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### AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION NAMES BERKELEY PROFESSOR NEUKOM FELLOWS RESEARCH CHAIR IN DIVERSITY AND LAW

CHICAGO, Sept. 14, 2017 — The [American Bar Foundation](http://AmericanBarFoundation.org) has appointed [Angela Onwuachi-Willig](#), the Chancellor's Professor of Law at the [University of California, Berkeley, School of Law](#), as the 2017-18 [William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law](#). Onwuachi-Willig is a renowned scholar of law and inequality whose teaching centers on Employment Discrimination, Evidence, Family Law, Critical Race Theory, and Torts.

Established in 2014, the Neukom Fellows Research Chair leads the ABF's empirical research on law and legal processes relating to issues of diversity and inequality that women, people of color, people with disabilities and persons from the LGBTQ community face in the justice system. It was created to build upon the work of the ABF's [Research Group on Legal Diversity](#), a network of scholars who conduct empirical research on [diversity in the legal profession](#) and institutions of justice, as well as the impact of diversity on legal processes and institutions.



Photo courtesy of Berkeley Law

“Everyone at the ABF is excited to welcome Professor Onwuachi-Willig as our newest Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law,” said ABF Director & Research Professor Ajay K. Mehrotra. “Her work on critical race theory and the law is precisely the type of innovative and influential research on diversity that this chair was designed to support and advance. We are immensely grateful to William Neukom and all the donors for the opportunity to have Professor Onwuachi-Willig join our research community.”

During her year as the Neukom Fellows Chair, Onwuachi-Willig plans to work on two research projects. The first is a book project tentatively titled “Trials and Trauma: The Ties Between Till and Trayvon,” which will examine the race-based traumas that African Americans experience in the wake of high-profile acquittals of defendants who have killed unarmed African Americans. She will approach this research through a legal comparison and analysis of the murders of Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin and the acquittals for those responsible, J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, and George Zimmerman.

Her second project will focus on the founding and development of the [National Bar Association](#), the country's largest network of predominantly African American lawyers and judges, formed in 1925 in Des Moines, Iowa. Her research will explore how the five founders understood their role as black lawyers during that time period, as well as the factors that drove the NBA's development and the challenges the founding members faced in the bar and courtroom.

"I am honored to serve as this year's Neukom Fellows Research Chair, and I thank the ABF and the donors to the Neukom Fellowship for their commitment to supporting the production of knowledge in this critical area of study," said Onwuachi-Willig. "The tragedy in Charlottesville, the recent DACA decision, and the deepening polarization of different racial and ethnic groups in the United States all highlight why continued research is needed on law, legal processes and inequality. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute to the ABF's longstanding tradition of excellent research that advances society toward justice."

Onwuachi-Willig joined the faculty of Berkeley Law in 2016. Prior to this, she was the Charles M. and Marion J. Kierscht Professor of Law at the [University of Iowa College of Law](#) and an assistant professor of law at the [University of California, Davis, King Hall](#). She is the recipient of several prestigious awards including the [Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys](#) and the Iowa Chapter of the National Bar Association's Gertrude Rush Award, the [University of Iowa's](#) 2012 Marion Huit Award, and the [Association of American Law Schools'](#) 2015 Clyde Ferguson and 2006 Derrick A. Bell Awards, given to a senior and junior faculty, respectively, who have made extraordinary contributions to legal education, the legal system or social justice. In 2010, she was elected to the [American Law Institute](#) and selected as a finalist for the Iowa Supreme Court. Onwuachi-Willig was chosen as one of the "50 Law Professors of Color Under 50" by *Lawyers of Color* in 2013 and "Minority 40 Under 40" by the [National Law Journal](#) in 2011.

She writes in a variety of areas including Employment Discrimination, Family Law and Critical Race Theory, and her articles have appeared in several notable publications including the *California Law Review*, the *Georgetown Law Journal*, the *Michigan Law Review*, and the *Yale Law Journal*. She is the author of the 2013 book, "[According to Our Hearts: Rhinelander v. Rhinelander and the Law of the Multiracial Family](#)" (Yale University Press).

Onwuachi-Willig received her doctorate and master's in sociology and African American Studies from [Yale University](#), her J.D. from the [University of Michigan Law School](#), and her bachelor's in American Studies with a concentration in African American Studies from [Grinnell College](#).

### ***About the American Bar Foundation***

*The [American Bar Foundation](#) (ABF) is among the world's leading research institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. An independent, nonprofit organization for more than 60 years, The ABF seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF will produce 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. The ABF's primary funding is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](#) and [The Fellows of The American Bar Foundation](#).*

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