



BLACK HAIR, BIG LAW SYMPOSIUM

**BLACK HAIR
BIG LAW**



The Black Hair Big Law Symposium

“Is natural black hair compatible with working in big law?”

Thursday October 27, 2022

Sponsored by the Black Law Students Association

Antonin Scalia Law School

George Mason University

Arlington, Virginia

3301 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, Virginia 22201

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Lunch and learn with food served from 12:00

<http://blackhairbiglaw.com>

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An Introduction from BLSA President Bianca Hancock-Siggers

About our BLSA

The [Black Law Students Association](#) (BLSA) works to provide a solid academic and social support system for its members. BLSA sponsors many community service activities, including the Adopt-A-School Program, voter registration programs, blood drives, and law clinics. George Mason University's BLSA was chartered in 1986 with a twofold purpose: to meet the needs of a fast-growing African American student population at the newly formed law school, and to serve as a community service vehicle to meet the needs of the surrounding community in Arlington.



Part of GMU BLSA's vision for the organization is to conduct regular meetings and bring in notable guest speakers to discuss navigating the field of law as diverse and minority students. Today, GMU is firmly ranked as a top tier law school and has established itself as one of the premier law schools in the greater Washington, D.C. area. Similarly, GMU's BLSA has grown in numbers, scope of vision and stature. In spite of the increased number, GMU is proud of the close familial relationship between its members.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to BLSA. [Click here to donate.](#)
https://secure.touchnet.com/C20788_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2237&SINGLESTORE=true

About our Symposium

The attempt to conform to an aesthetic that I cannot naturally achieve is exhausting and overwhelming. Tension seems to exist between natural black hair and professionalism in the legal industry. To be truly inclusive, the legal profession must recognize that Black hair, in its natural state, is professional. I am no stranger to the self-doubt that comes along with wearing natural hair and protective styles in a professional environment. I am also not immune to the stares and the difference in treatment I receive based on my hairstyles. I often sat in my law school classes wondering are my cornrows professional? When I schedule interviews I make sure that I have my hair pressed or use extensions to achieve the “look” others consider professional. I hope to one day be accepted as my authentic self in an industry that I am so passionate about.

About Bianca

Bianca is a third-year evening student from Indianapolis, Indiana. She earned a BME from Jackson State University and a M.Ed. from Belhaven University. Bianca is a music teacher with special education and reading certifications. Upon graduation, she intends to pursue a career in juvenile justice and hopes to improve the lives of at-risk children and children with disabilities. Her other interests are civil rights, criminal law, employment law, and family law. Bianca is a NOVABAA student member, a member of George Mason's Inn of Court, and is the Senior Notes Editor for GMU's National Security Law Journal. She is a wife and a mother to a two-year-old daughter.

Black Hair Big Law Symposium Introduction

October 27, 2022

As we celebrate Black History Month in the United Kingdom, I'm reminded that pulling together this event has been a monumental effort by so many people. I wasn't even sure it was possible; especially since I'm at the tail end of completing my law degree.

Amazingly, it's all come together and we have some fantastic speakers; some of the brightest minds worldwide.

I had the kernel of this idea of a symposium when Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was nominated to the Supreme court. I was fascinated by her; not only by her academics and jurisprudence, but the asthenic of a black woman with sisterlocs sitting on the Supreme Court just blew my mind.

Ultimately, I had an intense curiosity as to how other black lawyers wear their hair? And why isn't anyone else talking about this? Many states have enacted the CROWN act. The real question here is: Are law firms, as employers, steadfastly supporting the CROWN act and not just paying lip service to it? That's what I wanted to know. That's the conversation I want to have.

Thank you for coming and I hope you enjoy today's speakers.

Angela Mackie-Rutledge
LLM Candidate, George Mason University

Program Agenda

| Time | Presentation | More info |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 10:45 AM | Prelude "Rooted Judge Amber Givens" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rkedz12GMEw | More info |
| 11:00 AM 11:01 AM 11:02 AM 11:03 AM | Opening Statements BLSA President Bianca Hancock-Siggers BLSA Programming Chair, Angela Mackie-Rutledge "Wearing natural hair in big law" Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCcpdvKkU24 In a feature by Law360, Cooley attorney Rachel Boyce and three other women in the legal industry share their experiences and perspectives about what it means to be a Black woman in Big Law wearing natural hair. | More info |
| 11:08 AM | Deborah Enix-Ross President of the American Bar Association and member of the Deboise & Plimpton LLP Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council, Ms. Enix-Ross untangles implicit bias, one strand at a time. | More info |
| 11:16 AM | Umar Kankiya <i>Can you really be your authentic self at the law firm?</i> Solicitor Umar Kankiya shares his experiences in English law and on the mental health aspects of not being your true self at work. | More info |
| 11:24 AM | Professors Broussard & Page Policing our bodies: The Expectations and Professionalism of Black Hair in Law: A Conversation with Professors Patricia Broussard and Shelly Page | More info |
| 11:32 AM | Rachel Antoinette Boyce As featured in the Law 360 video, Rachel speaks about her experience in law with a natural style. | More info |
| 11:40 AM | The Honorable Turkessa Rollins A guided Q&A session about black hair and working in the judiciary. | More info |
| 11:50 AM | Karis Stephen <i>"Why I Choose to Wear Braids to the Workplace Every Day Despite the Fear of Criticism"</i> | More info |
| 12:00 PM | **FIVE MINUTE BREAK** 100 Black TV and Film Lawyers - video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqFLJbntnTY | More info |
| 12:05 PM | Angela Mackie-Rutledge Research results from the Black Hair Legal Professionals Survey Thoughts on 100 Black TV and Film lawyers | More info |
| 12:15 PM | Binta P. Mamadou Attorney and founder of Vision Braid Bar, Binta shares her unique perspective on natural hair, working in law and black hair trends | More info |
| 12:25 PM | Desireé H. Langley Desireé shares her experience and decision points on how she wore her hair when entering the workforce. | More info |
| 12:35 PM | Professor Wendy Greene <i>The C.R.O.W.N. Act: The legal impetus for legislation</i> | More info |
| 12:50 PM | Professor Leslie Thomas, KC <i>"Why my barrister's wig is culturally insensitive."</i> | More info |
| 12:58 PM | Closing Statements | |
| 1:00 PM | End | |

List of Speakers

(in order of alphabetical)

1. Rachel Antoinette Boyce, Associate, Cooley, LLP
2. Patricia Broussard, Professor, FAMU
3. Deborah Enix-Ross, President, American Bar Association
4. Wendy Greene, Professor
5. Desiree H. Langley, Associate Jackson Lewis, P.C.
6. Umar Kankiya, Solicitor (United Kingdom)
7. Angela Mackie-Rutledge, LLM Candidate, George Mason University
8. Binta P. Mamadou, Associate, Allen and Overy and founder of [Visions Braid Bar](#)
9. Shelly Page, Professor, Southern Illinois University
10. Turkessa Rollins, Judge, General District Court
11. Karis Stephen, 3L, University of Pennsylvania
12. Leslie Thomas, Author, Barrister and Professor (United Kingdom)

Rachel Antoinette Boyce

Rachel Boyce is a transactional attorney focusing her practice on financings, acquisitions, joint ventures, purchases and sales, corporate reorganizations, and commercial leasing. She also works on project finance, debt finance, general corporate matters and advises clients in PropTech.

Prior to entering private practice, Ms. Boyce worked at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington D.C., where she focused on financing projects, rural development and property rights; and has co-authored several publications on those areas. Ms. Boyce also advised government ministers and other officials in Latin America and the Caribbean on project finance and projects centered on promoting economic growth.



Ms. Boyce is an advocate for diversity and equity. She provides pro bono assistance to minority owned/founded tech startups and defends underrepresented minorities facing eviction. Rachel is an active participant in the California Minority Counsel Program and the Bar Association of San Francisco. While a student at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, Rachel volunteered at the East Bay Community Law Center and the Berkeley Immigration Group.

Rachel currently sits on multiple non profit boards including the Child Care Law Center and the BayGanda Foundation.

In her free time, Rachel explores the authenticity of the world, seeks out new hiking trails, engages in philanthropic activities and indulges in everything Caribbean!

In a feature by Law360, Cooley lawyer Rachel Boyce and three other women in the legal industry share their experiences and perspectives about what it means to be a Black woman in Big Law wearing natural hair.

Patricia Broussard

(She/Her/Queen)

Professor of Law, FAMU

Professor Patricia Broussard joined the faculty of Florida A&M University College of Law after teaching at Howard University School of Law for seven years. She teaches Constitutional Law I and II, First Amendment, Advance Appellate Advocacy, and Advance Topics on Women and the Law. Professor Broussard began her legal career clerking for the Honorable George W. Mitchell of the District of Columbia Superior Court. She writes in the area of Human Rights with a specialty focus on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).



She is committed to service and while at Howard received the Warren Rosmarin Award for outstanding teaching and service. She regularly coaches moot court and client counseling teams and serves as a commissioner for the City of Orlando Mayor's Martin Luther King Commission. She developed and implemented an annual neighborhood service project entitled "Clean- Up Parramore Day" for the law school. She is a four time recipient of the Percy Luney Spirit of Service Award and a five time recipient of Professor of the year. Professor Broussard believes that the success of her students is her greatest accomplishment in academia.

Professor Broussard has a J.D., cum laude, from Howard University School of Law and a B.S. degree from Northwestern University.

Deborah Enix-Ross



Deborah Enix-Ross, a senior adviser to the International Dispute Resolution Group of Debevoise & Plimpton in New York City, is president of the American Bar Association, the world's largest voluntary association of lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals.

Enix-Ross served as chair of the ABA's policymaking House of Delegates and as chair of the ABA Center for Human Rights. As chair of the ABA International Law Section, she co-founded the Women's Interest Network and worked with the International Bar Association to create its Women's Interest Group. She also led an international legal exchange delegation to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, where she delivered an address commemorating the country's 50th anniversary of

independence.

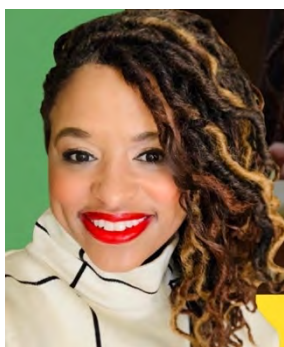
Enix-Ross is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation and has served as vice president of the World Justice Project, chair of the ABA Section Officers Conference, vice chair of the International Bar Association's Bar Issues Commission, and ABA representative to the IBA. She is a member of the American Law Institute.

Enix-Ross joined Debevoise & Plimpton in 2002. Previously, she served as senior legal officer with the World Intellectual Property Organization Arbitration and Mediation Center in Geneva, Switzerland. She also was a director of international litigation with Price Waterhouse and the American representative to the International Chamber of Commerce International Court of Arbitration. She started her legal career with MFY Legal Services in New York City.

Enix-Ross was appointed by the U.S. Departments of Commerce and State as one of the original eight U.S. members of the trilateral NAFTA Advisory Committee on Private Commercial Disputes. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the New York Law School Alternative Dispute Resolution Skills Program. She is also a former member of the advisory board of the Institute for Transnational Arbitration, the ADR Advisory Board of the International Law Institute, and the Board of Directors of the American Arbitration Association.

Enix-Ross earned a B.A. in broadcast journalism from the University of Miami and J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law. She also received a diploma in comparative law from the Parker School of Foreign and Comparative Law of Columbia University and a certificate in international law from the London School of Economics.

Professor Wendy Greene



The daughter of American civil rights activists, Doris “Wendy” Greene is a trailblazing U.S. anti-discrimination law scholar, teacher, and advocate who has devoted her professional life’s work to advancing racial, color, and gender equity in workplaces and beyond. The first tenured African American woman law professor at Drexel University Kline School of Law, Professor Greene’s legal scholarship and public advocacy have generated civil rights protections for victims of discrimination throughout the United States. Through her award-winning publications and activism, Professor Greene crafted a legal blueprint for historic civil rights legislation known as the C.R.O.W.N. Acts, which has also shaped the enforcement stance of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), federal courts, administrative law judges, and civil and human rights organizations in race discrimination cases involving discrimination African descendants endure when donning natural hairstyles.

[Teen Vogue](#), [Now This News](#), and [BBC News](#) have celebrated Professor Greene for her pioneering role in increasing public awareness around as well as securing legal redress for what she has coined as “grooming codes discrimination.” From serving as a legal advisor and expert in [civil rights cases](#) challenging race-based natural hair discrimination, co-drafting and advising on nearly 20 pieces of civil rights legislation including the federal and California C.R.O.W.N. Acts, [testifying in support of this legislation](#) across the nation, delivering public lectures around the world, to publishing seminal legal scholarship, Professor Greene’s advocacy has informed every key legal pronouncement throughout the United States that discrimination African descendants systematically encounter on the basis of their natural hairstyles is race discrimination. One of the nation’s leading legal experts on this global civil rights issue and founder of the [#FreeTheHair movement](#), she is currently writing her first book, [#FreeTheHair: Locking Black Hair to Civil Rights Movements](#), under contract with the University of California, Berkeley Press.

A native of Columbia, South Carolina, Professor Greene is a graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana (B.A. *cum laude* with Honors in English and a double-minor in African American Studies and Spanish); Tulane University School of Law (J.D.); and The George Washington University School of Law (LL.M.). Professor Greene also currently serves as the Director of the Center for Law, Policy, and Social Action at Drexel University's Kline School of Law.

| Publication / Media / Event | Event |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website for Professor Greene's #FreeTheHair movement and advocacy efforts: | www.freethehair.com |
| Media | |
| "Because Advocacy Can't Wait" Drexel University commercial featuring Professor Wendy Greene's scholarly activism to combat grooming codes discrimination: | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWH0LYkJ8ZA |
| PBS News Hour, How Hair Discrimination Impacts Black Americans in Their Personal Lives and the Workplace, | https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-hair-discrimination-impacts-black-americans-in-their-personal-lives-and-the-workplace |
| BBC segment, The Tangled History of Black Hair Discrimination in the US | https://youtu.be/KCh-AeU-o_4 |
| Law 360 Glass Ceiling report, "Wearing Natural Hair in Big Law," on which Professor Greene consulted: | https://youtu.be/xCcpdvKkU24 |
| "The CROWN Act & Transforming the Rules of Professionalism around Black Hair" by Natalie Runyon for Thomson Reuters (this is a good companion piece for the Law 360 Glass Ceiling Report) | https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/government/crown-act-legal-professionalism/ |
| Now This News: Carmelyn Malalis and Wendy Greene Fought and Won the NYC Hair Discrimination Law: | https://nowthisnews.com/videos/her/carmelyn-malalis-and-wendy-greene-won-the-nyc-hair-discrimination-law |
| Doris "Wendy" Greene Helped Fight for New York City's Ban on Natural Hair Discrimination | https://www.teenvogue.com/story/doris-wendy-greene-natural-hair-anti-discrimination-ban |
| John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight" segment on Natural Hair Discrimination (beware of expletives) | https://youtu.be/Uf1c0tEGfrU |
| Select Interviews on the C.R.O.W.N. Act, Natural Hair Bias, Discrimination, and Hair Diversity in the Workplace: | |
| Mane Moves Live! "Natural Hair & The Law" with Natasha Gaspard and Professor Wendy Greene | https://youtu.be/QkG5wDTsUCc |
| Celebrating the Anniversary of the California C.R.O.W.N. Act—an interview | https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/columnists/story/2020-07-19/anniversary-of-californias-crown-act-affirming-hair-discrimination-is-racial-discrimination |

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| with Lisa Deaderick and Professor Wendy Greene for the San Diego Tribune | |
| Professor Greene's publications on race-based natural hair discrimination and grooming codes discrimination in workplaces: | |
| D. Wendy Greene, Splitting Hairs: The 11th Circuit's Take on Workplace Bans against Black Women's Natural Hair in <u>EEOC v. Catastrophe Management Solutions</u>, 71 MIAMI L. REV. 987 (2017) | https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol71/iss4/5/ |
| D. Wendy greene, Title VII: What's Hair (And Other Race-Based Characteristics) Got To Do With It? 79 U. COLO. L. REV. 1355 (2008) (republished in 2021 as lead article of four articles selected for the law journal's special issue: a retrospective on race in america, 92 U. Colo. L. Rev. 1276 (2021)) | https://cms.detr.nv.gov/Content/Media/Greene_Title_7_Article.pdf |
| D. Wendy Greene, A Multidimensional Analysis of What Not to Wear in the Workplace: Hijabs and Natural Hair, 8 FIU L. REV. 333 (2013) | https://ecollections.law.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=lawreview |
| D. Wendy Greene, Black Women Can't Have Blonde Hair...in the Workplace, 14 J. GENDER RACE & JUST. 405 (2011) | https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1859662 |
| Angela Onwuachi-Willig, More Hair Raising Decisions and How Professor Wendy Greene Combs Through Their Flaws: | https://worklaw.jotwell.com/more-hair-raising-decisions-and-how-professor-wendy-greene-combs-through-their-flaws/ |
| Link to the text of the federal C.R.O.W.N. Act for which Professor Greene is a legal architect and leading advocate: | https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/house-bill/2116/text |

Desireé H. Langley

Desireé Langley is an Associate at Jackson Lewis P.C. where she represents and defends employers in a variety of workplace litigation matters. She is passionate about working with clients to prevent claims of

discrimination, harassment, retaliation,

and other claims. Previously, Desireé worked as an Associate at Mehri and Skalet, PLLC, a civil rights firm in D.C. where she represented individual and putative classes of employees and brought lawsuits under Title VII, the ADA, the FCA, and consumer protection laws.



Desireé has experience conducting racial equity and employee relations audits and investigations. After graduating from George Mason University School of Law, she served as a Litigation Fellow with the ACLU-National Prison Project and as an Assistant Public Defender in Maryland.

