

ROOTS & REALITY II: HIP HOP, LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZING

Presented by:

American Constitution Society WCL Chapter, Students United,
National Lawyers' Guild WCL Chapter,
Criminal Law Society &
HBO's Division of Corporate Social Responsibility

Co-sponsors:

The Modern American, Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project, *Journal on Gender, Social Policy, and the Law*, Lambda Law Society, & DC National Lawyers' Guild and American Constitution Society National Chapter

April 13

10:00 am – 6:30 pm

American University Washington College of Law
4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Room 603

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Hip Hop's influence on culture and law is undeniable. For well over forty years, hip hop has informed and been informed by laws and policies affecting its artists, consumers and constituents. In recent years, hip hop has taken front stage as an organizing tool – from the Fugees' hit, *Ready or Not* and will.i.am's remix of a campaign speech by President Barak Obama to issues related to Hurricane Katrina, Jena 6 and the youth led uprisings around the world - organizers are either closely connected to or identify as members of the hip hop nation. This symposium will explore the experiences and issues at the intersection of law, organizing, social justice, identity, legal theory, and hip hop music and culture. The symposium and related activities are a part of the *Roots and Reality SJP (Social Justice Project)* is a collective of activists, lawyers, artists, law professors, law students, policy makers from the public and private sectors, advocates and scholars committed to exploring the relationship between public interest law, public interest lawyers and "the public" they serve.

- 9:30 – 9:55 **Check in and Breakfast**
- 10:00-10:05 **Welcome** **Pamela D. Bridgewater**, Professor of Law, WCL, resident blogger/co-creator, hiphoplw.com and member, *Roots & Reality: Activism, Law and Organizing Project*
- 10:10-10:20 **Opening Address** by **andré douglas pond cummings**, Professor of Law, West Virginia University College of Law; editor, *Evolution of Street Knowledge: Hip Hop Law Anthology* and co-creator, hiphoplw.com
- 10:25 – 10:30 **Presentation** **“All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV” Slam! Winners***
Dennis Williams, Director, H.B.O. Division of Corporate Social Responsibility
- 10:35 – 11:35 **Law(lessness) and (In)Justice in Hip Hop Music and Culture**
Rosa Clemente, Hip Hop Activist, Former Candidate for Vice President (Green Party '08)
Rev. Yearwood, CEO, Hip Hop Political Caucus, community activist and political organizer around union issues, voting rights
Mora Namdar, 3L WCL, activist and organizer on issues and youth movements related to political and human rights in Iran; founder and Editor-in-Chief of AU National Security Law Brief

11:40-11:45 **Performance** - 3rd Place Winner ‘All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV Slam! *

11:50-12:35 **Keynote Presentation, *Paul Butler***, Dean & Professor of Law, GW Law
Author, *Let’s Get Free: A Hip Hop Theory of Justice*

12:40 – 1:55 **Lunch and Film Screening**
Beyond Beats and Rhymes, the documentary film by Byron Hurt, exploring homophobia, consumerism & sexism in hip hop music and culture

2:00 – 2:05 **Performance** - 2nd Place Winner ‘All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV Slam! *

2:10 – 3:30 **Hip Hop Legal Theory: Hip Hop in the Law School Classroom**
Moderator: *Michael Faithful*, Roots II Student Committee Co-Chair
Camille Nelson, Dean and Professor of Law, Suffolk University Law School
Anthony Farley, James Campbell Matthews Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence, Albany Law School, resident blogger – hiphoplaw.com
Nick Sciullo, Adjunct Professor, National Univ., resident blogger/co-founder hiphoplaw.com
Donald Tibbs, Professor of Law, Drexel University School of Law

3:35 - 3:40 **Performance** 1st Place Winner of ‘All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV Slam!*

3:45 – 5:00 **“On to the Next” Roundtable - Topic: Hip Hop in the Grassroots: Art, Politics Organizing and Activism**

Mazi Mutafa, Executive Director, Words Beats and Life, Inc.

1st place winner, ‘All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV *

Skim, activist, hip hop/spoken word artist

Head Roc, hip hop artist, activist, advocate for DC Statehood/Green Party and DC City Paper Columnist

Jemar Daniel, WCL ’10, former BET intern

5:00 – 5:10 **Closing Comments**
Kate Kelly, Roots II Student Planning Committee Co-Chair

5:10 – 6:30 **Reception and Keynote Address**
“Social Justice Organizing and Mentoring in the Juvenile Justice System” by R. Duane Betts, National Spokesperson for Campaign for Youth, 2010 Soros Justice Fellow, Cave Canem Fellow, 2010 Winner of NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Debut for his memoir, *A Question of Freedom*

* **“All of the Lights’: Life and Law in the DMV”**

A hip hop/spoken word slam! & open mic

DC area artists ages 14-19

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April 12, 7-9 pm

@ Bus Boys and Poets

1025 5th & K Street, Washington, DC

www.busboysandpoets.com

General registration is free but required. Please register by going to www.wcl.american.edu/secle/registration. CLE Accreditation (3 credits) will be applied for – registration fee is \$55. For further information, please contact: Office of Special Events & Continuing Legal Education, American University Washington College of Law. Phone: 202.274.4075; Fax: 202.274.4079; or secle@wcl.american.edu