

University of Houston Law Center to feature Reginald Dwayne Betts as Black History Month Speaker

Criminal justice reform advocate explores prison experience through poetry

Feb. 06, 2023 — Award-winning author, poet and lawyer Reginald Dwayne Betts will give a solo performance on Thursday, Feb. 16, in celebration of Black History Month at the University of Houston Law Center.

As part of the Bracewell LLP Distinguished Lecture in Racial and Social Justice, Betts will present “Felon: An American Washi Tale,” which combines traditional theater, poetry, fine art and Japanese paper-making. The piece is a theatrical version of a collection of poetry titled “Felon,” which won the 2020 American Book Award.

Formerly incarcerated, Betts transformed himself from a 16-year-old sentenced to nine years in prison to a critically acclaimed writer and Yale Law School graduate.

He holds a B.A. from the University of Maryland; an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College; and a J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was awarded the Israel H. Perez Prize for best student note or comment appearing in the Yale Law Journal. He is a Ph.D. in Law candidate at Yale and, as a Liman Fellow, he spent a year representing clients in the New Haven Public Defender’s Office. In 2020, he founded Freedom Reads, a non-profit organization that opens libraries in prisons.

Betts was also one of 25 selected for the 2021 MacArthur Fellowship — a prestigious honor, also known as a genius grant, that awards exceptionally talented and creative individuals with a significant, unrestricted grant.

“Bracewell is proud to partner with the University of Houston Law Center in bringing this timely and innovative presentation to the campus and greater Houston community,” said Bracewell Managing Partner Gregory M. Bopp.

The event is co-sponsored by Bracewell LLP, the University of Houston Law Center and the University of Houston College of Education. Attendees will receive one hour of Texas continuing legal education credit.

The presentation will be in-person on Thursday, Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m. Central at the University of Houston Law Center, 4170 Martin Luther King Blvd. Attendees may also join virtually. Participating attorneys will receive one hour of Texas continuing legal education credit.

For more information on this speaker please visit: www.simonspeakers.com

[Click here to register.](#)

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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, Intellectual Property Law, and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It 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 15 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 the University of Houston College of Education

As part of a Carnegie-designated Tier One research institution in one of the nation's largest and most diverse cities, the [University of Houston College of Education](#) works to improve educational and health outcomes for all children and families. The college prepares teachers, school leaders, health specialists, counselors, psychologists, higher education professionals, researchers and other change agents. With a commitment to equity, belonging and success, the college serves more than 3,500 students in undergraduate and graduate programs that have earned national recognition and accolades.

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 47,000 students.