Umar Kankiya, Solicitor

Umar is a qualified Solicitor with over 12 years practice in the field of Mental Health and Mental Capacity law. He regularly advises politicians, corporations and other groups around, mental health, Inclusion and Diversity and Wellbeing in the workplace and beyond. In addition Umar is able to provide insight into what is happening on the ground from a real perspective and has appeared on platforms such as the BBC, ITV, Sky News, Guardian, Independent newspapers to provide such views.



Umar has over 12 years of experience in Mental Health, Mental Capacity, Community Engagement and political engagement. As a member of Dope Black Dads, Umar has been active in representing Dope Black Dads on a wider media platform to speak about the issues facing black fathers.

Umar has regularly been active in the political sphere often speaking about law, mental health and politics in the media and in the community.

Umar regularly engages in speaking engagements with corporations, community groups and public sector organizations especially around Mental Health and the impact of this particularly in the Black Community.

Angela Mackie-Rutledge

LLM Candidate,
President, Graduate Law Students Association
Programming Chair, Black Law Students Association

Angela is a dual British / American citizen. Antonin Scalia Law School. She holds a BFA from New York University in Dramatic Writing, and MSc from the University of Brighton (UK) in Digital Television Management and Production and an LLB from the University of Law in London, United Kingdom. She was a winner of the 2017 Choose Law Full Fee Scholarship which gave her a full scholarship to obtain her law degree. She is currently an LLM candidate at George Mason University.



Angela is a career-changer with 15 years + experience in IT Project Management, QA Software Testing and Multimedia production. She specializes in Cable & Satellite TV technology as well as STB / CPE / Smart TV engineering. She previously contracted for Comcast as an Application Engineering Manager; a functional role where she had strategic input to technical issues guiding the production and release of Comcast's X-Class TV.

This past summer Angela completed a writing contract at MNB Meridian Law where she supported the US Deputy Secretary of Defense's Internal Review Team in researching and writing about racial discrepancies in military justice systems.

She has recently accepted an intern position with the United States Attorneys Office.

Angela has worked closely with other members of the BLSA to produce the Black Hair Big Law Symposium. This required substantial time and dedication, whilst completing her degree and studying for the Washington DC Bar which she plans to take in February 2023.

Angela is currently looking a job at a law firm that will lead to an Associate position and would appreciate your help in getting her one. Should you have any leads on relevant jobs Angela can be contacted at amackier@gmu.edu

Binta P. Mamadou

Binta P. Mamadou is an associate in the Washington, DC office of Allen & Overy LLP, in the global Projects, Energy, Natural Resources and Infrastructure practice. Binta has experience advising project sponsors and financial institutions, including commercial lenders and development banks, in a range of cross-border transactions in various countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa in connection with the acquisition, development, structuring and financing of energy and infrastructure projects. Her publications include:

(1) “On the path of reform...Linklaters looks at Morocco and on how it is attracting private investment through innovative legal reforms and public-private partnerships” (co-authored with M. Barges and P. Lignières), *The Oath – The Middle East Law Journal for Corporates* and

(2) “The Journey to a Virtual African Identity: Did ICANN Correctly Deny the African Union’s Request to Include dot Africa on the ‘Reserved Names List’?”, *ABA International Law News*.

She is a member of the New York Bar and Paris Bar (Barreau de Paris, inactive status), and is fluent in French and Zarma.



Binta learned to braid hair as a child, enjoys discussing and learning about all things "natural hair", and is the founder of Visions Braid Bar -- a braid bar in Maryland which offers a variety of hair services to Black women.

Binta has a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School and a B.S.F.S. in International Economics from Georgetown University.

Shelly Page

Shelly Taylor Page (Cheryl) has been a licensed attorney since 1993 and a Law Professor since 2004. She attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. (graduated cum laude) and received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.



She has worked for Legal Aid (Galveston, Texas), as a Criminal Prosecutor (Austin, Texas) and a Staff Attorney for the State Board for Educator Certification in Austin, Texas. In 2004, she became a Law Professor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas and then worked for LMU Law in Knoxville, Tennessee (where she earned tenure) as well as serving as a Visiting Professor at Florida A&M University in Orlando, Florida.

She has taught core curriculum courses including Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence. Her electives include Education Law, Domestic Violence Law, Civil Rights, Human Rights (domestic and international), and Human Trafficking. She has co-authored a textbook on Human Trafficking (Carolina Academic Press, 2016) and is passionate about seeing the eradication of modern-day slavery.

Prof. Page has spoken internationally on issues relating to commercial sexual exploitation and human exploitation in Prague, Czech Republic; Istanbul, Turkey; Beijing, China; Cape Town, South Africa; Gloucester, England; and has taught at the University of Innsbruck in Austria for two semesters. She has written numerous law review articles on various topics that focus on human exploitation and marginalized communities. She also serves as an Expert Witness on Human Trafficking for the American Bar Association.

Prof. Page serves on the Board for the Lorena Gallo (Bobbitt) Foundation and has appeared on Lifetime TV Network speaking on behalf of victims of domestic violence and as expert on domestic violence for the Lorena Bobbitt case. She has appeared on numerous radio and television networks including the Black News Channel, Spectrum News, ABC affiliate (WATE News 6), as well as a number of webinars and symposiums. She is a member of the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights.

Prof. Page has taught for a number of years in the University of Tennessee's Law Enforcement Innovation Center and National Forensic Academy where she helps to train law enforcement officers on how to testify in court. Prof. Page currently serves

as the Director of Experiential Learning where she creates opportunities for students to graduate from law school “practice ready” for the legal field.

The Honorable Turkessa B. Rollins

Turkessa Bynum Rollins grew up in Essex County, New Jersey. She obtained her Bachelors of Science from Trenton State College and her Juris Doctor from George Mason University School of Law. Judge Rollins was appointed to the General District Court of the 31st Judicial District on July 1, 2019. Prior to her appointment, she served as a substitute judge for seven (7) years and was a Partner with the law firm of Fullerton & Knowles, P.C. where she worked for almost 18 years.



Judge Rollins practiced law in the areas of construction law, landlord/tenant law (commercial & residential), collections, criminal/traffic defense and domestic relations. She was a Board of Director for the Prince William County Bar Association, a Board of Director for the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, a member of the Old Dominion Bar Association and Virginia Women Attorneys Association.

Judge Rollins has been greatly involved in multiple community service and bar programs, including but not limited to the following: *Prince William County Bar Association* (So You're 18 Program, Middle School Court Tours Program, Wills for Heroes); *Fairfax County Bar Association* (Colors of Justice Program, 8th Grade Court Tours & Devonshire Program); *Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association* (Kamp Kappa, Judicial Screening Committee, Social Committee- Chair); *Old Dominion Bar Association* (Annual Conference Committee); *George Mason University School of Law* (Moot Court Judge, Alumni Coordinator for Law Student Minority Mentoring Program, Trial Advocacy Team Coach and Law Student Mentor); and *Mary-Elizabeth Ministry* (mentoring program for pregnant teens at First Mt. Zion Baptist Church).

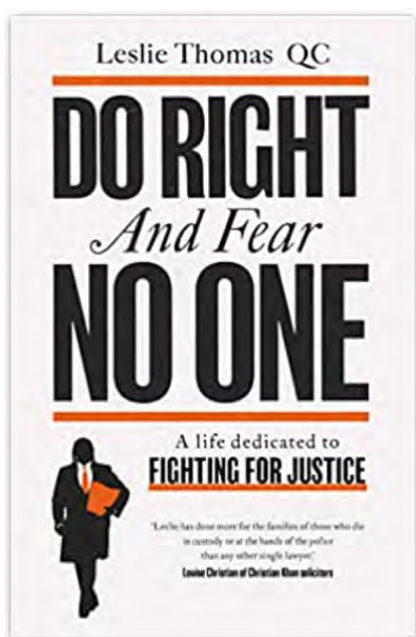
Professor Leslie Thomas, KC

Professor Leslie Thomas KC, is a human rights/civil liberties barrister in the UK. He is also an attorney in the Eastern Caribbean. He specializes in actions against the police and the state. He has appeared in many high profile cases representing the families of those who have died in custody. Notable cases include the Birmingham Pub Bombing Inquests, Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry, the police shootings of Azelle Rodney, Mark Duggan, and Anthony Grainger.



In 2012 he was awarded Legal Aid Barrister of the Year (LALY) and again in 2016 for his work on the Hillsborough Football stadium disaster. In 2020 he received the award for Outstanding Contribution to D&I in the UK Chambers Bar Awards. A former Joint Head of Garden Court Chambers. In 2020 he became the first Black Professor of Law at Gresham College.

He is a visiting Professor of Law at Goldsmith College, University of London. Leslie sits on the Equality Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee for the Inner Temple and the Bar Standards Board Race Equality Task Force. He is the author of 'Do Right and Fear No One' his autobiography published in 2022.



About the book

'If deaths are not investigated, then the authorities cannot be held to account and democracy is threatened. And if deaths are not investigated, we are not a society that values human life.'

Inspired from a young age to help the marginalized and voiceless, Leslie Thomas KC has dedicated his career to fighting for the underdog and holding the State to account. This intimate and personal record of some of the most significant, controversial and disturbing legal cases of the last fifty years lays bare the very heart of the law enforcement and judicial process.

It's an unforgettable account of an idealistic and outspoken lawyer's coming of age as a Black man in London, and a powerful portrait of the lives of those he has fought for. From the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, to the deaths of Christi and Bobby Shepherd by carbon monoxide poisoning, the Birmingham Pub Bombings and the police shooting of Mark Duggan, *Do Right and Fear No One* present a blistering argument for a level playing field in the pursuit of justice.

Karis Stephen

3L University of Pennsylvania

A current third-year J.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Karis is currently based in Philadelphia and is well on her way to becoming an employment lawyer. After graduation, she will start as an associate at Latham & Watkins.

While in law school, Karis worked at Console Mattiacci Law, the EEOC, and Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity. Before enrolling at Penn Law, Karis was a Fulbright Grantee based in Malaysia. She earned her B.A. in English and Cinema & Media Studies *summa cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.



Her writing frequently appears in *PopSugar* and *The Regulatory Review*. In her free time, Karis is a professional singer and songwriter working on her artist project. Follow her on Instagram [@karisleemusic](https://www.instagram.com/karisleemusic).

Crown Act Virginia

CHAPTER 107

An Act to amend and reenact § 2.2-3901 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Human Rights Act; discrimination on the basis of race; hair style, type, or texture.

[H 1514]

Approved March 3, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2.2-3901 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-3901. Unlawful discriminatory practice, gender discrimination, and racial discrimination defined.

A. Conduct that violates any Virginia or federal statute or regulation governing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, or disability shall be an "unlawful discriminatory practice" for the purposes of this chapter.

B. The terms "because of sex or gender" or "on the basis of sex or gender" or terms of similar import when used in reference to discrimination in the Code and acts of the General Assembly include because of or on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Women affected by pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions shall be treated the same for all purposes as persons not so affected but similar in their abilities or disabilities.

C. The terms "because of race" or "on the basis of race" or terms of similar import when used in reference to discrimination in the Code and acts of the General Assembly include because of or on the basis of traits historically associated with race, including hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

H. R. 2116

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

March 21, 2022

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

AN ACT

To prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s texture or style of hair.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2022” or the “CROWN Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSE.

(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Throughout United States history, society has used (in conjunction with skin color) hair texture and hairstyle to classify individuals on the basis of race.

(2) Like one’s skin color, one’s hair has served as a basis of race and national origin discrimination.

(3) Racial and national origin discrimination can and do occur because of longstanding racial and national origin biases and stereotypes associated with hair texture and style.

(4) For example, routinely, people of African descent are deprived of educational and employment opportunities because they are adorned with natural or protective hairstyles in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, or worn in locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, or Afros.

(5) Racial and national origin discrimination is reflected in school and workplace policies and practices that bar natural or protective hairstyles commonly worn by people of African descent.

(6) For example, as recently as 2018, the U.S. Armed Forces had grooming policies that barred natural or protective hairstyles that servicemembers of African descent commonly wear and that described these hairstyles as “unkempt”.

(7) The U.S. Army also recognized that prohibitions against natural or protective hairstyles that African-American soldiers are commonly adorned with are racially discriminatory, harmful, and bear no relationship to African-American servicewomen’s occupational qualifications and their ability to serve and protect the Nation. As of February 2021, the U.S. Army removed minimum hair length requirements and lifted restrictions on any soldier wearing braids, twists, locs, and cornrows in order to promote inclusivity and accommodate the hair needs of soldiers.

(8) As a type of racial or national origin discrimination, discrimination on the basis of natural or protective hairstyles that people of African descent are commonly adorned with violates existing Federal law, including provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.](#)), section 1977 of the Revised Statutes ([42 U.S.C. 1981](#)), and the Fair Housing Act ([42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.](#)). However, some Federal courts have misinterpreted Federal civil rights law by narrowly interpreting the meaning of race or national origin, and thereby permitting, for example, employers to discriminate against people of African descent who wear natural or protective hairstyles even though the employment policies involved are not related to workers’ ability to perform their jobs.

(9) Applying this narrow interpretation of race or national origin has resulted in a lack of Federal civil rights protection for individuals who are discriminated against on the basis of characteristics that are commonly associated with race and national origin.

(10) In 2019 and 2020, State legislatures and municipal bodies throughout the U.S. have introduced and passed legislation that rejects certain Federal courts’ restrictive interpretation of race and national origin, and expressly classifies race and national origin discrimination as inclusive of discrimination on the basis of natural or protective hairstyles commonly associated with race and national origin.

(b) Sense Of Congress.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Federal Government should acknowledge that individuals who have hair texture or wear a hairstyle that is historically and contemporarily associated with African Americans or persons of African descent systematically suffer

harmful discrimination in schools, workplaces, and other contexts based upon longstanding race and national origin stereotypes and biases;

(2) a clear and comprehensive law should address the systematic deprivation of educational, employment, and other opportunities on the basis of hair texture and hairstyle that are commonly associated with race or national origin;

(3) clear, consistent, and enforceable legal standards must be provided to redress the widespread incidences of race and national origin discrimination based upon hair texture and hairstyle in schools, workplaces, housing, federally funded institutions, and other contexts;

(4) it is necessary to prevent educational, employment, and other decisions, practices, and policies generated by or reflecting negative biases and stereotypes related to race or national origin;

(5) the Federal Government must play a key role in enforcing Federal civil rights laws in a way that secures equal educational, employment, and other opportunities for all individuals regardless of their race or national origin;

(6) the Federal Government must play a central role in enforcing the standards established under this Act on behalf of individuals who suffer race or national origin discrimination based upon hair texture and hairstyle;

(7) it is necessary to prohibit and provide remedies for the harms suffered as a result of race or national origin discrimination on the basis of hair texture and hairstyle; and

(8) it is necessary to mandate that school, workplace, and other applicable standards be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner and to explicitly prohibit the adoption or implementation of grooming requirements that disproportionately impact people of African descent.

(c) Purpose.—The purpose of this Act is to institute definitions of race and national origin for Federal civil rights laws that effectuate the comprehensive scope of protection Congress intended to be afforded by such laws and Congress' objective to eliminate race and national origin discrimination in the United States.

SEC. 3. FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS.

(a) In General.—No individual in the United States shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, based on the individual's hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

(b) Enforcement.—Subsection (a) shall be enforced in the same manner and by the same means, including with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was incorporated in title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.](#)), and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section 601 of such Act ([42 U.S.C. 2000d](#)).

(c) Definitions.—In this section—

(1) the term “program or activity” has the meaning given the term in section 606 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d–4a](#)); and

(2) the terms “race” and “national origin” mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the term in section 601 of that Act ([42 U.S.C. 2000d](#)) and “national origin” within the meaning of the term in that section 601.

SEC. 4. HOUSING PROGRAMS.

(a) In General.—No person in the United States shall be subjected to a discriminatory housing practice based on the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

(b) Enforcement.—Subsection (a) shall be enforced in the same manner and by the same means, including with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was incorporated in the Fair Housing Act ([42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.](#)), and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was a discriminatory housing practice.

(c) Definition.—In this section—

(1) the terms “discriminatory housing practice” and “person” have the meanings given the terms in section 802 of the Fair Housing Act ([42 U.S.C. 3602](#)); and

(2) the terms “race” and “national origin” mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the term in section 804 of that Act ([42 U.S.C. 3604](#)) and “national origin” within the meaning of the term in that section 804.

SEC. 5. PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS.

(a) In General.—No person in the United States shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section 201, 202, or 203 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.](#)), based on the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

(b) Enforcement.—Subsection (a) shall be enforced in the same manner and by the same means, including with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was incorporated in title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section 201, 202, or 203, as appropriate, of such Act.

(c) Definition.—In this section, the terms “race” and “national origin” mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the term in section 201 of that Act ([42 U.S.C. 2000e](#)) and “national origin” within the meaning of the term in that section 201.

SEC. 6. EMPLOYMENT.

(a) Prohibition.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining (including on-the-job training programs) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against an individual, based on the individual’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

(b) Enforcement.—Subsection (a) shall be enforced in the same manner and by the same means, including with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was incorporated in title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.](#)), and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section 703 or 704, as appropriate, of such Act ([42 U.S.C. 2000e–2](#), 2000e–3).

(c) Definitions.—In this section the terms “person”, “race”, and “national origin” have the meanings given the terms in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000e](#)).

SEC. 7. EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW.

(a) In General.—No person in the United States shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section 1977 of the Revised Statutes ([42 U.S.C. 1981](#)), based on the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

(b) Enforcement.—Subsection (a) shall be enforced in the same manner and by the same means, including with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was incorporated in section 1977 of the Revised Statutes, and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was a violation of that section 1977.

SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit definitions of race or national origin under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.](#)), the Fair Housing Act ([42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.](#)), or section 1977 of the Revised Statutes ([42 U.S.C. 1981](#)).

SEC. 9. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

Passed the House of Representatives March 18, 2022.

1. *A Murder in Harlem* (1935) **Clarence Brooks**
2. *Amos & Andy* (1951) **John D. Lee, Jr.**
3. *Carbon Copy* (1981) **Paul Winfeld**
4. *Loving* (1983-1995) **Lynne Thigpen**
5. *The Cosby Show* (1984) **Phylicia Rashad**
6. *As the World Turns* (1986-1995, 2005) **Tamara Tunie**
7. *LA Law* (1986-1994) **Blair Underwood**
8. *Bonfire of the Vanities* (1990) **Morgan Freeman**
9. *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (1990-1996) **James Avery**
10. *LA Law*, Season 6 (1992) **Lynne Thigpen**
11. *Philadelphia* (1993) **Denzel Washington**
12. *Striking Distance* (1993) **Andre Braugher**
13. *Law & Order*, (1990, 1992-95, 2004) S1,3,4,14 **Lorraine Toussaint**
14. *NYPD Blue*, (1993) **Garcelle Beauvais**
15. *Living Single* (1993-1998) **Erika Alexander**
16. *High Crimes* (1993) **Morgan Freeman**
17. *Se7en* (1995) **Richard Roundtree**
18. *Seinfeld*, (1995) “The Maestro” **Phil Morris**
19. *Sparks* (1996-1998) **Robin Givens**
20. *The Defenders* (1997) **Yaphet Kotto**
21. *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) **Lisa Nicole Carson**
22. *The Practice* (1997-2004) **LisaGay Hamilton**
23. *The Practice* (1997-2004) **Steve Harris**
24. *Enemy of the State* (1998) **Will Smith**
25. *Enemy of the State* (1998) **Regina King**
26. *King of the Hill*, “Hank’s Dirty Laundry” (1998) **Lynne Thigpen**
27. *Any Day Now* (1998-2002) **Lorraine Toussaint**
28. *Law & Order: SVU* (1999) **Ami Brabson**
29. *Law & Order: SVU*, S4, “Doubt” (2003) **Viola Davis**
30. *Legally Blonde* (2001) **Francesca P. Roberts**
31. *Soul Food* (2000-2004) **Nicole Ari Parker**
32. *Girlfriends* (2000-2008) **Tracee Ellis Ross**
33. *Anger Management* (2003) **Lynne Thigpen**
34. *Legally Blonde 2* (2003) **Regina King**
35. *Law & Order SVU*, S5, “Carless” (2004) **CCH Pounder**
36. *24* (2007) **Regina King**
37. *Law & Order: UK* (2009-2014) **Freema Agyeman**
38. *Suits* (2011-2019) **Gina Torres**
39. *Suits* (2011-2019) **Meghan Markle**
40. *Boston Legal* (2006-2008) **Gary Anthony Williams**
41. *Boston Legal* (2004-2008) **Kerry Washington**

42. *Our Family Wedding* (2010) **Regina King**
43. *Law & Order: Los Angeles* (2010) **Regina Hall**
44. *Broadchurch* (2013-2017) **Marianne Jean-Baptiste**
45. *Real Husbands of Hollywood* (2013) **Cynthia McWilliams**
46. *The Divide* (2014) **Nia Long**
47. *American Crime Story: The People vs. O.J. Simpson* (2016) **Courtney B. Vance**
48. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Rhonda Willis**
49. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Katrina Pierson**
50. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Monique Sparks**
51. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Juanita Jackson**
52. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Tiye Foley**
53. *Sisters in Law* (2016-) **Vivian King**
54. *The Split* (2018-2022) **Chukwudi Iwuji**
55. *How to Get Away with Murder* (2014-2020) **Viola Davis**
56. *Law & Order: SVU* (2015-2022) **Mary Hodges**
57. *Divorce* (2016-2019) **Geoffery Owens**
58. *Empire* (2017) **Francesca P. Roberts**
59. *Flash Forward* (2009-2010) **Gabriel Union**
60. *Scandal* (2012-2018) **Kerry Washington**
61. *Madam Secretary* (2015-2019) **Morgan Freeman**
62. *Fleabag* (BBC, 2016) **Ray Fearon**
63. *Billions* (2016) **Condola Rashad**
64. *The Bachelorette* (2017) **Rachel Lindsay**
65. *The Good Fight* (2017 - 2022) **Delroy Lindo**
66. *The Good Fight* (2017 - 2022) **Cush Jumbo**
67. *The Good Fight* (2017 - 2022) **Audra McDonald**
68. *The Good Fight* (2017 - 2022) **Erica Tazel**
69. *Diggstown* (2019-present) Canada, CBC Arts **Vinessa Antoine**
70. *Street Legal* (Canada, 2019) **Cara Ricketts**
71. *All Rise* (2019 – now), **Simone Missick**
72. *Truth Be Told* (2019-) **Andre Royo**
73. *Powerbook II: Ghost* (2020) **Method Man**
74. *For Life* (2020-2021) **Nicholas Pinnock**
75. *For Life* (2020-2021) **Cassandra Freeman**
76. *Roadkill* (UK Mini Series, 2020) **Pippa Bennet Warner**
77. *A Fall from Grace* (2020) **Bresha Webb**
78. *Just Mercy* (2020) **Michael B Jordan**
79. *Law & Order: SVU* (2021) **Adriane Lenox**
80. *Delilah* (2021) **Maahra Hill**
81. *Delilah* (2021) **Susan Heyard**
82. *Showtrial* (UK Mini Series 2021) **Tracy Ifeachor**
83. *The Good Fight* (2022) **Andre Braugher**

84. *Anatomy of a Scandal* (UK Mini Series 2022) **Josette Simon**
85. *Reasonable Doubt* (2022) **Emayatzy Corinealdi**
86. *The Lincoln Lawyer* (2022) **Kim Hawthorn**
87. *The Lincoln Lawyer* (2022-) **LisaGay Hamilton**
88. *We Own This City* (2022-) **Wunmi Mosaku**
89. *We Own This City* (2022-) **Ian Duff**
90. *61st Street* (2022-) **Courtney B. Vance**
91. *Hot Bench*, **Judge Tanya Acker**
92. *Judge Mathis*
93. *Judge Joe Brown* (1997-2013)
94. *Divorce Court*, **Star Jones**
95. *Divorce Court* (2013-2022) **Judge Lynn Toler**
96. *Lauren Lake's Paternity Court* (2013-2020) **Lauren Lake**
97. *Judge Hatchett* (2000-2008) **Glenda A. Hatchett**
98. *Relative Justice* (2021) **Rhonda Willis**
99. *Judge Faith* (2014-2018) **Faith Jenkins**
100. *Couples Court*, **Judges Dana & Keith Cutler**
101. *Judge Steve Harvey*, **Steve Harvey**
102. *Personal Injury Court*, **Judge Gino Brogdon**
103. *Support Court with Judge Vonda B.*



The Crown Act and Big Law

By Nkey Chibuzo

Following decades of discrimination against black women and girls because of their natural black hair, and the unfair scrutiny of black hairstyles like braids, dreadlocks, twists, and Bantu knots in workplaces and public schools, the CROWN Act was born.

CROWN, an acronym for "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair," is a California law prohibiting forms of discriminatory actions against an individual because of the type, texture or style of their hair. The Act which was passed into law in 2019, makes it illegal to deny a person employment opportunities or educational privileges because of their racial hair type.

The CROWN Act is the first legislation passed to prohibit hair discrimination at a state level in the United States. Presently, the Act has been signed into law in six more states namely Colorado, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington and Virginia. Effort is still ongoing to extend this protection to other states, and make it a nationwide law.

How does it affect individuals?

To African Americans, this is a huge step in the right direction. The Crown Act becomes more significant to Blacks when it is viewed against the backdrop of all sorts of natural hair discrimination and stigmatization the Black people have had to deal with, and the uncountable biases meted out to them just because of an inherent hair texture and culture-based hairstyles.

Back from the Black Power Movement of the 60's, afro hair and other black hairstyles have been demonized and seen as a symbol of rebellion and radicalism. Even in this millennial century, black hair has still not found full acceptance in predominantly white countries. Blacks still face the stigma of their natural hair been labelled as unprofessional and unacceptable.

Black women and girls are discouraged from wearing hairstyles that reflects their cultural heritage. Many have been laid off from their workplace because they wore a hairstyle, and unfavorable policies prohibiting natural black hair exists in some public schools. While many have been forced to change their natural hair texture or preferred hairstyle in order to be accepted in a school or retain their jobs, others have suffered several sanctions and disciplinary actions. All for no reason other than their hair.

As a matter of fact, it's unethical and wrong to force anyone to divest themselves of their natural hair identity just to suit another person's perception of what an "acceptable" or "professional" hair should be. That is sheer racism.



Therefore, for the black man and woman, the CROWN Act represents hope of a freedom long overdue. Freedom to express their racial identity. Freedom to wear amazing black hairstyles without being judged. Freedom to not have to straighten kinky or coily black hair to be accepted among peers. Freedom from worrying about biases and criticisms just for wearing black hair. Freedom to choose whether or not to subject their hair to damaging chemical and heat treatment. For Black communities all over the United States of America, the Crown Act represents hope. Hope for a better society, where they can seat before a panel of white interviewers without worrying about their hair been the subject of scrutiny and the basis for their evaluation instead of candidate's competency and qualifications.

How would it affect lawyers?

The stereotyping of black hair as unacceptable in the workplace affects all careers and sectors, and more so the legal profession. The general perception of what constitutes a professional appearance and the idea of how a lawyer should look tilts more towards what a White European lawyer should look like. Straight hair, without question, is accepted as "good hair" and the ideal for fitting into corporate culture.

Historically, Black hair and traditional black hairstyles are seen as unprofessional and unbecoming for a legal officer. Law students are taught to look the part of the ideal white lawyer, thus fixing black women lawyers in a tight corner. Kinky hair gets permed to look straight and dreads are taken down so as to conform to the "professional" lawyer look. It is not uncommon to see a black law student on natural hair change their hair to get it "interview ready".

The CROWN Act casts a beam of hope to black lawyers on natural hair or black hairstyles. It holds out a hope, an expectation that as the Act gets adopted by several other States a time will come when every type of hair would be accepted as professional. As more black lawyers stay true to their identity, embrace their natural hair and wear black hairstyles; the image of the ideal lawyer will eventually expand to accommodate black hair.

Take for example, Wendy Greene, an African American law professor and one of the people who facilitated the adoption of the CROWN Act wears her natural hair and encourages other lawyers to do so. As she rightly puts it, the goal is to see that everyone's choice is respected, the notion of good and bad hair done away with, and every hair celebrated as good hair.

Achieving that will mark the end of black hair discrimination, and is what the CROWN Act is all about.



Why I Choose to Wear Braids to the Workplace Every Day Despite the Fear of Criticism

Karis Stephen

Jan 3, 2022, Written for Pop Sugar

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/scared-wear-braids-now-couldnt-193013029.html>

The "Black letter law" rarely makes room for Blackness.

What I mean by that is the legal profession is in need of more diversity, with only 7.8 percent of law students being Black. From my point of view - that of a brand-new, prospective Black lawyer - the lack of representation in the legal field provoked a developing fear of how my colleagues, professors, and future employers would perceive me in the workplace, especially when it pertained to my hair.

As a child, I was taught that I needed to work twice as hard to "make it." It was implied that being successful meant that I had to prove people wrong. I quickly learned that in this society, my appearance triggered an array of harmful assumptions, like that I could only ever be "pretty for a Black girl." Being Black in predominantly white spaces, particularly in edifices for education, also carried over into my graduate school experience.

I started law school in the last year of 2020 wearing my natural hair. This was a choice I made unthinkingly, because it came after a summer of wearing braids (my go-to protective style), and I was letting my hair grow out. At the beginning of the semester, the virtual format of school gave me more time to focus on the maintenance of my natural hair. Every evening, I would tend to my tightly coiled curls with creams, twists, oils, and satin bonnets, treating my nightly routine as a form of self-care.

However, as the semester progressed into finals, summer internships, and a ramping up of extracurricular activities, I knew that nightly ritual needed to change to accommodate the difficulties of my first (1L) year. Maintaining my natural hair became difficult, as the vast majority of my time was taken up by the academic demands of law school. I wanted to get my braids back, but refrained from doing so for fear of covert criticism.

Braids outwardly convey strength and resilience, especially when it comes to the lived experience of Black women.

My flawed understanding was that the protective hairstyles of Black women, particularly braids, were inappropriate in the legal workplace because they did not properly express all of the straight-laced things that I envisioned a lawyer to be. Maybe it was because of popular culture's archetype portrayal of lawyers, or because Meghan Markle played a young, Black attorney on *Suits* with perfectly straightened hair, or



because the unfortunate fact that I had never met a Black woman lawyer until I was well over the age of 18. Whatever the reason, I certainly held the belief that lawyers must look a certain way.

When I started my first-ever law firm internship this summer, the question of hair acceptance was top of mind. I was nervous to don braids in a professional setting, but eventually I made the decision to do just that. When I showed up to meetings virtually, my coworkers and supervisors and peers did something wonderful: they didn't bat an eye.

The truth of the matter is that braids are compatible with the legal profession. In fact, they are extremely reminiscent of the important qualities of a great lawyer. Braids outwardly convey strength and resilience, especially when it comes to the lived experience of Black women. Our curl patterns create a stronghold for the braided hair to attach to, in such an enduring manner as to last through the wear and tear of life. And that's just what Black women are: enduring.

For me, my waist-length braids are not purely a style choice (although they are stylistically versatile). Protective styles are worn to protect our natural hair, not hide it - these styles are a distinct cultural emblem preserving our crown.

The power of a Black woman rests in her unrestrained ability to be anything she wants to be, and that power is only made more visible with each beautiful, Black hairstyle. As soon as I realized this, I took a trip to the salon for a braid appointment, because the legal profession must make room for Blackness.

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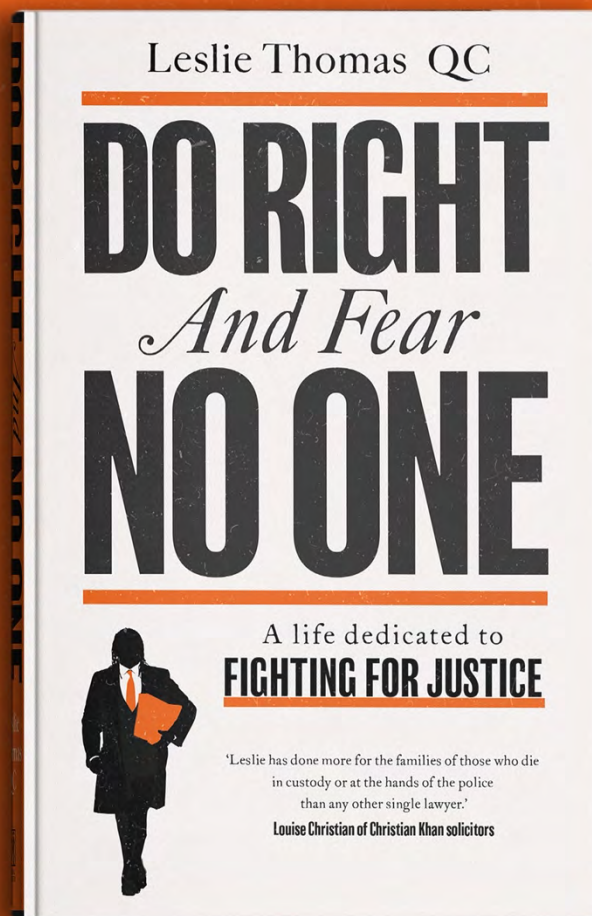
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**'LESLIE HAS DONE MORE FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO
DIE IN CUSTODY OR AT THE HANDS OF THE POLICE THAN
ANY OTHER SINGLE LAWYER.'**

LOUISE CHRISTIAN, OF CHRISTIAN KHAN SOLICITORS



**AN UNFORGETTABLE ACCOUNT OF AN IDEALISTIC AND
OUTSPOKEN LAWYER'S COMING OF AGE**



OUT NOW IN HARDBACK, EBOOK AND AUDIOBOOK



Black hair and Professionalism.

By Nkey Chibuzo

After some years of wearing permed hair and regularly heat-styling her hair to keep it looking straight, Brenda decided to make a transition back to her natural hair to revive her hair back to life. What better opportunity to do so than during her annual leave from work. 4 weeks away from work, and when she came back she was sporting a gorgeous head of short 4C hair.

The mixed reactions that greeted her wasn't unexpected. From the surprised looks, to muted laughter to the backhanded compliments; she took all in good faith. However, she couldn't take it anymore when her direct supervisor, a fellow black woman, pulled her aside to tell her that her natural hair was unprofessional. "Unprofessional?", Brenda snapped. "Who determines what hair is professional, and what hair is not?" she asked in indignation.

Who truly determines what's "professional hair" and what's not? From years of black hair discrimination, the racism-reeking perception that black hair is unprofessional arose, leading some people to assume that black hairstyles don't fit into corporate environments. For some black women like Brenda's supervisor, it's the case of fitting into the cast molded for blacks.

The hate for black hair is real. Even people who claim to be open-minded and anti-racist will pass negative comments about natural black hair. Remarks like "Your hair is so thick. How do you cope with it?" emanate from the negative notion that black hair is bad hair.

Historically, Black hair was mocked, derided, and demonized in the bid to make it appear less desirable than White European hair. This was one of many factors that ultimately kept enslaved Africans subdued into feeling inferior to the whites. The aim was to create a power dynamic that set the white slave masters above their black slaves. Following this mind-play and subjugation, blacks who wanted to be socially acceptable had to alter the texture of their hair to make it look straight. The days of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade are long, but has the discrimination against black hair stopped? Obviously, no. Is black hair considered as acceptable as white hair? Not yet. At least not in the workplaces and public schools across the United States and United Kingdom.

