedicated to expanding knowledge and advancing justice through rigorous empirical and interdisciplinary research on the law, legal institutions, and legal processes. The purpose of the William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law (Neukom Fellows Research Chair) is to advance a diverse legal profession that promotes a more just society, and to help us understand and break down the barriers that women, people of color, people with disabilities, and persons from the LGBTQ community find in practice and before the law.

Thanks to your vision and generosity, the ABF endowed the Neukom Fellows Research Chair in 2014 and welcomed our inaugural Neukom Fellows Research Chair in September 2015. This report highlights the many accomplishments made possible by your support over the past five years. The projects undertaken by the Neukom Fellows Research Chairs are very different in nature, yet they all converge on the fundamental theme of eliminating bias and promoting full participation in our legal system and society for all people. The variety of research projects undertaken by this visiting position supports our broader aim to develop an empirical and interdisciplinary research program that contributes to the academic and practical literature on law and diversity and fosters collaboration among the community of scholars and legal practitioners who are concerned with these issues.

Supporting ABA Goal III: Eliminate Bias and Enhance Diversity

The Neukom Fellows Research Chair directly responds to and supports Goal III of the mission of the American Bar Association.

Goal III Objectives:

1. Promote full equal participation in the association, our profession, and the justice system by all persons
2. Eliminate bias in the legal profession and the justice system


Laura Edwards speaks as a part of a panel on the Fourteenth Amendment, on American Bar Association’s Law Day in May 2017.
Laura F. Edwards
2016–2017 Neukom Fellows Research Chair
Laura F. Edwards, the Peabody Family Professor of History at Duke University, was appointed as the 2016–17 Neukom Fellows Research Chair. Edwards is an award-winning scholar and expert on race, gender, and the law. Her research focuses on how disadvantaged and dependent groups, such as enslaved people, women, and children, used the law in the nineteenth-century U.S. South to empower themselves.

During her time as the Neukom Fellows Research Chair, Edwards completed research for her new book project, Only the Clothes on Her Back: Women, Textiles, and Governance in the Nineteenth-Century United States. She also drafted a book proposal and began writing her book manuscript. Edwards’ book project uncovers a history with broad implications for the way that we understand inequality in the law today.

In addition to working on the book project, Edwards has completed two papers and presented at numerous invited lectures and conferences, including the American Bar Association’s Law Day in May 2017, where she was part of a panel on the Fourteenth Amendment.

Angela Onwuachi-Willig
2017–2018 Neukom Fellows Research Chair
Angela Onwuachi-Willig, Chancellor’s Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law and now Dean of Boston University School of Law, is a leading scholar on issues of educational access, diversity and equality, and Latino-related law and policy.

Moran serves as co-director of the ABF research initiative, The Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility, along with ABF Director Emeritus and MacCrate Research Chair, Robert L. Nelson. The Future of Latinos is a nation-wide, interdisciplinary research initiative devoted to understanding the current condition of Latinos in the United States, the structural barriers that impede full equality and integration for this emerging population, and the sites of intervention that promise to be most impactful in promoting opportunity and mobility through law and policy.

“My year at the ABF has made me a better scholar.”
Laura Edwards

“(Any) list (of accomplishments) … does not really capture the importance of my time there because it fails to express the ways that the ABF’s intellectual community has shaped my work. My year at the ABF has made me a better scholar.”
Laura Edwards

“Weekom Fellowship allowed me to have a very productive year as a scholar. I am very grateful for the opportunity presented to me through this research chair, and I will forever feel honored for being selected as one of the Neukom Fellows Research Chairs.”
Angela Onwuachi-Willig
Her first project was an award winning article titled Trials and Trauma: The Ties Between Till and Trayvon. In the article, she explored the race-based traumas—individual, collective, and cultural—that African Americans have experienced following the high-profile acquittals of defendants who have killed unarmed African Americans. Her second project explored the founding and development of the National Bar Association (NBA), exploring how the five founders of the NBA understood their role as lawyers, and specifically as black lawyers, during that time period.

Devon Carbado
2018–2019 Neukom Fellows Research Chair
Devon Carbado, associate vice chancellor of BruinX for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the honorable Harry Pregerson professor of law at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law, was the 2018-19 William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law. Carbado is a renowned law professor and legal scholar who teaches Constitutional Criminal Procedure, Constitutional Law, Critical Race Theory and Criminal Adjudication at UCLA School of Law.

During his year as Neukom Fellows Chair, Carbado worked on two book projects. The first focuses on race and police violence and is entitled, “The 4th: From Stop and Frisk to Shoot and Kill with One Amendment,” and is under contract with the New Press; the second, entitled, ‘Critical Race Judgments: Rewritten Court Opinions on Race,’ is an edited volume with Bennet Capers, Angela Onwuachi-Willig, and Robin Lenhardt. Under contract with Cambridge University Press, ‘Critical Race Judgments’ is part of a broader effort to reimage past court decisions from a range of scholarly perspectives.

Angela P. Davis
2019–2020 Neukom Fellows Research Chair
Angela P. Harris has been named the American Bar Foundation (ABF) 2019-20 William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law. Harris is a Distinguished Professor of Law and the Boochever and Bird Endowed Chair for the Study and Teaching of Freedom and Equality at the University of California (UC), Davis School of Law. She is a renowned scholar in the field of critical legal theory, examining how law interacts with race, gender, sexuality, class, and other dimensions of power and identity.

During her year as Neukom Chair, Harris will work on a book project entitled The Color of Farming. This project, grounded in law and political economy, will use farming as a site to explore the interactions of state power and market power expressed through law. Through historical investigation and present perspectives from new farmers of color, the book will examine the significance of race law in addition to economic regulation in shaping American farming.

About the American Bar Foundation
The American Bar Foundation expands knowledge and advances justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF produces timely, cutting-edge research of the highest quality to inform and guide the legal profession, the academy, and society in the United States and internationally.

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