

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UH Law Center and SMU Dedman School of Law Host Black Lawyers Matter Conference 2020

HOUSTON - Oct. 7, 2020 – Lawmakers, leaders in legal education, and legal professionals serving in a variety of roles will gather for a day-long virtual symposium titled, “Black Lawyers Matter: Strategies to Enhance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.” The event will be held via Zoom on Oct. 30. Co-conveners are the University of Houston Law Center and SMU Dedman School of Law.

The event's opening speaker will be U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of the 18th Congressional District of Texas. Topics throughout the conference include increasing Black enrollment in law schools; the role of historically Black law schools; the LSAT, socioeconomics and *U.S. News & World Report*; hiring for firms and corporate positions; and increasing diversity in law faculty hiring, the judiciary and judicial clerkships.

“I am delighted to co-convene this important conference with my friend and colleague Dean Jennifer Collins of SMU Dedman School of Law,” said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. “Although the legal profession has made much progress in diversity and inclusion, there is still significant underrepresentation of African American lawyers in every aspect — students, faculty, judges, law clerks and lawyers, especially those working as prosecutors and in corporate law firms. This conference is designed to provide strategies to improve this representation.”

“It has been such an honor to work on this critically important endeavor with Dean Leonard Baynes and the wonderful team at the University of Houston Law Center,” added SMU Dedman School of Law Dean Jennifer Collins. “We have so much work to do as a profession, and we hope this conference will provide participants with concrete strategies and takeaways to increase access and equity in every aspect of our work.”

The Bracewell LLP Distinguished Lecture in Racial and Social Justice Keynote Speaker is David B. Wilkins, the Lester Kissel Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, Vice Dean for Global Initiatives on the Legal Profession, Faculty Director of the Center on the Legal Profession and the Center for Lawyers and the Professional Services Industry.

“Bracewell is proud to sponsor the Black Lawyers Matter conference and the inaugural Bracewell LLP Lecture in Racial and Social Justice,” said Bracewell Managing Partner Gregory M. Bopp. “This important conference is an opportunity for our profession to hear and learn from each other about the ways we can work together to increase the representation of Black lawyers in the legal profession.”

The Zoom webinar is sponsored by Law School Admission Council.

For questions about the event, please email Sondra Tennessee, UH Law Center Associate Dean of Alumni and Community Relations, at stennessee@uh.edu.

[Click here for more information, including how to register.](#)

[Click here for an agenda and complete list of speakers.](#)

UHLC media contacts: Carrie Anna Criado, UH Law Center Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-2184, cacriado@central.uh.edu; Elena Hawthorne, Assistant Director of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-1125, ehawthor@central.uh.edu; and John Brannen, Media Relations Rep, 713-743-3055, jtbranne@central.uh.edu.

SMU Dedman School of Law media contact: Lynn Dempsey, Director of External Relations, 214-768-8617, ldempsey@smu.edu.

About the University of Houston

The [University of Houston](#) is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian-American-Serving institution with enrollment of more than 46,000 students.

About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) (UHLC) is a dynamic, top tier law school located in the nation's 4th largest city. UHLC's Health Law, and Intellectual Property Law programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. Its awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 11 centers and institutes which fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

About Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law

The School of Law at SMU was founded in 1925. It was named Dedman School of Law in 2001 in honor of Dallas benefactors Nancy and Robert H. Dedman, Sr., and their family. SMU Dedman Law enjoys a national and international reputation of distinction. It is among the most competitive law schools in the country for admission, as well as one of the most successful in the placement of its graduates.

About SMU

SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in eight degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, communities and the world.