Though attitudes are changing, traditionally, the further a black hairstyle didn't resemble a white European hairstyle the more it was seen as inferior and unprofessional. Nevertheless, there are many black women out there, working professional jobs and confidently rocking their natural hair to work everyday.



2 beautiful black sisters share their personal experiences of wearing their black hair in a corporate setting.

Sasha, 27, Account Executive

All my life I've worn my kinky 'fro. At least for as long as I can remember. Wore it through high school to college without any issues, except for the one white kid in high school who said my hair looked like a mop. Other than that school was a breeze. Maybe because it was a black neighborhood. I grew up comfortable with my natural hair. Got a job and moved to a different state. First month at my new workplace, that was when it hit me. The staring and snide comments was unbearable. I became too conscious of my coarse, black hair, and got a straight hair wig. Then the praises started pouring in. It's like I was being commended for doing something great. I got royally pissed, and ditched the wig after wearing it for a couple of days. This is an organization that claims to be big on inclusivity and all. Why should I hide my natural hair to please people moving around happily with their own hair. The next day I showed up for work elegantly dressed and with my cute natural hair back in place. Stare at me, I stare at you; glare and I glare back. I remember a woman asking what happened to the lovely wig I wore yesterday and I quietly told her I have a very lovely afro wig for her in case she wants to cover her own hair. This is 8 years now, and no one ever disturbed me about my hair since then. The company needs me, I need them; why make it about my hair?

Kayla, 21, Data Analyst.

My hair had always been an issue for me. The white girls I hung out with in high school called it 'nemesis' and I agreed with them. Actually, I was the first to start referring to my hair as my nemesis. You see, my dad is black and my mom filipino. My hair was long quite alright but with these tight curls I just couldn't relate with. I felt ashamed of my hair and envied my white friends. That was before I met Tanya, a black girl who worked in the IT department of the first company I worked after graduating from college. I'm yet to see a black woman who took pride in her black heritage. The way she wore one glam black hairstyle after the other was captivating. Everything I wanted to hide about my hair, she flaunted in hers. I drew close to her, and gradually my hair shame began to reduce. I chopped my treated hair, and as my natural and untreated hair grew, I wore it with more pride. I still wear my natural hair till date. Long with super-tight coils, and occasionally style them into Bantu knots. What I learned - there is strength in number. Seeing Tanya rock her hairstyles with pride gave me the push I needed all along.



Let My Hair Be Me

An Investigation of Employee Authenticity and Organizational Appearance Policies Through the Lens of Black Women's Hair

By Tina Opie

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Organizations manage employee appearance using appearance policies — formal or informal dress codes that set organizational expectations for how employees “should” appear at work (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997; Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). Typically based on Eurocentric ideals of professionalism (Bell & Nkomo, 2003), appearance policies are often enforced by well-intentioned managers striving to foster a professional workforce (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016).

Given the taken-for-granted status of appearance policies, it is rare for organizations to have robust discussions about the necessity and possible negative consequences of these policies. This is unfortunate because conformity to appearance policies may have significant negative implications for employees’ workplace success, as employees who violate appearance policies may be reprimanded, reassigned, or terminated. Appearance policies are supported by the law (Caldwell, 1991) and leading human resource organizations provide guidance on how to control employee appearance (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016).

Interestingly, although organizations may be working hard to control employee appearance, research illustrates that the concept of authenticity, also referred to as “bring your whole self to work,” has far-reaching benefits for organizations and employees. Specifically, when employees exercise individual agency by sharing aspects of their identity, organizational cultures may become more inclusive and organizations and individuals alike may benefit (Chraibi & Cukier, 2017).

While appearance policies may help organizations in various sectors and locales (e.g., businesses, hospitals, militaries, nonprofits, etc. around the globe) manage customer perceptions and reinforce consistent organizational branding, such policies may conflict with increasing organizational efforts to encourage employee authenticity. Authenticity is a fundamental component of human thriving (Kernis & Goldman, 2006) and is defined as the “alignment between one’s internal experiences and external expressions” (Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009, p. 3).

Thus, employee authenticity refers to employees’ sense that, in the workplace, their internal experiences and external expressions are aligned. Appearance is a visual indicator of authenticity that may manifest in employees’ choices about how to dress, style their hair, whether or not to wear religious garb or to wear makeup, etc.



Appearance choices are identity-relevant as they help to define and distinguish cultural and subcultural groups (Keblusek & Giles, 2017). Further, employee choice about appearance may reflect personal effort to express unique aspects of the self. Appearance policies may inhibit employee authenticity, particularly disadvantaging employees with appearances that deviate from Eurocentric (Bell & Nkomo, 2003; Rosette & Dumas, 2007), heteronormative, masculine norms (Barry, 2015). Inhibiting employee authenticity may have negative consequences for employees and organizations. Research indicates that employees

who involuntarily conform to organizational norms may experience painful psychological distress and a sense of meaninglessness (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Hochschild, 2012). As time passes, inauthenticity may contribute to emotional exhaustion, guilt, and shame, and less desire to stay within an organization (Hewlin, 2009). Is it worth it to organizations to enforce appearance policies given the negative consequences of employee inauthenticity?

A critical first step in this line of inquiry about appearance policies and employee authenticity is to document current attitudes about employee appearance that may deviate from Eurocentric ideals of professionalism.

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It's just hair, until it's more than just hair...

By Ms. Binta P. Mamadou
Associate, Allen & Overy LLP
Founder, Visions Braid Bar

I grew up in Niger – a socially conservative country with respect to the roles of men and women in society, where these two groups are clearly defined and generally expected to exhibit certain attributes. Early on as a child, I understood the tacit social message that part of what defines a woman is her femininity, which partially means that her physical features and mannerisms could not (should not) be masculine. Of these features, one of the most important ones is arguably a woman's hair – how it is styled and adorned, its texture (the tightness or looseness of the curls), its density, and its length (the longer, the better...).

As a young girl, I struggled with the importance that was placed on hair because I felt I did not have "good hair" (meaning, my hair was short and my curls were tight). A woman's hair is so important in my cultural that during traditional weddings in my ethnic group (the *Songhais*), a day is set aside for styling the bride's hair before she is ceremoniously escorted to her husband's home. As a young girl, I longed for long, straight hair (or at least wavy curls) because I felt deeply that this attribute was necessary for me to be perceived as beautiful. Today, as an adult, I wish I wholeheartedly believed that my hair is just hair – that is, a small part of what makes me a whole person. Intellectually, I know that it is just hair, and I can accept



that beauty is subjective, but somewhere deep down, the feelings and scars formed from being ridiculed for having short hair as a child or made to feel less than because of my hair texture creep up. These feelings are loud and though they may not be real, I am not able to ignore their sound.

For the past two decades, I have mostly worn my hair short and generally, I think I like having short hair – it is convenient, easy to deal with and I usually like the way I look with short hair. The first time I did a “big chop”, I was in college. But, I did not cut my hair as a political statement nor because I had finally accepted that hair relaxers were bad for me. My first “big chop” was necessary because my natural hair had been damaged from years of using hair relaxers and poor styling choices, and I had developed traction alopecia. My hair was severely damaged, and my only option was to cut all of it and start over. It took a lot for me to cut my hair that first time – I felt insecure and defeated. The second time I did a “big chop”, I was in my early 20s. I went through a period where my hair would shed so much that I would be in tears. My dermatologist prescribed vitamins and topical creams, but nothing worked, and my only option was to cut all my hair *again*. I cannot remember my third “big chop” and after a while, I stopped counting. Each time I have had to cut my hair, I have told myself that *this* time would be different. I have made promises to myself, as so many of us make New Year’s resolutions, that *this* time, I will follow the tips from YouTube influencers about their hair-growth journeys, I will rinse my hair with rice water, I will take daily “Hair, Skin, and Nails” vitamins and I will use



the LOC¹ method to moisturize my hair...all this, just to have long, thick hair. And, as most of us do a few weeks into a new year, after a few weeks of adopting rigid haircare routines, I fall off the wagon. And, just as the seasons change, I can predict with a high degree of certitude that my hair will shed, then I will feel bummed out, then I will cut my hair while promising myself that *this* time, I will really, really, reeeaaallllyyy take care of my hair so it can grow. And, 12 to 18 months later, repeat.

I would like to say that I love wearing my hair short. However, when I am alone with my thoughts, I wonder whether I inherently like myself with short hair or whether I have grown to like it because I have no other choice. If I am completely honest, I must admit that I only cut my hair because it refuses to grow the way I would like it to grow. Each time I have cut my hair, it has been because my hair was damaged, each time I have done so, I have felt a deep sense of defeat. To face the world confidently, I have to constantly give the little girl inside a pep talk so that my adult self can believe I am beautiful and more than just my hair.

Over time, my hair – an attribute that is, physically and objectively, a very small part of my being – has become tantamount to an Achilles' heel. A joke about my hair can instantly deflate my sense of self-worth while a compliment about the same can inflate it back. My hairstyles have become extensions of myself, and I know that my hair is seen before I am seen. The way I wear my hair is determined by

¹ LOC is stands for liquid (or leave-in conditioner), oil, and cream.



factors ranging from the weather (literally!) to my mood, to whether a stylist cancels an appointment, to the time of the day. I can easily go to work with my natural hair short, then wear a big afro wig for a night out and braid my hair the next day.

Throughout the ups and down, one thing has remained constant – every time I go to a barber, my only instructions are: “Don’t shape up my hairline too sharp; I don’t want to look masculine.”



Lawyers with Locs

By Nkey Chibuzo

The field of law, with longstanding traditions, is one career sector that places much emphasis on looking the part. Although there are no definitive descriptions of what "looking professional" covers, there is a widely held notion that the ideal professional look for a lawyer is the look of a conservative male white European lawyer. This is particularly regarding hair and hairstyles.

Thus, natural black hair has, at times, been regarded as incongruent in fitting with the image of a professional lawyer. Among black hairstyles, locs and Afros have been seen as unacceptable. We question, however, who determines what constitutes a professional hair style?

Dreadlocks or *locs* are one of the natural black hairstyles that has received its share of criticism of the years for appearing unprofessional within the American and British workforces. Notwithstanding, there are some outstanding lawyers who proudly embrace their locs:

Professor Doris Wendy Greene, a speaker at this symposium, is an internationally renowned anti-discrimination law scholar, an activist and a full-time faculty at Drexel University's Thomas R. Kline School of Law. She rocks her sisterlocks dreads hairstyle with pride. Her visibility as a law professor on locs has really helped to breakdown the law industry's rigidity on the ideal image of professionalism. It has also redefined to an extent what is considered an acceptable appearance for lawyers.

Greene focused on combatting hair discrimination from her days in law school. The stigma attached to natural hairstyles, especially black hair, fueled her zeal to stand and fight the discrimination. Her activism was pivotal to the enactment of the CROWN Act (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act). She serves as a legal architect of federal and state-level C.R.O.W.N. Acts, and is also the founder of the [#FreetheHair](#) movement.

For Professor Wendy, transforming the law and policy starts with transforming one's mind. This in extension includes embracing ones natural, racial hair without fear of judgement.

Marcus Shute Jr. is a 34-year old lawyer who wears locs. Shute who is from Nashville in Tennessee started growing his locks sometime in 2002 to the consternation of the law community. Shute reported that he's been told over and over at different stages of his education and career as a lawyer that he won't succeed as an attorney unless he took down his locks.



All the naysaying, however, has not stopped him from wearing his long dreads. In fact, Shute adamantly refuses to cut his dreads, and has worn it for the past 20 years. Currently, he runs his own law firm in Nashville, and is one of the most famous and well sought-after lawyers in Tennessee.

Is he comfortable with his decision to stand up for his cultural heritage? I'll say yes. Shute, in an interview, revealed he deliberately refuses to conform to "standards" and cut his locks in order to prove a point. The point being that one's preferred personal appearance shouldn't affect their professional career. Hairstyle isn't the yardstick for measuring performance or predicting success.

Nonetheless it hasn't been an easy ride for the loc'ed Nashville lawyer. Not everyone applauds his decision to practice the law profession on dreads. Shute narrated how a judge mistook him for a client instead of a law student. According to Shute, he has also been denied and disregarded for promotion because he didn't fit the look of a professional lawyer.

Despite the stigma, for him there is no backing out. He chooses to stay true to himself, and not conform to the ideal lawyer look.

Isaac Ssemakadde, a Ugandan human rights lawyer and the founding director of Legal Brains Trust sparked a debate on social media for wearing dreads. The Ugandan lawyer faced the most criticisms and stigmatization from his fellow Black lawyers. Many of them argued that dreads hairstyles are "unbefitting" for a noble profession like law. Some were even calling for his suspension from the bar for "desecrating" the professional decorum for which lawyers are known. Even highly ranked law professors who should know better were describing dreads as 'unprofessional', insisting that lawyers have a professional look to follow. A look obviously dictated by the whites. This shows the heights of brainwashing and an unquestioned acceptance of whatever standards the white man has put in place and a shameful willingness to trade in black hair/hairstyles in order to be acceptable.

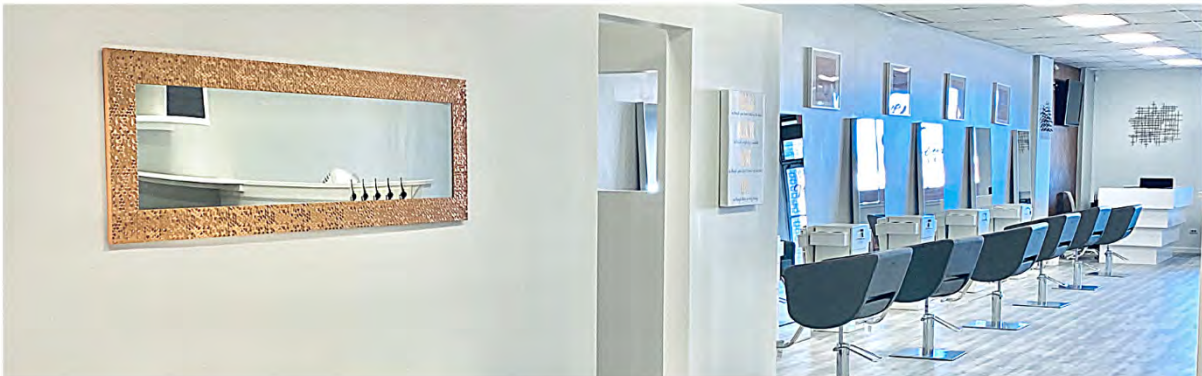
Ssemakadde who identifies as a rebel lawyer reacted to their criticisms by saying he wonders what will happen if he tinted his dreads.

To conclude, I would say, be good at what you do and the type of hair you choose to wear won't be a hindrance to your career success



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My Natural Hair Is Unprofessional

The Impact of Black Hairstyles on Perceived Employment-Related Characteristics

By Kalen Kennedy

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Perceived professionalism is an emerging construct relevant to research conducted within the work context, particularly as it applies to job applicants and new workers. In the business sector, many companies are becoming more tolerant of various dress styles and body modifications (Broadbridge & Fielden, 2018); however, individuals with marginalized identities may still be concerned about the degree to which their often- underrepresented identities are accepted at work (Roberts, 2005). In 2019, the New York City Commission on Human Rights updated its guidelines to prevent discrimination of Black people based on their hairstyle. According to the guideline, Black people are allowed to maintain “natural hair, treated or untreated hairstyles such as locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, fades, Afros, and/or the right to keep hair in an uncut or untrimmed state” (Stowe, 2019). This guideline will likely benefit Black employees throughout New York City; however, its implementation in New York highlights a significant problem still faced by Black people across the United States.

Negative attributes associated with Black individuals’ hair² can be traced back to the transatlantic slave trade. For example, historic publications by White travelers, newspaper articles, runaway slave advertisements, and notes of early American artists include comments about the odd growth and styling of what they refer to as Black people’s “wool” (White & White, 1995). The kinky, curly hair texture of Black people was considered to be one indication of their foreign nature, which engendered an essentialist view of Black otherness and inferiority, thus justifying the inhumane treatment inflicted upon Black people.

Although slavery in the United States ended in 1865, anti-Black stereotypes associated with Black people’s hair have persisted. Contemporarily, Black individuals’ hair is still negatively stereotyped, and research in the fields of sociology and African American studies suggest certain Black hairstyles (e.g., dreadlocks, braids, afros) can influence how Black people are perceived (Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Caldwell, 1991; Jenkins, 2018). As the opening quotes illustrate, when Black women wear their hair in natural (i.e., not chemically straightened or manipulated) hairstyles – such as dreadlocks, afros, or braids – they are often viewed as unprofessional, aggressive, militant, incompetent, criminal, or unattractive. Sociological work has demonstrated that Black women are conscious of the critical lens through which their hair is viewed by society at large and some women consequently exert significant effort to avoid being perceived negatively because of their hairstyle (Bellinger, 2007). This may

² Individuals of African descent typically have hair that is thick, tightly coiled, and naturally drier



involve Black women spending hours preparing their hair for work, spending entire days in the beauty salon, spending large amounts of money on hair supplies, avoiding physical activity, or avoiding going outdoors when it is raining.

Although legal publications have documented many cases of employment discrimination experienced by Black women based on the way they wear their hair (Onwuachi-Willig, 2010), empirical investigations of the influence of Black hair styles on evaluations of Black women in the labor domain are scarce. Negative assessments of Black individuals' hair may lead to assumptions that Black people are lazy, ignorant, unkempt, unpredictable, or unprofessional. Thus, the aim of the present study is to empirically examine the influence of different Black hair styles on the evaluation of Black women's employment-related characteristics and outcomes.

