

Onondaga County Bar Association and Syracuse University College of Law Announce the Bond Schoeneck & King Series on Race & Justice in CNY



The Onondaga County Bar Association (OCBA) in partnership with the Syracuse University College of Law (SUCOL) announces the **Bond Schoeneck & King Series on Race & Justice in CNY**, a full year of legal and non-legal programming aimed at opening a respectful, constructive, and healthy dialogue about systemic racism and unequal access to justice in our community.

“As lawyers, we are responsible to uphold the rule of law and the rights to equal protection and due process for all. By creating this year-long series of programs, the Bar Association, together with Syracuse University’s College of Law, will lead the effort to identify and remove the forces in our legal systems that oppress and marginalize people of color right here in our CNY community,” said OCBA President Paula M. Engel, Esq.

The Race & Justice in CNY program offers a variety of events throughout 2020-21, energizing participants toward an understanding about each other – together and apart – as a unified community desirous of “Liberty and Justice for All.” The focus on engaging a broad cross-section of our neighbors via multiple platforms goes beyond simply raising awareness of the racial issues felt by Onondaga County citizens, to brainstorm the question “Now, what?” – We want to provide the answer: The specific actions we can take, individually and as a community, to move reform forward.

Professor and Director of the Cold Case Justice Initiative at the Syracuse University College of Law, Professor Paula C. Johnson, Esq. said, “This project is important on a broad scale because we want to include the many voices across our community who have interest, experience, or solutions to racial justice issues in law enforcement and across all institutions. We are all stakeholders in addressing these problems.”

(continued next page)

Race and Justice in CNY -- continued

“Important results from the project will include greater knowledge, understanding, and accountability by public officials to the communities they serve,” Johnson continued. “We also want to foster greater awareness by the public regarding legal and governmental systems, how they work and how they should be responsive to the needs of diverse communities.”

Johnson added, “We think the partnership between the Bar Association and law school is important because as lawyers and those who educate lawyers, we are particularly responsible for ensuring the equal justice and democratic principles of our society. Every lawyer serves the public interest, and must be competent to address racial justice concerns in our communities and society. We are all affected by racial injustice and must be vigilant in its removal.”

This important effort is made possible by the generosity of presenting sponsor **Bond Schoeneck & King, PLLC**.

“Within Bond we acknowledge hundreds of years of the systemic, dehumanizing racism that permeates the very foundation of this country,” said Kevin Bernstein, chair of the Bond, Schoeneck & King management committee. “We are committed to listening and learning. We are committed to action by working to promote anti-racism initiatives and intentional diversity throughout our communities, the legal profession and our firm. Sponsoring the OCBA Race & Justice in CNY initiative provides us the opportunity to support our community and to continue learning ourselves. It is one way we can play a part in eradicating the scourge of racism to build stronger, inclusive communities where we live and work,” Bernstein added.

List of Events Currently in the Series (more to come)

Part I: The Community Book Read of “Just Mercy” – presented by Mackenzie Hughes, LLP

Online, Facilitated Book Discussion via Zoom – 10 weeks

6 to 7:30 p.m. Mondays, September 14 – November 23 (except Sept. 28, in observance of Yom Kippur)

Community members will read attorney and activist Bryan Stevenson’s New York Times bestseller “Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption.” There is a published schedule for chapters to be read each week, but people don’t have to read the entire book in advance to participate in the weekly discussions to be hosted on the Zoom platform. Weekly questions and discussion topics will be shared with the participants, and Zoom-based discussions will be facilitated by community leaders. To sign up for the Community Book Read, click [here](#).

Mackenzie Hughes Managing Partner Anne Ruffer said, “Mackenzie Hughes is a 140-year-old Syracuse-based law firm that is dedicated to racial justice including the fair treatment of everyone, regardless of race, gender, religion, language, culture, ethnicity, ability and orientation. We are proud to sponsor the “Just Mercy” Community Book Read. We are confident that the program will succeed in exploring ways in which prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination may be addressed and diminished,” she concluded.

(continued next page)

Race and Justice in CNY -- continued

With generous sponsors, including **The Lynn Law Firm** and the **CNY Women's Bar Association**, we are able to distribute free copies of this book to those who need one, through our collaboration with the Onondaga County Public Library and the Syracuse Central School District.

Part II: Continuing Legal Education seminars on legislative reforms addressing racial injustice in our legal systems, adopted or proposed, and historical context. (Fall 2020 – Spring 2021)

Part III: Taking the INSIDE BASEBALL, OUT of Your Government: A three-part series addressing for each community resident everything they need to know about our local governments (City, County, and State). Topics covered will include: What are specific departments responsible to do? Who is in charge? How can I advocate for a position: Open Meetings Law, FOIL requests, legislative hearings, etc. (First session will focus on Syracuse City Government, date tbd, sponsored by **Smith Sovik**; others to run through spring of 2021.)

Part IV: Addressing Racial Injustice in Every Practice of Law: Specific programs will be targeted to legal systems in criminal justice, family law, trusts and estates, real estate, e.g., that discuss racial injustice and disparities in those particular areas of the law. (Spring 2021)

Champion of the Law Award in the Field of Civil Rights: OCBA will award its first-ever “**Champion of the Law Award**” recognizing an attorney in a specific practice area for their notable achievement in advancing the rule of law and/or administration of justice. This honor is intended to be annually awarded in a different legal arena, beginning in 2020 with the Civil Rights Champion of the Law.

Collaborators

This project is made possible by the helpful hands and great ideas of the following collaborators: The Syracuse Central School District, Onondaga County Public Library System, Onondaga County District Attorney's Office, Legal Services of Central New York, Center for Court Innovation, William H. Johnson Bar Association, and the City of Syracuse – Mayor's Office.

Presenting Sponsor: **Bond Schoeneck & King, PLLC**

Community Book Read Sponsor: **Mackenzie Hughes, LLP**

Book Underwriter: **The Lynn Law Firm**

Additional Sponsors:

The Sugarman Law Firm

Smith Sovik Kendrick & Sugnet, P.C.

CNY-Women's Bar Association

CCB Law / Cohen Compagni Beckman Appler & Knoll, PLLC.

Buy a Book / Pick Up a Book

Buy Bryan Stevenson's book “Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption” via an Amazon.com wish list. Donate one to a community member while you're at it. Click [here](#) to order a book today.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, complimentary copies of the book are available for pick-up at the downtown (S. Salina Street) Central Library location of the Onondaga County Public Library, Monday-Saturday, 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.



The Bond, Schoeneck & King Series on
Race and Justice in CNY (2020-2021)

Syracuse
University
**COLLEGE
OF LAW**

**THE COMMUNITY
BOOK READ**



**JUST
MERCY**



Thank you to our
sponsors:
Lynn Law Firm
CCB Law
Sugarman Law Firm
Smith, Sovik, Kendrick
& Sugnet
CNY Women's Bar
Association

BY BRYAN STEVENSON

Register at:
[www.onbar.org/
race-justice-in-
central-new-york](http://www.onbar.org/race-justice-in-central-new-york)

PRESENTED BY MACKENZIE HUGHES, LLP

**READ THE BOOK ON YOUR OWN;
ZOOM DISCUSSION ON MONDAYS**



**SEPT. 14 - NOV. 23, 2020
6PM - 7:30PM**



REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

**"JUST MERCY" IS AVAILABLE AT MAJOR BOOKSELLERS. COMPLIMENTARY
BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE BASED ON NEED THROUGH GENEROUS DONATIONS
FROM OUR SPONSORS**

