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Contact: Whitney Peterson  
E-mail: [wpeterson@abfn.org](mailto:wpeterson@abfn.org)  
Phone: 312.988.6515  
Fax: 312.988.6579  
Online: [americanbarfoundation.org](http://americanbarfoundation.org)  
Facebook: [American Bar Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanBarFoundation)  
Twitter: [@ABFResearch](https://twitter.com/ABFResearch)

**The American Bar Foundation Welcomes Three New Research Professors**

CHICAGO, Aug. 19, 2019 – The American Bar Foundation (ABF) has appointed three scholars to the position of Research Professor, beginning in Fall 2019. Tera Agyepong, Anna Reosti, and Christopher Schmidt join the other residential ABF Research Professors in serving the legal profession, the academy, and the public through empirical research and programs that advance justice and the understanding of law.

With expertise ranging from inequality in housing to race and juvenile justice to constitutional law and history, the ABF's newest faculty members bring a range of intellectual perspectives to the American Bar Foundation. Professor Reosti will be a fulltime ABF Research Professor, and Professors Agyepong and Schmidt will be joint appointees, a cooperative effort between the ABF and local Chicago universities to leverage their skills as both scholars and educators.

Agyepong is an Assistant Professor of Legal History and African American History at DePaul University. She studies the intersection of race, gender, history, and the law, paying particular attention to how historical processes of constructing race and gender have shaped the evolution of criminal and juvenile justice laws. Last year, she authored the award-winning book, *The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago's Juvenile Justice System, 1899-1945*.

Reosti is a Post-Doctoral Weinberg Fellow in Legal Studies at Northwestern University's Center for Legal Studies. Her scholarship explores law's relation to inequality in the criminal justice and housing settings, and she is currently investigating the consequences of modern background screening practices for rental housing access and discrimination.

Schmidt, who has been an ABF Faculty Fellow since 2011, studies U.S. legal and constitutional history, with a focus on the relationship between intellectual history, social movements, and constitutional change in the twentieth century. He is an Associate Professor of Law, at Chicago-Kent College of Law. In 2018, he authored the book *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era*, which was a finalist for the 2018 David J. Langum, Sr. Prize in American Legal History.

"It is a great pleasure to welcome these three outstanding scholars to our community of ABF Research Professors," said ABF Executive Director Ajay K. Mehrotra. "Each of

them will help us build on research strengths and broaden our scholarly profile at the ABF.”

### ***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. 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](#).*

### ***About the ABF’s New Research Professors:***

#### **Tera Agyepong**

Tera Agyepong is an Assistant Professor of Legal History and African American History at DePaul University. In addition to being awarded the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences’ first endowed professorship in 2016, she founded and directs a new program in legal history. She received a J.D./Ph.D. from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and the Department of African American Studies after earning a B.A. and graduating with honors from Stanford University.

Her scholarly interests lay at the intersection of race, gender, history, and the law. She pays particular attention to how historical processes of constructing race and gender have shaped the evolution of criminal and juvenile justice laws. Her first book, *The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago’s Juvenile Justice System, 1899-1945* (University of North Carolina Press), was awarded the Society for the History of Childhood and Youth’s 2018 Grace Abbott Book Prize. She has also authored book chapters and articles in scholarly venues like *Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights*, *Journal of African American History*, and *Gender and History*.

#### **Anna Reosti**

Anna Reosti is a Post-Doctoral Weinberg Fellow in Legal Studies at Northwestern University’s Center for Legal Studies. Her scholarship explores law’s relation to inequality in the criminal justice and housing settings. Her current research investigates the consequences of modern background screening practices for rental housing access and discrimination, as well as the capacity of local innovations in fair housing law to

improve housing outcomes for renters with criminal convictions, evictions, and other stigmatizing background records. She received her Ph.D in Sociology from the University of Washington in Seattle in 2018, and originally hails from Detroit, Michigan.

### **Christopher Schmidt**

Christopher Schmidt researches U.S. legal and constitutional history, with a focus on the relationship between intellectual history, social movements, and constitutional change in the twentieth century. He is an Associate Professor of Law, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and Co-Director of the Institute on the Supreme Court of the United States at Chicago-Kent College of Law. He has also served as the editor of the ABF's *Law & Social Inquiry* since 2013. He has published in leading law reviews and peer-review journals; his article "Divided by Law: The Sit-Ins and the Role of the Courts in the Civil Rights Movement" (*Law and History Review*, 2015) won the 2014 Association of American Law Schools' Scholarly Papers Competition and the 2016 American Society for Legal History Surrency Prize.

Professor Schmidt is the author of *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era* (University of Chicago Press, 2018). He is currently completing a new book project, *Civil Rights: An American History*, which examines how Americans have struggled over the meaning of civil rights from the Civil War through today.

He holds a Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.