There are countless examples of Black people from whom job offers were rescinded because of their hairstyle. In 2016, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the case of *EEOC v. Catastrophe Management Solutions*, allowing the employer to ban dreadlocks during the hiring process and to rescind job offers based on hairstyle (Greene, 2017). Considering how well documented the effects negative associations with Black hair have on outcomes for Black people, empirical accounts of this phenomenon are scarce in psychology.

Hairstyle as a Within-Race Variable

Research has demonstrated that several within-race variables such as skin tone and Afrocentric facial features influence how Black individuals are treated across a number of context (Maddox, 2004). For example, Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns, and Johnson (2006) found that in cases where the victim of a violent crime was White,

male defendants with more stereotypically Black facial features (i.e., broad nose, full lips, dark skin) were more likely to be sentenced to death. Moreover, Viglione, Hannon, and DeFina (2010) found that Black women with darker skin tones were sentenced more harshly and served more of their sentenced time relative to Black women with lighter skin tones. Research also suggests that lighter skinned Black people, relative to their darker skin counterparts, are paid higher salaries (Allen et al., 2000; Goldsmith, Hamilton, & Darity, 2006, 2007; Keith & Herring, 1991; Mason, 2004), have lower rates of unemployment, and obtain higher occupational prestige (Espino & Franz, 2002; Hill, 2000). This body of work demonstrates that although any Black individual may face racial discrimination, some Black individuals are more susceptible to discrimination than others due to within-race differences.

Although hairstyle has been theorized as a within-race characteristic that influences perception of Black people (Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016; Maddox, 2004; Patton, 2006), few empirical investigations have explored how commonly worn Black hairstyles may influence how Black individuals are evaluated and treated. In fact, to the researcher's



knowledge, only a handful of studies to date have empirically explored this phenomenon with Black targets.

The “Good Hair” study (McGill et al., 2017) explored explicit as well as implicit attitudes about hairstyles commonly worn by Black women. Using a national sample of 4,163 women and men, researchers explicitly inquired about participants’ opinions regarding textured hair – hairstyles that exhibits a prototypically Black hair texture – and smooth hair. McGill and colleagues found that Black women’s textured hair is perceived to be less beautiful, sexy, attractive, and professional than smooth hair. White women perceive afros as significantly less beautiful, sexy, attractive, and professional than Black women. Black women perceive their textured hair as stigmatized, and this perception is supported by their finding that White women display explicit bias against Black women’s textured hair. Further, White women perceive the US to consider afros significantly less beautiful, sexy, and attractive; however, both Black and White women believe that afros are considered in the US to be unprofessional. This finding suggests a common understanding across races of the inherent bias in the US conceptualization of professionalism. Additionally, Black women indicate that if they are wearing a textured hairstyle, they are most likely to wear braids or afros. This would suggest that after straightened styles, braids and afros could be the hairstyles worn most commonly by Black women in stringent professional settings.

McGill and colleagues (2017) also created the first implicit associations test to assess attitudes toward Black women’s hair, the Hair Implicit Association Test (Hair IAT). Researchers found that regardless of race, participants on average showed a moderate level of implicit bias against textured hair. White men and women showed stronger levels of implicit bias against textured hair. These findings would suggest an overall negative perception of all Black hairstyles that exhibits a prototypically Black hair texture; however, the design of the Hair IAT categorized the eight hairstyles as either textured (afro, dreadlocs, twist- out, braids) or smooth (straight, long curls, short curls, and pixie cut). This dichotomization does not allow for quantitative assessment of individual differences in the implicit associations of different textured styles. Therefore, the differences in implicit perceptions of different textured hairstyles cannot replicate the varied explicit perceptions reported in McGill and colleagues qualitative survey.

Prior to the “Good Hair” study, Opie and Phillips (2015) had empirically explored the perceptions of different hairstyles worn by Black women. They investigated whether hairstyles worn by Black women – either Afrocentric (i.e., afros and dreadlocs) or Eurocentric (i.e., straightened, falling past their shoulders) – impact perceptions of Black women’s professionalism and dominance across three studies. In study 1, they presented participants with a headshot of a White woman with straight hair, a Black woman with straightened hair, a Black woman with dreadlocs, or a Black woman with an afro.



Participants were then asked how professional the woman in the headshot was and how likely the target was to succeed in corporate America. Researchers found that the images of the Black and White woman with straight hair were perceived as more professional than the images of the Black woman with an afro and the Black woman with dreadlocks.

Building on the results of Study 1, Study 2 was designed to examine how the manipulation of hairstyle impacts perceived professionalism, the potential mediation by dominance, as well as the potential moderation by participant race. In this study, professionalism was measured using questions created to reflect the lack-of-fit model (Heilman, 1983, 2001). The lack-of-fit model suggests that individuals are penalized for not aligning with common associations made with a particular role, regardless of whether those associations are actual qualifications that would benefit a person's functioning in said role. For example, men are often associated with leadership roles; therefore, women may be particularly scrutinized for their gender when they hold a position of leadership. Researchers found that both Black and White participants perceived the woman wearing Afrocentric hairstyles more negatively than when she was wearing her hair straight; however, Black participants rated the woman significantly more negatively than White participants. Furthermore, Black participants, but not Whites, perceived women with Afrocentric hairstyles as more dominant than those wearing Eurocentric hairstyles. The perceived dominance of the employment candidate also mediated the relationship between Afrocentric hairstyle and professionalism ratings by Black participants; candidates with Afrocentric hairstyles were perceived as more dominant and then rated lower on professionalism. Using the same stimuli and procedure as Study 2, with the same outcome measures from Study 1, Opie and Phillip's Study 3 sought to investigate the robustness of participant race as a moderator in the relationship between hairstyle and perceived professionalism among White and Black female participants. They found that a Black woman wearing Afrocentric hairstyles was perceived to be less professional and less likely to succeed in a corporate position, by White and Black participants; however, they found that the effect was even stronger for Black participants.

The findings of Opie and Phillips (2015) suggest that ratings of professionalism can significantly vary for Black female job applicants based on their hairstyle as well as the evaluator. Black women with Afrocentric hairstyles can be perceived as less professional than Black women with Eurocentric hairstyles under certain contexts. Attribution of dominance could provide some explanation for this differential perception; however, the race of the evaluator plays a significant role in the evaluation of professionalism and the attribution of dominance to Black women who wear their hair in afro and dreadlock styles.

One limitation of Opie and Phillips (2015) studies, however, was the collapsing of two hairstyle conditions (i.e., afro and dreadlocks) into a single condition (i.e., Afrocentric),



when research suggest there may be stereotypes associated with afros that differ from the stereotypes associated with dreadlocs. Both hairstyles are considered Afrocentric because neither hairstyle requires manipulation of prototypically Black hair texture. Though this grouping is reasonable in terms of textural associations, this approach assumes that afros and dreadlocs are perceived similarly when historical evidence would suggest otherwise.

For example, the “Black is beautiful” movement of the 70’s was reified in the large afros worn by Black people; afros have been interpreted through a politicized lens in a way that other Black hairstyles have not (Lemi & Brown, 2019). In fact, Opie and Phillips’ findings suggest significant differences between the perceptions of afros and dreadlocs, as well as potential qualitative differences between the two Black hairstyles. The researchers found that individuals perceived a Black woman with an afro to be significantly less professional and marginally less dominant than the same Black woman wearing dreadlocs. Although researchers did not provide an explanation for these findings, the findings suggest that Black women with afros were perceived differently than Black women with dreadlocs. No existing research has investigated the associations made with distinct Black hairstyles. Considering that afros and dreadlocs are rated differently on a trait association measure of dominance, one could reason that other Black hairstyles (e.g., afros, dreadlocs, cornrows, or straightened/relaxed hair) might vary on character traits as well.

These findings highlight the need for further documentation of associations of Black hairstyles prior to investigating the particular bias expressed toward Black women in the hiring process.



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My professors who hopefully understand why I'm slightly behind in my coursework with putting together this symposium –

- Professor Joseph P. Esposito, Pretrial Practice, George Mason University
- Professor William Henning, Secured Transactions, George Mason University
- Professor Timothy Price, Wills Trusts and Estates
- Professor Scott Burnham, Contract Drafting, Concord Law School, Purdue Global



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The Black Law Students Association (BLSA) of George Mason University, is a component of a nationally incorporated organization. The recruitment and admission of Black students into the law school are two of the foremost concerns of BLSA. BLSA is interested in the admission of persons who demonstrate an active desire to contribute to the Black community.

The Black Law Students Association (BLSA) works to provide a solid academic and social support system for its members. BLSA sponsors many community service activities, including the Adopt-A-School Program, voter registration programs, blood drives, and law clinics.

All funds will be used for events that further BLSA's mission to increase the number of culturally responsible attorneys who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community. *All donations are tax deductible.



BLACK HAIR BIG LAW



Analysis from the Black Hair Legal Professionals Survey

By Angela Mackie-Rutledge

LLM Candidate, George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School

This research was conducted for the Black Hair Big Law Symposium

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The Black Hair Big Law Symposium

"Is natural black hair compatible with working in big law?"

Thursday October 27, 2022

Sponsored by the Black Law Students Association
George Mason University, Antonin Scalia Law School
3301 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, Virginia 22201

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Lunch and learn with food served from 12:00

<http://blackhairbiglaw.com>

Live in person and streaming on Zoom.

Free entry, registration for the live and Zoom events is required



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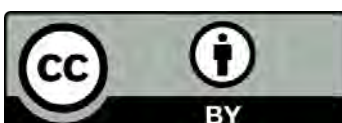




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Intro

To get a deeper understanding of the experiences of legal professionals for the [Big Law Black Hair Symposium](#), I created a survey. Though the initial thought-process was rather informal, the lack of data on the same subject matter made me more focused on making this a critical survey until the point where another academic, with loads of university funding, can research this in a more substantiative way.

I created a survey on SurveyMonkey and distributed the link to the survey in many ways: On LinkedIn, through the [NOVABAA](#) listserv, through Instagram, through [Perfectly Paralegal](#), through word of mouth, and from individuals kindly offering to help-out by forwarding the link to their friends, colleagues and contacts. I'd like to thank everyone who helped get this out there.

I opened the survey on September 10, 2022, and closed it on October 9, 2022. The survey was open to men and women, of all races with a focus on black attorneys' groups and black student groups. The survey was open to attorneys, law students, law professors, law deans, law faculty, law clerks, solicitors, barristers, paralegals, paralegal students, individuals on Training Contracts and Pupillages, CILEX / Chartered legal professionals and retired attorneys. American and British lawyers, law students and paralegals were targeted.

In the end, we had 205 responses. SurveyMonkey did the initial number crunching. The in-depth data analysis was completed by Kingsley Ukwuoma, and incorporated into this report. Mr. Ukwuoma, a biostatistician expert in systematic review and meta-analysis. Mr. Ukwuoma holds a MSc Econometrics and Quantitative Economics from the University of Lagos.



The free version of SurveyMonkey, which I used, isn't ideal for many purposes. However, its ease of use, distribution, data extraction and the fact that it was free to use initially, made it the tool of choice here.

The things that the free version doesn't have which would have yielded better results:

- More than 10 questions per survey
- SPSS extraction
- The ability to brand the survey with our own imagery
- The ability to add pictures. A few people commented that there should have been a picture available for them to see when deciding their hair type.
- It also lacks the ability to collect more than 100 responses. This however meant that I was forced to upgrade only after we had a significant response. Had I realized that I would have had to upgrade to the professional version from the start, I certainly would have asked more questions.

Questions I would have added if I had more than 101 questions available:

- What's your gender?
- How do you self-identify yourself by race?
- How often do you switch up hair styles?
- Are you happy with how your hair looks?
- Have you ever commented negatively on a colleague's hair?
- How long were you at your job before you changed your hairstyle?
- How racially diverse is your office?
- Do you work from home?
- How did you wear your hair during the pandemic?
- Do celebrities influence your hairstyle
- When was the last time you went to a salon to get your hair done?



- Has the C.R.O.W.N. act passed in your city / state? If so how has it affected you?
- How long after you started your job did you change hairstyles?

The ten questions I asked on the survey:

1. How would you classify your natural hair?
2. What is your occupation?
3. How much money do you spend per month on your hair?
4. How do you wear your hair to work?
5. How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?
6. Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?
7. Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?
8. How big is the firm you work for?
9. At work, who do you feel judges your hair most harshly?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Can you tell us about how your hair impacts your work life?

This research itself is adequate for the purposes of our symposium and to get an initial look into the sentiment and experiences of black legal professionals. For professional and PhD-level research a number of adjustments and verifications would need to be made; including a significant increase into the response pool.

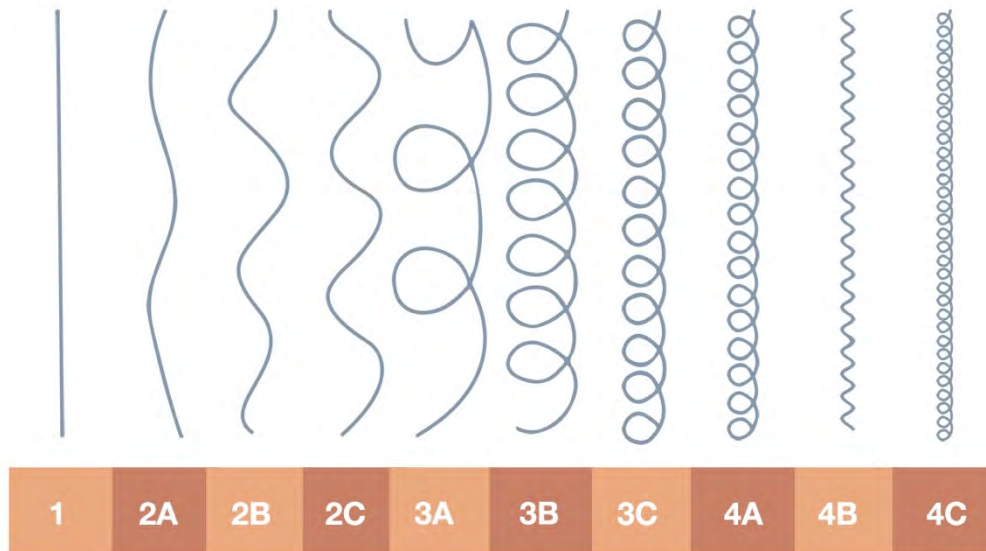
For anyone reading this who is using the research for anything other than the Black Hair Big Law symposium, please exercise caution. Though I am proud of the research I've done here, the sample size isn't big enough and many of the questions aren't particular enough, to make big sweeping generalizations about black people, black lawyers or society in general. From my point of view the sample size is just big enough to get a glimpse into the ongoing racial and diversity difficulties to which this industry, steeped in tradition, is slow to adapt.



What do the numbers tell us?

Hair Type

How would you classify your natural hair?



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A basic overview of the survey tells us that more than half the people who answered the survey had type 4 hair on the [Andrew Walker Hair Typing System](http://blackhairbiglaw.com). Type is kinky, coily hair that many black people have. So whilst my survey doesn't ask for racial classifications, this can be broadly assumed by the type of hair selected. Black people can certainly also have in categories other than type 4. Black and mixed-race people are heavily represented in hair types 3B and 3C. The closer the hair type is to Type 1, the less likely the individual is to be black; though I have not discounted that outright.

Occupation & Firm Size

What is your occupation?

43.90% percent of individuals that answered are lawyers in some capacity: attorneys, government lawyers, prosecutors, retired attorneys etc.³

³ This percentage was recached when factoring in the "other" write in answers.



Law Students:

- 22.93% were law students.⁴
- 8.51% of law students were also paralegals⁵
- 1.46% were students that did not identify as law students.

Paralegals:

- 15.61% were paralegals only
- 17.56% of paralegals were also law students⁶

How big is the firm you work for?

- 14.15% worked at law firms with more that 500 Associates
- 20.00% were students not working at a firm
- 11.22% were solo practitioners
- 12.20% worked at firms with 10 partners or less

Money

How much money do you spend per month on your hair?

According to the survey the majority people spent \$50 or less per month on their hair. 25.8% of those responded spend more than \$100 per month on their hair.

Work hair

Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?

26.47% wear a wash n' go to work. The next popular answer was 'other' with the other section, ponytails, buns and blowouts showed up frequently.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid



Interview hair

How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?

This was the sort of question where “other” told us more information than the numbers themselves. 29.06% responded “other” to the question, “How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for the job. Within “other,” the write-in answers that showed up repeatedly were: Buns, silk presses, blowouts, and ponytails. These are all usually very straight, very polished styles. This question along with the previous question indicates a propensity for legal professionals to style their hair in one particular straight style for the initial job interview, then when employed, switching to some other style.

One must question, why are these individuals interviewing with a straight style rather than a natural, curly or protective style? Is it truly a personal choice? Or is this indicative of the pressure individuals feel to conform to a white European standard?

In 2018, [Legal Cheek](#) ran an article titled, “*It’s virtually impossible to reach the top of City Firms without straight hair.*” Did this article make a sad and racist indictment about employment prospects at the top firms? Or was it further perpetuating the idea that straight hair is not only *de rigueur*, but completely obligatory if one hopes to gain employment at a law firm?

Is wearing straight hair to an interview simply a means to a well-paid job? Without judgement, I remain curious why more of the write-in answers, weren’t “Bantu knots, braids, locs, twists, Afros, etc.” Why weren’t the majority individuals in the survey wearing Banto knots, braids, locs, twists and Afros to their job interviews? This survey did not go in-depth enough to produce an answer to that. Empirical evidence provides some insight that in an industry that is overwhelming white (79.8, according to [Zippia](#)), there’s a financial incentive to shun Afrocentric hairstyles when interviewing for jobs.



Professionalism, work and hair

Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?

60.98% responded that they have changed their hair to feel more professional at work.

Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?

18.63% responded that a colleague or client has remarked negatively about their hair.

At work, who do you feel judges your hair most harshly?

When asked who judges their hair the most harshly, "No one" was the leading answer with 29.6% of responses. The second largest response was, "Myself" at 22.93%. Of the named racial classifications selected, White women were gauged as being the harshest judges of hair at work 15.61%, followed Black women at 12.20% then followed by White men at 11.71%. Curiously, Hispanic men and women, Asian men and women and Black men were found to be the least judgmental in this regard.

What they told us

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Can you tell us about how your hair impacts your work life?

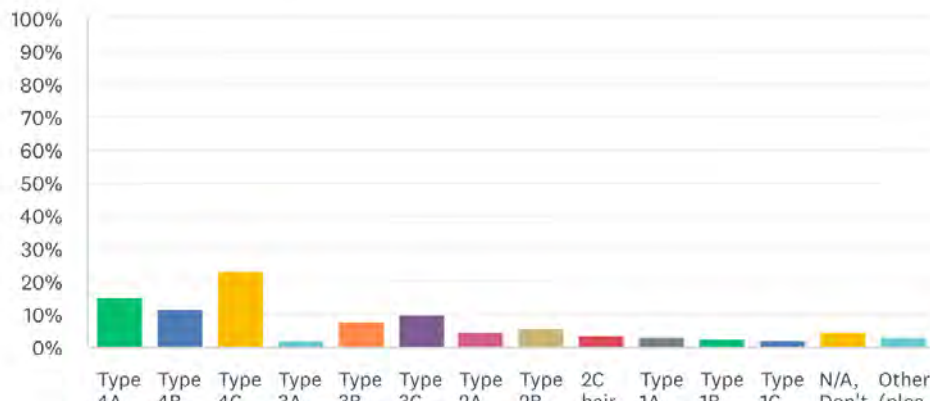
44.39% left comments when asked, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Can you tell us about how your hair impacts your work life?" These comments are reported in full at the end of the survey results.



Question 1 How would you classify your natural hair?

How would you classify your natural hair?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Type 4A hair is full of tight coils. It has an "S" pattern when stretched | 15.12% 31 |
| Type 4B hair has a less defined pattern of curls and looks more like a "Z" as the hair bends with very sharp angles. | 11.71% 24 |
| Type 4C hair, the most coily and dense of all | 23.41% 48 |
| Type 3A hair is very shiny and loose | 1.95% 4 |
| Type 3B hair has a medium amount of curls, ranging from bouncy ringlets (spiral-like loose curls of hair) to tight corkscrews (spiral-shaped corkscrew curls). | 7.80% 16 |
| Type 3C hair has a defined curl that holds a tight, S-shaped pattern. "3C hair is dense, and most people who have this hair type have curly and coiled strands blended into their hair pattern." | 10.24% 21 |
| Type 2A hair is fine and thin. It is relatively easy to handle from a styling perspective because it can easily be straightened or curled. | 4.88% 10 |
| Type 2B hair characteristically has natural waves that tend to adhere to the shape of your head. | 5.85% 12 |
| 2C hair type is the waviest hair type before you get into fully curly territory. It's characterized by medium to coarse hair strands with a prominent wavy texture that closely resembles curls. | 3.90% 8 |
| Type 1A hair is described as fine, very thin, and soft with a noticeable shine. | 2.93% 6 |
| Type 1B hair is medium-textured and has more body than Type 1A hair. | 2.44% 5 |
| Type 1C hair is the most resistant to curly styling and relatively coarse compared to other Type 1 hair types. | 1.95% 4 |
| N/A, Don't know | 4.88% 10 |
| Other (please specify) | 2.93% 6 |
| TOTAL | 205 |

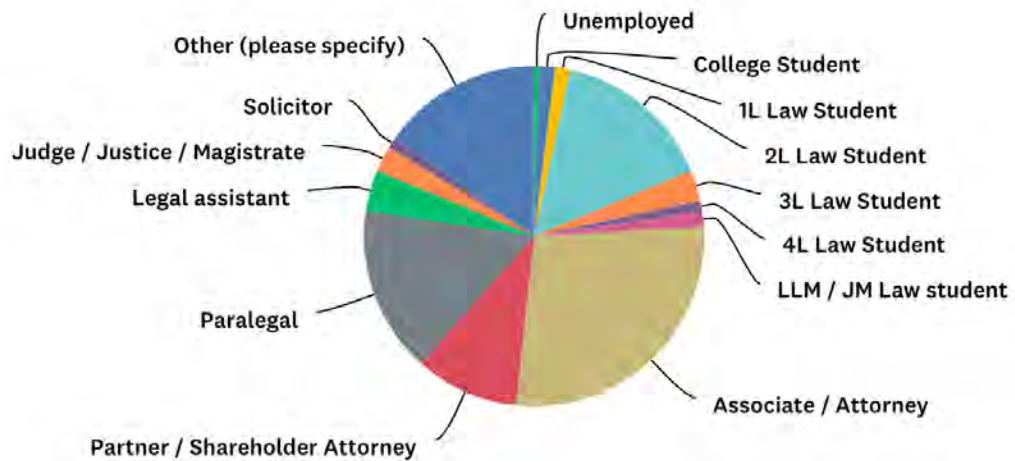
Other responses

- Hair is fine and thick. Relatively straight and easy to manipulated
- Mix of 4C and 4B
- Between 1A & 2A
- Male Caucasian Blond hair (fine?)
- Shaved close to scalp
- My hair is dreadlocks – so unsure how to categorise



Question 2 What is your occupation? What is your occupation?

Answered: 203 Skipped: 2



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| ▼ Unemployed | 0.49% | 1 |
| ▼ College Student | 1.48% | 3 |
| ▼ 1L Law Student | 1.48% | 3 |
| ▼ 2L Law Student | 15.27% | 31 |
| ▼ 3L Law Student | 2.96% | 6 |
| ▼ 4L Law Student | 0.99% | 2 |
| ▼ LLM / JM Law student | 1.48% | 3 |
| ▼ Associate / Attorney | 27.59% | 56 |
| ▼ Partner / Shareholder Attorney | 9.85% | 20 |
| ▼ Paralegal | 15.76% | 32 |
| ▼ Legal assistant | 3.94% | 8 |
| ▼ Law Intern | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Summer Associate | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Honors Associate | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Judge / Justice / Magistrate | 2.46% | 5 |
| ▼ Solicitor | 0.99% | 2 |
| ▼ Solicitor Advocate | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Barrister | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ CILEX Chartered Legal Professional | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ On a Training Contract | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ On a Pupilage | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Other (please specify) | Responses 15.27% | 31 |
| TOTAL | | 203 |



Other responses:

- Judicial Assistant
- Law Internship Coordinator
- Government attorney
- Association Dean and Association Professor
- Law Professor
- Solo Attorney
- 2L law Student / Administrative Support Colleague at Bloomingdales
- Paralegal and Law Student
- Law Professor
- 2L Law Student an paralegal
- Law Professor
- In House attorney
- Senior Prosecutor
- Courtroom Clerk
- Retired attorney
- Solo practitioner
- Compliance officer
- Vice-President of Litigation In-House
- Assist Attorney General
- Prosecutor
- Contract Manager
- Paralegal & Bookkeeper
- Government Staffer
- I'm both a paralegal and a 1L
- D&I Professional
- I am a court advocate and legal consultant

Table 4.1c below shows that Associate/Attorney made up the highest percentage (27.3%) of occupation of the participants, while Unemployed made up the lowest (0.5%).



Table 4.1c.

What is your occupation?

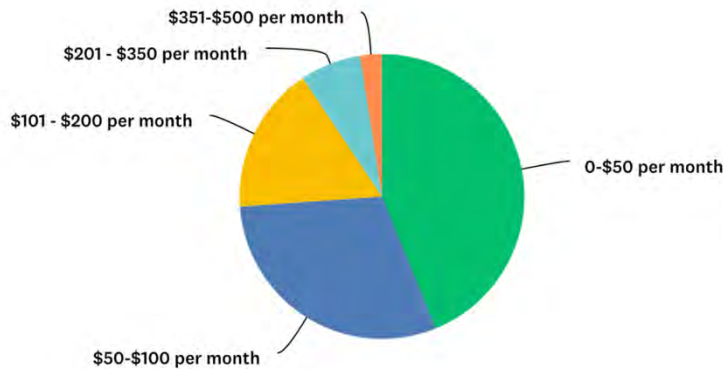
| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1L Law Student | 3 | 1.5 |
| 2L Law Student | 31 | 15.1 |
| 3L Law Student | 6 | 2.9 |
| 4L Law Student | 2 | 1 |
| Associate / Attorney | 56 | 27.3 |
| College Student | 3 | 1.5 |
| Judge / Justice / Magistrate | 5 | 2.4 |
| Legal assistant | 8 | 3.9 |
| LLM / JM Law student | 3 | 1.5 |
| Other (please specify) | 33 | 16.1 |
| Paralegal | 32 | 15.6 |
| Partner / Shareholder Attorney | 20 | 9.8 |
| Solicitor | 2 | 1 |
| Unemployed | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total | 205 | 100 |

Question 3: How much money do0 you spend per month on your hair?



How much money do you spend per month on your hair?

Answered: 203 Skipped: 2



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| ▼ 0-\$50 per month | 43.84% | 89 |
| ▼ \$50-\$100 per month | 30.05% | 61 |
| ▼ \$101 - \$200 per month | 16.75% | 34 |
| ▼ \$201 - \$350 per month | 6.90% | 14 |
| ▼ \$351-\$500 per month | 2.46% | 5 |
| ▼ \$501 + per month | 0.00% | 0 |
| TOTAL | | 203 |

On the basis of how much money spent per month on hair, \$0 - \$50 was spent per month by 43.4% of the participants, which makes up almost half of the total. About 29.8% spent \$50-\$100 per month and on the upscale, about 2.4% of the participants spent \$351-\$500 per month

Table 4.1d.

How much money do you spend per month on your hair?

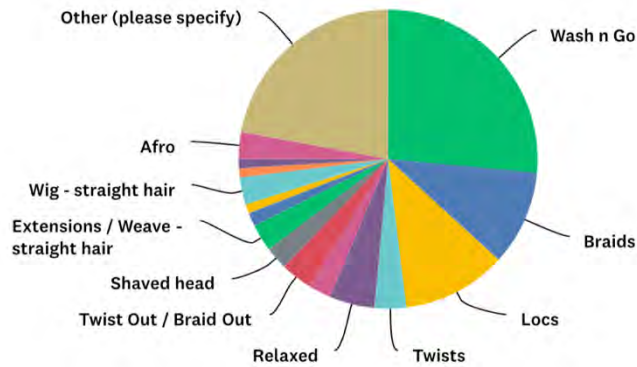
| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 0-\$50 per month | 89 | 43.4 |
| \$50-\$100 per month | 61 | 29.8 |
| \$101 - \$200 per month | 34 | 16.6 |
| \$201 - \$350 per month | 14 | 6.8 |
| \$351-\$500 per month | 5 | 2.4 |



Question 4: How do you wear your hair to work?

How do you wear your hair to work?

Answered: 204 Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| ▼ Wash n Go | 26.47% | 54 |
| ▼ Braids | 10.29% | 21 |
| ▼ Locs | 11.27% | 23 |
| ▼ Twists | 3.43% | 7 |
| ▼ Bantu knots | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Relaxed | 4.90% | 10 |
| ▼ Deva Curl | 2.45% | 5 |
| ▼ Gina Curl | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Twist Out / Braid Out | 3.43% | 7 |
| ▼ Shaved head | 2.45% | 5 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - straight hair | 2.94% | 6 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - wavy hair | 1.47% | 3 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - kinky / coily | 0.98% | 2 |
| ▼ Wig - straight hair | 2.94% | 6 |
| ▼ Wig - wavy hair | 0.98% | 2 |
| ▼ Wig - kinky / coily | 0.98% | 2 |
| ▼ Afro | 2.94% | 6 |
| ▼ Other (please specify) | Responses 22.06% | 45 |
| TOTAL | | 204 |

Other responses:

- Curls with straightener
- Ponytail or down
- Loose curls from hot rollers
- Silk press
- Dry wax
- Natural hair blowout/straight



- The style switches every one to two months from Bantu knots, braids, crochet, pressed
- A mix of both protective and natural stylings but most often some sort of protective style
- Ponytail
- Brush and wax
- Natural twist or blow out
- Different ways
- Bun, French braid, ponytail down and styled
- Natural flat iron
- Passion twist braids for locks (protective styles)
- Comb over fade / tape up
- All

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Each distribution of participants' responses, noting the number of observations or frequencies (denoted as N) and the associated percentages (%).

As represented in Table 4.1a below, from the question "How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?" about 4.9% (N = 10), wore their hair as *Extensions/Weave - straight hair* to job interview while 9.3% (N = 19) and 2.4% (N = 5) wore their hair as *Relaxed* and *Wig - straight hair* respectively. The three hair types are jointly grouped as "European hairstyles", which makes up a total of 16.6% (N = 34) proportion to the total of 205 responses. The tabular representation also shows the frequencies and percentages for other hair styles worn when interviewed for a job.

Table 4.1a.

How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?



| | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Afro | 6 | 2.9 |
| Bantu knots | 1 | 0.5 |
| Braids | 20 | 9.8 |
| Cut short, men's style - #1 or #2 razor | 7 | 3.4 |
| Deva Curl | 3 | 1.5 |
| Extensions / Weave - kinky / coily | 2 | 1 |
| Extensions / Weave - wavy hair | 5 | 2.4 |
| *Extensions / Weave - straight hair | 10 | 4.9 |
| Locs | 11 | 5.4 |
| Other (please specify) | 59 | 28.8 |
| *Relaxed | 19 | 9.3 |
| Shaved head | 7 | 3.4 |
| Twist Out / Braid Out | 3 | 1.5 |
| Twists | 8 | 3.9 |
| Wash n Go | 34 | 16.6 |
| Wig - kinky / coily | 1 | 0.5 |
| *Wig - straight hair | 5 | 2.4 |
| Wig - wavy hair | 2 | 1 |
| Others | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 205 | 100 |

*European hairstyles which includes Extensions / Weave - straight hair, Relaxed and Wig - straight hair.

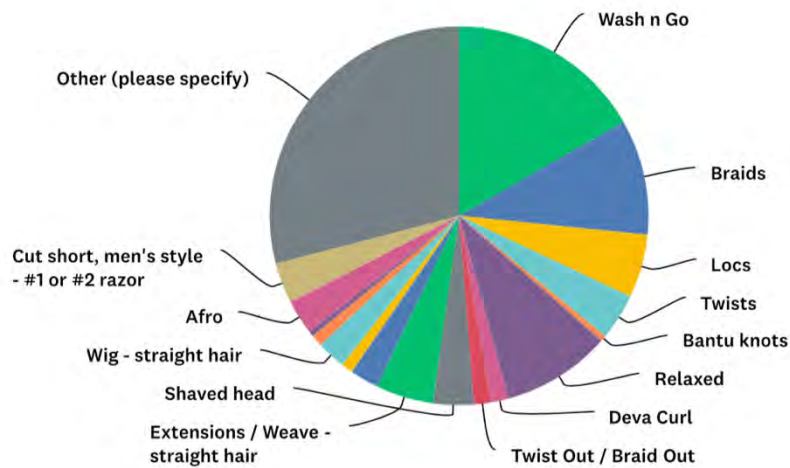
As represented in Table 4.1b below, from the question "How do you wear your hair to work?" about 2.9% (N = 6), wore their hair as *Extensions/Weave - straight hair to work* while 4.9% (N = 10) and 2.9% (N = 6) wore their hair as *Relaxed* and *Wig - straight hair* respectively. The three hair are jointly grouped as "European hairstyles", which makes up a total of 10.7% (N = 22) proportion to the total of 205 responses. The tabular representation also shows the frequencies and percentages for other hair styles worn to work



Question 5: How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?

How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?

Answered: 203 Skipped: 2



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| ▼ Wash n Go | 16.75% | 34 |
| ▼ Braids | 9.85% | 20 |
| ▼ Locs | 5.42% | 11 |
| ▼ Twists | 3.94% | 8 |
| ▼ Bantu knots | 0.49% | 1 |
| ▼ Relaxed | 9.36% | 19 |
| ▼ Deva Curl | 1.48% | 3 |
| ▼ Gina Curl | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Twist Out / Braid Out | 1.48% | 3 |
| ▼ Shaved head | 3.45% | 7 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - straight hair | 4.93% | 10 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - wavy hair | 2.46% | 5 |
| ▼ Extensions / Weave - kinky / coily | 0.99% | 2 |
| ▼ Wig - straight hair | 2.46% | 5 |
| ▼ Wig - wavy hair | 0.99% | 2 |
| ▼ Wig - kinky / coily | 0.49% | 1 |
| ▼ Afro | 2.96% | 6 |
| ▼ Cut short, men's style - #1 or #2 razor | 3.45% | 7 |
| ▼ Other | 0.00% | 0 |
| ▼ Other (please specify) | Responses 29.06% | 59 |
| TOTAL | | 203 |



Other responses

- Blow dried, smoothed then curled
- Light curls from hot rollers
- Silk press
- Wax dry wax
- Natural blow out/straight
- Press and curled
- Ponytail
- Down and brushed
- Straight
- Blown out
- Either flat iron straight or curl
- NA
- Slick back low bun
- Straight
- Ponytail
- Back ponytail
- Comb over feed/tape up
- Blow dry
- Bun
- Ponytail with a bun
- Same
- Puff (Natural hair pulled back into a puff)
- Hair in a bun
- Bun
- Blowout/straightened natural hair
- Buns
- Twist updo
- Blowout/flat iron
- I'm solo so it doesn't matter. But I did have natural hair and bleached it blonde. I interviewed for a judicial opening. Sure they had issues with that.
- Pressed
- Bun
- Silk press
- Straightened
- Straight down
- Flat ironed
- Silk press
- Slicked back bun
- Blown out
- Wash, dry, style with product
- Straightened
- Blow dry straight
- Silk Press
- Style with heat tools
- Did SCO this past summer. Had braids in my head shot, went every day with wash and go.
- Blow dried
- Hair pulled back in a bun
- Low bun
- Twisted or braided up to
- Straight blown out and flat iron
- Silk press slick bun
- I wear my locks under a turban
- Bun
- Silk Press
- Roller set
- Braid
- Straight



Table 4.1a.

How did you wear your hair when you interviewed for your job?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Afro | 6 | 2.9 |
| Bantu knots | 1 | 0.5 |
| Braids | 20 | 9.8 |
| Cut short, men's style - #1 or #2 razor | 7 | 3.4 |
| Deva Curl | 3 | 1.5 |
| Extensions / Weave - kinky / coily | 2 | 1 |
| Extensions / Weave - wavy hair | 5 | 2.4 |
| *Extensions / Weave - straight hair | 10 | 4.9 |
| Locs | 11 | 5.4 |
| Other (please specify) | 59 | 28.8 |
| *Relaxed | 19 | 9.3 |
| Shaved head | 7 | 3.4 |
| Twist Out / Braid Out | 3 | 1.5 |
| Twists | 8 | 3.9 |
| Wash n Go | 34 | 16.6 |
| Wig - kinky / coily | 1 | 0.5 |
| *Wig - straight hair | 5 | 2.4 |
| Wig - wavy hair | 2 | 1 |
| Others | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 205 | 100 |

*European hairstyles which includes Extensions / Weave - straight hair, Relaxed and Wig - straight hair.

As represented in Table 4.1b below, from the question "How do you wear your hair to work?" about 2.9% (N = 6), wore their hair as *Extensions/Weave - straight hair to work* while 4.9% (N = 10) and 2.9% (N = 6) wore their hair as *Relaxed* and *Wig - straight hair* respectively. The three hair are jointly grouped as "European hairstyles", which makes up a total of 10.7% (N = 22) proportion to the total of 205 responses. The tabular representation also shows the frequencies and percentages for other hair styles worn to work.

Table 4.1b.

How do you wear your hair to work?



| | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Afro | 6 | 2.9 |
| Braids | 21 | 10.2 |
| Deva Curl | 5 | 2.4 |
| Extensions / Weave - kinky / coily | 2 | 1 |
| Extensions / Weave - wavy hair | 3 | 1.5 |
| Extensions / Weave - straight hair | 6 | 2.9 |
| Locs | 23 | 11.2 |
| Other (please specify) | 46 | 22.5 |
| Relaxed | 10 | 4.9 |
| Shaved head | 5 | 2.4 |
| Twist Out / Braid Out | 7 | 3.4 |
| Twists | 7 | 3.4 |
| Wash n Go | 54 | 26.3 |
| Wig - kinky / coily | 2 | 1 |
| Wig - straight hair | 6 | 2.9 |
| Wig - wavy hair | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 205 | 100 |

Comparing how women wore their hair when interviewed for a job and how they wore it going to work. Table 4.1a and 4.1b mirrors the comparison at interview and work phase.

In the case of Extensions/Weave - straight hair, 4.9% (N = 10) and 2.9% (N = 6) to interview and to work, this indicates a drop in the number women who wore Extensions/Weave - straight hair by 2% (N = 4).

In the case of Relaxed, 9.3% (N = 19) and 4.9% (N = 10) to interview and to work, this indicates an increase in the number women who relaxed their hair by 4.4% (N = 9).

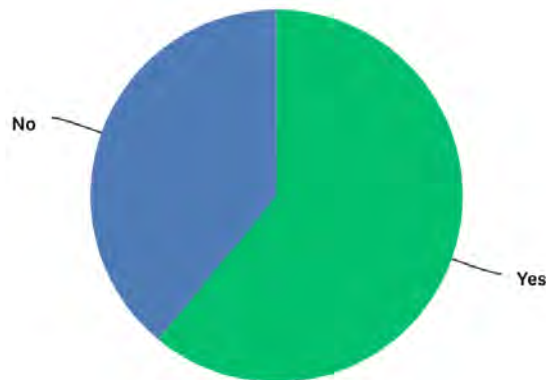
In the case of Wig - straight hair, 2.4% (N = 5) and 2.9% (N = 6) to interview and to work, this indicates a slight increase in the number women who wore wig - straight hair by 0.5% (N = 1).



It is concluded that women are wearing straight hair and relaxed hair more at work than at interview.

Question 6: Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?
 Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|------------|
| Yes | 60.98% 125 |
| No | 39.02% 80 |
| TOTAL | 205 |

As represented in Table 4.1e below, from the question "Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?" about 61% (N = 125) said that they have made changes to their hairstyle to feel more professional at work. However, 39% (N = 80) said they did not make any changes to their hair to feel more professional at work.

Table 4.1e.

Have you ever changed your hair to feel more professional at work?

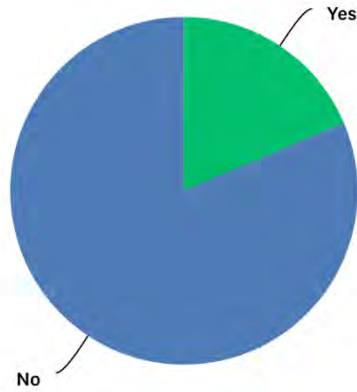
| | Frequency | Percent |
|-----|-----------|---------|
| No | 80 | 39 |
| Yes | 125 | 61 |



Question 7: Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?

Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?

Answered: 204 Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 18.63% | 38 |
| No | 81.37% | 166 |
| TOTAL | | 204 |

As represented in Table 4.1f below, from the question “Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?” about 18.5% (N = 38) said that a colleague or client have made a negative remark about their hair while 81% (N = 166) said that *no* colleague or client have made negative remark on their hair.

Table 4.1f.

Has a colleague or client ever remarked negatively about your hair?

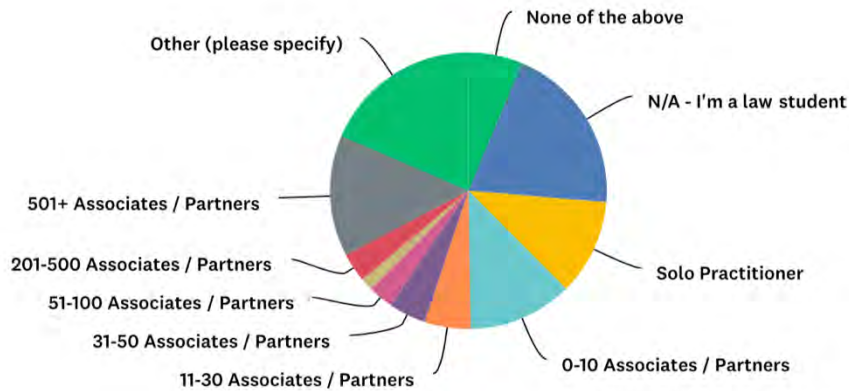
| | Frequency | Percent |
|-----|-----------|---------|
| No | 166 | 81 |
| Yes | 38 | 18.5 |



Question 8: How big is the firm you work for?

How big is the firm you work for?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| None of the above | 6.34% | 13 |
| N/A - I'm a law student | 20.00% | 41 |
| Solo Practitioner | 11.22% | 23 |
| 0-10 Associates / Partners | 12.20% | 25 |
| 11-30 Associates / Partners | 5.37% | 11 |
| 31-50 Associates / Partners | 4.39% | 9 |
| 51-100 Associates / Partners | 2.93% | 6 |
| 101-200 Associates / Partners | 1.46% | 3 |
| 201-500 Associates / Partners | 3.41% | 7 |
| 501+ Associates / Partners | 14.15% | 29 |
| Other (please specify) | Responses 18.54% | 38 |
| TOTAL | | 205 |

Other responses

- Federal government
- In-house
- Corporate legal department
- In house WFH
- In house counsel
- Law School
- Law School faculty
- I work in a corporate setting
- 44+ law faculty
- In house
- Court
- Big Bank
- Working outside of the legal field while in school
- Currently unemployed
- In house now
- I work for a management consulting firm, legal team has about 50 attorneys
- I work in circuit court
- Never work for a last firm
- N/A

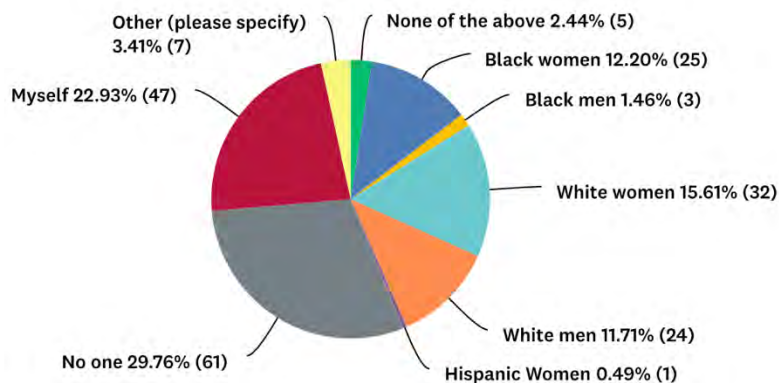


- 200
- 7K employees
- In house at TV production company
- When I worked at a firm we had over 600 attorneys
- Government
- 200 Assistant Attorneys General
- 30 people in Government office
- Government
- Currently Freelance
- Corporate Legal
- Government
- I do not work in a law firm
- I'm in house corporate
- Call center
- I work in a large organization with 501+ employees
- I don't work for a firm. I work for the government
- Government agency attorney
- Government
- Federal Public Defender

Question 9: At work, who judges your hair the most harshly?

At work, who do you feel judges your hair most harshly?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| None of the above (1) | 2.44% | 5 |
| Black women (2) | 12.20% | 25 |
| Black men (3) | 1.46% | 3 |
| White women (4) | 15.61% | 32 |
| White men (5) | 11.71% | 24 |
| Hispanic Women (6) | 0.49% | 1 |
| Hispanic Men (7) | 0.00% | 0 |
| Asian Women (8) | 0.00% | 0 |
| Asian men (9) | 0.00% | 0 |
| No one (10) | 29.76% | 61 |
| Myself (11) | 22.93% | 47 |
| Other (please specify) (12) | Responses 3.41% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 205 |



Other responses

- White women and men
- I don't care what others think
- Not sure
- When worn natura, I don't feel judged but rather treated as a spectacle in the eyes of my non-black colleagues
- Because I wear a turban, I may get the odd comment from person who are Sikh or form the Asian community (UK)

As represented in Table 4.1g below, from the question "At work, who do you feel judges your hair most harshly?" about 29.8% (N = 61) opined that *no one* has judged their hair harshly; which made up the highest proportion to total. About 22.9% (N = 47) self-judged their hair harshly. Also, 15.6% and White Women (15.6%) and Black Women (12.2%) judges their hair harshly.

Table 4.1g.

At work, who do you feel judges your hair most harshly?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Black men | 3 | 1.5 |
| Black women | 25 | 12.2 |
| Hispanic Women | 1 | 0.5 |
| Myself | 47 | 22.9 |
| No one | 61 | 29.8 |
| None of the above | 5 | 2.4 |
| Other (please specify) | 7 | 3.4 |
| White men | 24 | 11.7 |
| White women | 32 | 15.6 |

Question 10: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Can you tell us how your hair impacts your work life



How does your hair affect your work life?

| How does your hair impact your work life? | Survey respondent ID |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>“Thankfully, I haven’t encountered too much negativity from others at work about my hair but it’s a constant internal struggle where I feel the need to look “professional” to avoid getting negative feedback from colleagues. I had loose natural hair for more than a decade but decided to loc my hair 2 months ago, partly because I wanted to spend less time in the morning before work getting my hair done.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114129871622 |
| <i>“I had a Caucasian judge comment that my hair was wild and eccentric when I had a wig on. I’ve had Caucasian women ask to touch my hair when I wore it natural.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114129662209 |
| <i>“I feel that I keep my locs maintained, but natural things such as frizz and new growth make other Black people question me. I was asked how I’d wear it for my externship interview and I hadn’t thought about it prior to that. I ended up just pulling it back into a low ponytail, but refused to get a retwist for an interview just because fellow Black students thought I should.”</i> | Survey respondent, Dwan Samuel, Class of 2024 Mitchell Hamline School of Law |
| <i>“I work for a White female attorney who offered me above what I was initially planning to ask for and has given me two bonuses in less than two months. It’s unfortunate that some</i> | |



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| <i>care so much about appearance and less about work product. I hope that this changes and that we change the way we view each other. “</i> | |
| <i>“Yes it surprises people. I wrote an article about it on Above the Law.” https://abovethelaw.com/2021/08/are-dreadlocks-unprofessional/</i> | Survey respondent, Joseline Jean-Louis Hardrick |
| <i>“I chose places to work where it seemed I would be accepted as myself, no matter how I wore my hair.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114127128666 |
| <i>“It takes me so much time to get ready when my hair is out than when I have braids.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126985905 |
| <i>“I have been less inclined to wear my hair in its natural state or in twist/braid outs when appearing in court. I am more likely to wear it in a bun.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126972109 |
| <i>“As head of Diversity, equity, and inclusion for our 7k person firm, I make it a point to wear my hair natural. My philosophy is if I cannot feel comfortable being myself, then how can other employees from under-represented populations feel comfortable being themselves. True authenticity is not something we should be willing to compromise. I reference the Crown Act as an example and am willing to advocate for any employee who believes they are being treated differently because of their hairstyle.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126866097 |
| <i>“You should include pictures of the various hair types that you are describing to help the person answering the survey. That being said, I think this is great survey. Happy to help.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126615970 |
| <i>“I am practically retired. Hair has stopped being an issue. (Thank God).”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126533777 |
| <i>“It is probably a good idea to find a place of employment where how you wear your hair is not super important to your employer. I am a senior attorney and I do not believe that my hair really impacts my work life.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126462767 |
| <i>“I believe that it is a subconscious bias for most of the people I interact with for work, not overt racism - in my experience.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126373259 |



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| <i>Nevertheless, there is a very recognizable difference in interactions when my hair is straight vs. natural curls. I think because of colonial/mainstream beauty standards, which obviously is rooted in racial/ethnic differences."</i> | |
| <i>My hair doesn't impact my work life</i> | Survey respondent ID 114126347296 |
| <i>"I always interview for a job with a straight hair wig (I've been natural for over 20 years). After about 30 days I start wearing my hair in its natural state."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114125186532 |
| <i>"I've never had an issue with my hair from male peers, judges, nor bosses."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114125072626 |
| <i>"Never had an issue with my hair."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114125061915 |
| <i>"It gets annoying when it's too long and I throw it up more often"</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124858049 |
| <i>"I'm not necessarily impacted but I do know that when I change it up, I'll have to deal with all of the comments about how it was done, how long did it take, is that your real hair, etc. Insert eyeroll."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124586101 |
| <i>"I often find that I feel if I have meetings with clients or trials, I feel the need to wear my hair in a slicked back style or straighten it to avoid the feeling of judgment of my hair looking like I don't do anything and am lazy rather than celebrating and letting my hair be as natural as possible."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124584523 |
| <i>"Extensions or wigs for the interview and one month in. I need my work to outshine any negativity that may have about my hair."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124570723 |
| <i>"My go to for an interview is always straightened/blown out and pulled back for a neat up do. I feel like I have to wait until I'm well-known for my knowledge and work ethic before it's okay to let my curls pop in their natural glory. Otherwise, it feels like we're judged by what's on our head, rather than what's in it."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124556214 |
| <i>"It doesn't."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124491141 |



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| <i>“Right now in the non-profit world, it’s better. When I worked for a law firm, I had to pretty much wear my hair relaxed as that was what was expected. Never again.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124362459 |
| <i>“My hairstyle has no impact on my daily job.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124331027 |
| <i>“I feel as though I need to wear my hair in a tight bun in order to make white people feel safe. Example: I grocery shop at Walmart and if I wear my curly hair out, I am followed around & treated like a thief even though I have been going to this particular store for years!! This is the same feeling at work- I am trusted less based on white folks inability to understand that my hair has nothing to do with my damn character! It's hard to accept that some people will always hate minorities and then to ruin my hair to appease these their beauty standards, is now in the past. I embrace my differences and proudly stand talk and walk with confidence!”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114124039520 |
| <i>“Years ago I would regularly straighten my hair because I couldn't deal with my curls but I have learned to embrace them. My area is very culturally diverse so I don't feel any negativity over how I wear my hair at work.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123988819 |
| <i>“When I was younger and earlier in my career I would dye my hair (purple/pinks). I stopped and ultimately ended up needing to change firms in order to be promoted.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123655158 |
| <i>“I'm in the Houston area and it's rare to see Black coworkers wearing their hair relaxed. I'm here for it!”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123414181 |
| <i>“Because of my long locs, I feel inclined to wear business professional attire every day. i figure that if they're going to stare at my hair the next thing they notice might as well be my tie. hopefully one day that won't be true.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123404010 |
| <i>“Very minimally. Grooming facial hair only thing I have to keep on top of.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123365259 |
| <i>“I am white. One time a colleague made fun of my hair looking too clean cut.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123274957 |
| <i>“I've never had anyone discriminate against my hair in the civilian world but did have trouble staying in regulation with braids/twists while in the military. I relaxed it so as not to have</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123226608 |



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| <i>that issue. I wear my hair covered now and no ones ever said anything about my scarf. I still relax once or twice a year.”</i> | |
| <i>“As always we deal with uneducated comments like ‘I didn’t know that your hair was that long.’”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114123082921 |
| <i>“I’m grateful to work for a diverse organization. My legal team includes other black women who also wear protective styles.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122886928 |
| <i>“In the beginning I was very conscious about my locs in the workplace, specially during the “ugly phase”. But over time I’ve gained more confidence and I always stand ready to defend my hair choices, although I’ve never had to.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122794017 |
| <i>“Hair has not had any noticeable impact on my professional experience in the law. I did spend time in my transition from law student to practicing attorney thinking a bit about what styles I wanted for my job full-time job in big law but it was more about wanting styles that are low maintenance and less about whether the hair would be accepted at the firm.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122664657 |
| <i>“I am very cognizant of my hair when I get ready for work each day. I don’t feel great about saying this, but I try to play it safe. Whenever I wear my hair natural (wash and go) I get questions and comments about my hair (e.g., did you cut it, how do you get it to look like that, etc.).”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122609074 |
| <i>“I have changed my hair mostly with regard to perceptions by those outside my firm (opposing counsel/court) so as not to be viewed as young. “</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122606416 |
| <i>“I don’t get negative comments on my hair. But I do feel my hair is a topic of decision at work more than others. White legal assistants in particular tend to be interested in my hair and give me a lot of compliments or may ask questions when I change it. While it is not ill intentioned, I do find it unnecessary to discuss at length in the workplace and find my white colleagues experience this less (given they tend to change their hairstyles less).”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122600651 |
| <i>“Hair impacts my work life because I won’t come in to the office if my hair isn’t in good shape. I dread the days when I can’t get a hair appointment or there’s only one available</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122567680 |



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| <i>during the work week. And I hate having to change styles too quickly because it always gets comments! I wore a wig for one week in between styles and everyone was so surprised and commented when the next week I had braids again."</i> | |
| <i>"I went natural only a year or two into practicing, some 15 years ago. It's mostly been positive, but I've definitely dealt with people wanting to pet it, or comment negatively on my hair routine, or things like that. I admittedly do NOT wear my hair in a full afro for court hearings. I will wear a twist-out, but normally it's in twists or plaited in some way for court."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122462831 |
| <i>"I wear wigs now to save time on my hair because I used to spend a lot of time styling my hair for a professional look. I also spent a lot of time thinking about how to style my hair to reduce any reaction to a different look. Also no one has said anything to me about my hair except for a compliment years ago. But I definitely think people talk about my hair."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122385462 |
| <i>My hair impacts my life by making me walk taller, prouder, beautiful and blacker. I am happy with who I am and unapologetic in my appearance. I wear my crown with pride and because of such, gives me more incentive to break down any discriminatory, systemic barriers about Rastafarians in the legal profession</i> | Survey respondent ID 114122015782 |
| <i>"I love my natural hair but feel like it's a distraction and some colleagues are extremely uncomfortable when I have my hair in its natural state. I am often the only woman and person of color in the room. I basically just have decided if I want to be comfortable or if I need to make them comfortable. I remember preparing for an oral argument before the First Circuit Court of Appeals and trying to decide if I should keep my braids in or wear some other style. I decided I needed to spend more time preparing for my argument than dealing with my hair and left the braids in. I realized that after years of attending arguments with my colleagues I had never seen a black woman at all so either way I would stick out. Fortunately, I won my argument but if I had lost, I would have wondered if my hair had anything to do with the decision."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121947154 |
| <i>"Depending on the court, I use to change my hair. As a black woman in many jurisdictions, the court assumes I am either a party to the case or the court reporter. So I would style my hair</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121832338 |



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| <i>“differently and in fact, dress differently to set myself apart or rather to attempt to set myself apart.”</i> | |
| <i>“I’ve had locs for over a decade. I first got locs in 2005/2006 and had them for 5 years. I removed them and put them in smaller so that I could style my hair in different ways. I’ve had my small locs since 2011. While I never get negative comments about them, I believe it’s because they are “tame” enough not to garner any type of reaction other than compliments. I love my locs because they are low maintenance, but I also recognize that it’s likely because they are small that they’ve never caused any issues for me professionally speaking.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121448179 |
| <i>“I was an attorney for almost 25 years before becoming a judge. As I’ve been rooted in the legal community for quite a while, I feel that my work ethic & reputation Paved the way for me to feel confident & carefree about how I wore my hair or what people thought.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121424181 |
| <i>“Feel more self-conscious if I do get braids so I tend not to wear them to work due to concerns of professionalism.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121385928 |
| <i>“I never want my appearance to be a distraction, hair included. Practicing in courts in which mostly white men practice and preside, makes me think about how my appearance may affect the perceived effectiveness of my advocacy.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121155884 |
| <i>“I have worked in big law, for a judge, and for the US Government. I have had various styles of natural hair that I wear. At no time have I ever felt uncomfortable about wearing my hair the way I want to wear it.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121110521 |
| <i>“I covered my locs with a wig (for reasons outside of work) and was definitely viewed differently at work.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121083578 |
| <i>“I was told to change my hair when I entered law school. In law school, when in mock trial competitions my hair was judged and questioned by my coaches. Despite it all, I am who I am. My hair is a part of who I am. Thankful for my Howard University experience that helped solidify that being Black is not a badge of shame. Neither is my hair.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114121001555 |
| <i>“While I’m not necessarily your target survey responder, I do support women feeling confident and beautiful however they define that.”</i> | Survey respondent ID 114120997879 |



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| <i>"It doesn't. I wear my hair in a style that is easy to maintain and works personally and professionally."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114115794962 |
| <i>"I wear my hair down on video calls to make myself look more feminine and slim down my face. When I'm actually doing my job, I tie my hair back."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114133082568 |
| <i>"I'm always nervous on how should I style my hair for an interview. I know that I will wear it natural while at work, but I also don't want to lose an opportunity because by interviewer does not like my hair."</i> | Survey respondent ID 114134789825 |
| <i>I've learned to not give too much thought about others' perception of my hair. I wear my hair for me and in ways I like. I am always switching it up, but I did decide to loc my hair in November 2021. I will say, I've decided to put protective braid styles (faux locs, marley twists) over my natural starter locs for things like interviews and headshots since I'm still in the early loc phase.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114140778413 |
| <i>As a south Asian woman, I was never raised to style my hair. Had to learn to fit into western professional life.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114140753550 |
| <i>I don't blow dry my hair (frizz-factor). I was once written up for having "wet" hair when meeting clients. I don't work at that firm any longer.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114140383581 |
| <i>Only time I was ever addresses about my hair was when it was colored an "unnatural" color. I had blue streak. I never go to court or interact with clients.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114140368406 |
| <i>I mostly get compliments about my hair in professional settings</i> | Survey respondent ID 114139271397 |
| <i>I am a caucasian male. I have never felt judged based on my hair.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114138614195 |
| <i>Natural hair is bra strap length and I often wear or blown out (puffy huge hair) or straightened. I get comments when my hair is puffy from white students about the change that is disguised as nice but I can tell they are very uninformed.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114138206932 |
| <i>A black woman's hair is a part of her identity and often tells a story. How she wears her hair often reflects her mood, outfit, and culture. A black woman's ability to manipulate and style her hair with versatility allows a space for creativity and expression. Often, people in the work place are intimidated by this and critical of what is unknown to them. How many times has a black woman been asked "Is that real?" "Can I touch it?" "How long will you be wearing that style?" "Do you think you will get the job/position with that style?" My question is, who determines how I can wear my hair? Who</i> | Survey respondent ID 114138020205 |



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| <i>sets the standard for hair beauty? When will black women be able to live fully and unapologetically in every way?</i> | |
| <i>Hair for black women is a huge thing. We have been told for years that our hair, in its natural state, is not beautiful nor is it professional. We are raised and taught to keep our hair neat and presentable so the world can take us seriously. Our hair is made to be a core part of our identity and as a result, negative comments or comments perceived to be negative affect us deeply. We should be able to wear our hair any way we want and still feel as though we belong in whatever space we find ourselves in.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114138012300 |
| <i>Because I have been told that I am being judged on intelligence, class(caste), and assimilation abilities with a quick glance, I cannot afford to look unconventional, or be individualized without risking appearing amiss and out of place.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137876279 |
| <i>I'm not sure that it does. When I first transitioned I wasn't totally comfortable with my new look and the academic setting. I received a lot of encouragement from students and coworkers.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137726990 |
| <i>My hair doesn't impact my work life. I am white with red hair and I wear it in a bun, pony tail, or down.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137684446 |
| <i>My only negative experience regarding my hair was during my second interview at a plastic surgeon's office; they asked if I would have my hair done soon because my roots were grown out, and they had a specific image they had to portray. I did have a hair appointment set for the following day and informed them of that, but it was a bit embarrassing to be asked during the interview process. They did offer me the job; however, I declined the position because I obtained a better offer elsewhere.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137628700 |
| <i>Being self employed definitely cuts down on the stress related to my hair. In addition, I work from home and the majority of my work is done online or over the phone</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137609197 |
| <i>In the medical profession I was berated by a manager in front of fellow co-workers about wrapping my hair after removing braids as unprofessional. Since leaving the medical field and going to retail I have received nothing but praise about my hair. I was nervous to arrive at the office with bantu knots but my co-worker both white and black did not make any comments. In fact a senior manager actually spoke to me about changes around company policies over hair. That for those who are ignorant of the culture surrounding black</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137608347 |



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| <i>women's hair they must educate themselves. This was encouraging to hear. I pray this trend will continue so that future generations of black girls will not experience a feeling of otherness ever.</i> | |
| <i>My hair is political. It's a way to make my presence known. It's how I represent young black girls like me. It's my daily form of advocacy. I love to express black beauty with my natural hair. My natural hair is beautiful, and I want to ensure that truth is not erased. My natural hair did not impact my ability to do my job. I was a teacher before being a law student. However, I noticed that wearing my natural hair to work every day made it okay for young black girls to feel comfortable wearing theirs. Sometimes they would even emulate my styles and ask me for advice. I loved knowing that they had the confidence that I did not have at their age. So, it was an honor to be able to create that space even within the workplace.</i> | 114137607854 |
| <i>Unless my hair is in a protective style it takes me about a hour every morning to do it. Even though I wear my hair in an Afro, I still feel the need to do something to it.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137592866 |
| <i>N/A.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137576193 |
| <i>When I am working, i feel like how I present my hair is different than who I am as a person. I want to be respected by others. However, I know that if I were to deviate from the "norm" of short kept hair for men, then I would possible suffer unjust prejudice from the hair style I wish to have. I believe that it is a standard set by past generations that is slowly fading, but until that generation of people are gone from power/authoritative positions, I will continue to keep my hair trimmed short.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137445556 |
| <i>My hair tends to frizz up very easily and is difficult to maintain naturally straight flat-iron hair</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137438919 |
| <i>Not at all because I work at an HBCU.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137407534 |
| <i>Black is beautiful!</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137404644 |
| <i>My hair impacts my work life because it's the difference between me waking up early or sleeping in. It also affects what time of day I choose to work on based on meetings or nights that I have class.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137399325 |
| <i>Coming from the Air Force, I saw a lot of discrimination in the way that dress and appearance regulations were applied to women of color. I am a dark skin and I wear my hair honey blonde. This has drawn a lot of attention to me when to comes</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137382755 |



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| <i>to regulations on dress and appearance. but I refuse to change because black women can HAPPILY wear blonde hair. It compliments our skin tone.</i> | |
| <i>I work at a small law firm for a black attorney with black and hispanic coworkers. Because of this I do not have negative interactions regarding my hair.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137355529 |
| <i>work from home/virtual so it mostly doesn't matter, until we are randomly asked to be on camera.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114137095688 |
| <i>It is an almost daily consideration.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114136974819 |
| <i>I am at a point in my life where I go for any style that's easy to main with working out</i> | Survey respondent ID 114136618833 |
| <i>I always fear that I won't get to the next stage during internship interviews because i sport locs.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114136599185 |
| <i>People dont consider the amount of time it takes to maintain natural hair takes away "free time" for millions of AA women.</i> | Survey respondent ID v114135096797 |
| <i>I'm a black man (5th year at a V10 firm). I usually wear my hair with a shadow fade high top. No one's ever said anything negative. I also sported a very long beard (similar to James Harden) for multiple years at my firm. No one has ever commented on that beard in any negative way either.</i> | Survey respondent ID 114134852303 |
| <i>"I have definitely been told (by employers) that my hair was unprofessional, "militant," and that others within the organization have explicitly said they wouldn't hire someone with natural hair."</i> | Wtfshesay ⁷ , Reddit, in response to a post advertising the Black Hair Big Law Symposium |
| <i>"I have definitely seen female partners touch a female black associate's hair and make "positive" comments about it."</i> | FlashCats ⁸ , Big Law Alumnus, in response to a post advertising the Black Hair Big Law Symposium: |
| <i>"Depends on the firm. I took the plunge at mine and started wearing my hair curly cause having to keep it straight in the middle of summer during trial wasn't fun. Granted wash and go isn't as easy as wash and go, either, but long story short I started wearing my hair curly. Mine is somewhere between 3b-4a depending on where you look on my head.</i> <i>I was REALLY nervous about it at first, even though my firm was doing the whole "everyone's hair is professional and</i> | Minuialear ⁹ , In response to a post advertising the Black Hair Big Law Symposium |

⁷ https://www.reddit.com/r/biglaw/comments/xgc0of/is_natural_black_hair_compatible_with_working_in/

⁸ https://www.reddit.com/r/biglaw/comments/xgc0of/is_natural_black_hair_compatible_with_working_in/

⁹ https://www.reddit.com/r/biglaw/comments/xgc0of/is_natural_black_hair_compatible_with_working_in/



awesome!" thing everyone's now required to say because it's against the law to claim otherwise. But I personally haven't seen it affect my ability to get work or to be invited in calls with clients where I'm expected to be seen there.

I know there are 4c women in the firm who wear their hair natural too, but I don't know if they get treated differently than me and even if they do, if that's because they're 4c or just because they're in a more hostile group generally. I also dunno how much I'd be accepted coming in with an afro or cornrows. I'll also note my hair was straight when I was hired and for maybe the first year I was there, so maybe I was fine because they knew my work before I made the swap.

If you're looking to swap to natural in your current firm or trying to figure out if a firm is welcoming to your hair, look at pictures of PoC on the firm's website. If you can't find any that in and of itself is a red flag, but if all black associates and partners wear their hair straight, chances are that's what you're going to have to do. I saw many with curly hair/natural hairstyles on our firm's site and that ultimately turned out to be a fair representation of how liberal people at the firm have been (at least to me) about my hair."

"I switch between my natural curls, sew-ins and braids. There's always a ridiculous comment once I switch it up. Nothing necessarily offensive but annoying none the less 🙄. I've always found that being unapologetically me 100% of the time is the best approach. When I wear my curly fro I walk through the office like its my runway."

An attorney on Fishbowl¹⁰

"In-house counsel here: Like the Tik Tok memes say "we do not care." Box braids ARE professional. So long as you're doing great work for me that's all that really matters. Hopefully your partners understand that. Show up. Show out. Professionally of course and socialize til your heart's content! Nothing to be afraid of."

A Director on Fishbowl¹¹

¹⁰ https://joinfishbowl.com/comment_tf4ifjckmt

¹¹ https://joinfishbowl.com/comment_t9htx2edn6



"Hope it's ok to comment as a white person. I wish law firms were an environment where women (and men!) were comfortable wearing whatever hairstyle they prefer. I hate that it even has to be a question for you whether it's "appropriate" to wear a protective or natural hairstyle. I am optimistic that things are changing for the better with my generation, but in the meantime I hope you feel comfortable wearing whatever makes you feel the most beautiful and confident!"

At my big law firm, four summer associates showed up with natural styles on day one (pre-pandemic). A female partner followed suit soon after. I hope that's a sign of changes to come"

An Associate on
Fishbowl¹²

¹² <https://www.fishbowlapp.com/post/black-girl-here-in-big-law-i-scheduled-a-hair-appointment-for-long-feedin-braids-next-week-and-literally-just-got-an-email/comment/60d527b45aa581002864b385?timestamp=1624582068301>



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About the Author, Angela Mackie-Rutledge

LLM Candidate, George Mason University
LLB, University of Law, London Bloomsbury
GDL, University of Law, London Bloomsbury
MSc, University of Brighton, Brighton, East Sussex, UK
BFA, New York University, Tisch School of the Arts
President, Graduate Law Students Association
Programming Chair, Black Law Students Association

Angela is a dual British / American citizen at George Mason University, Antonin Scalia Law School. She holds a BFA from New York University in Dramatic Writing, an MSc from the University of Brighton (UK) in Digital Television Management and Production and a GDL (graduate diploma in law) and LLB from the University of Law in London, United Kingdom. Angela was a winner of the 2017 [Choose Law Full Fee Scholarship](#) which gave her a full scholarship to obtain her first law degree. She is currently an LLM candidate at George Mason University and will graduate in December 2022.



Angela is a career-changer with 15 years + experience in IT Project Management, QA Software Testing and Multimedia production. She specializes in Cable & Satellite TV technology as well as STB / CPE / Smart TV engineering. She previously contracted for Comcast as an Application Engineering Manager; a functional role where she had strategic input to technical issues guiding the production and release of Comcast's X-Class TV.

This past summer Angela completed a writing contract at MNB Meridian Law where she supported the US Deputy Secretary of Defense's Internal Review Team in researching and writing about racial discrepancies in military justice systems.

She has recently been offered an internship with the United States Attorneys Office.

Angela has worked closely with other members of the BLSA to produce the Black Hair Big Law Symposium. This required substantial time and dedication, whilst completing her degree and studying for the Washington DC Bar which she plans to take in February 2023.

Angela is currently looking a job at a law firm that will lead to an Associate position and would appreciate your help in getting her one. Should you have any leads on relevant jobs Angela can be contacted at amackier@gmu.edu