
The Association for the Public Defender of Maryland and Maryland State Bar Association Co-Host Gala Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Office of the Public Defender

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Maryland State Bar Association →

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Legal community gathers to commemorate the OPD and support public defense in Maryland.

BALTIMORE, Oct. 25, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- The **Maryland State Bar Association** (MSBA) and the **Association for the Public Defender of Maryland** (APDM) are pleased to announce they are hosting an evening of celebration honoring fifty years of the **Maryland Office of Public Defender's** commitment to equality, dignity, and justice for all. The **Office of Public Defender 50th Anniversary Gala** will take place Tuesday, November 1, 2022, at 6 PM, at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City, MD. The Gala will highlight the work of the dedicated attorneys and staff of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender who advocate for indigent clients, seek justice, protect civil rights, and preserve liberties.

Guests will have an opportunity to connect and mingle with colleagues in the legal profession from a variety of practice sectors and jurisdictions throughout the evening. The Gala offers a cocktail hour, dinner and presentations from notable speakers and celebrated members of the legal community, emceed by The Daily Record's Tom Baden.

Speakers, Honored Guests and VIPs include:

- Rep. Jamie Raskin
- Hon. Chief Judge Matthew J. Fader
- Hon. Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera (Ret.)
- Hon. Gary E. Bair (Ret.)
- Natasha Dartigue, Public Defender of Maryland
- Paul H. DeWolfe, Former Public Defender
- Lisa Monet Wayne, Executive Director, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
- Ronald Weich, Dean, University of Baltimore School of Law
- Renée Hutchins, Dean, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
- Roger Fairfax, Dean, American University Washington College of Law
- Harry S. Johnson, President, Association for the Public Defender of Maryland Board
- Kristin Henning, The Blume Professor of Law & Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic, Georgetown Law
- Kirsten Gettys Downs, Executive Director, Homeless Persons Representation Project
- Sharon E. Goldsmith, Executive Director, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland
- Susan Francis, Executive Director, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
- Victoria Schultz, Executive Director, Maryland Legal Aid
- Josh C. Toll, Partner & Head of Pro Bono, King & Spalding
- Timothy F. Maloney, Principal, Joseph, Greenwald & Laake, PA
- Donald P. Salzman, Pro Bono Counsel, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP

OPD is honoring the following partnerships and staff with awards at the event:

- **50th Anniversary Warrior for Justice Award:** *The University of Baltimore School of Law, Innocence Project Clinic*
 - OPD has partnered with the University of Baltimore School of Law since 2008 to establish the Innocence Project Clinic (IPC). Currently led by Assistant Public Defender Erica Suter, the IPC engages UB law students in the investigation and advocacy on behalf of public defender clients who have been convicted in Maryland state courts of crimes they did not commit. The clinic represents clients in post-trial litigation efforts to secure exonerations, and advocates for relevant changes in Maryland law. To date, the clinic has secured the exoneration of 13 clients. Among the clinic's clients is Adnan Syed, whose conviction has received international attention and was recently vacated due to withheld Brady material.
- **50th Anniversary Warrior for Fairness Award:** *Williams & Connolly LLP for the Pro Bono Fellowship Program*
 - Since 2017, associates from Williams & Connolly have served as fellows with the OPD. During their 6-month fellowship, fellows are embedded in OPD district offices working side by side with OPD attorneys and staff to provide zealous representation to indigent clients in trial court matters. Over the years, fellows have afforded zealous representation to clients in the Charles County, Montgomery County and Prince George's Counties offices. The first OPD Williams & Connolly Fellow, Joseph Q. Wood, is now the partner in charge of the fellowship program.
- **50th Anniversary Warrior for Dignity for all Award:** *Dawn Kouneski*
 - Working in the Human Resources Division (formerly Personnel Division) of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender for 35 years, there is nobody who knows more about the attorneys and staff of the OPD than Dawn Kouneski. Starting with OPD at the age of 17, while still in high school, Dawn has made it her life's work to ensure OPD is a place where all employees feel satisfied and motivated. She is integral to all aspects of OPD hiring and retention, and has been a lifeline throughout the COVID pandemic, ensuring the health and safety of OPD staff while ensuring that we remained updated and compliant on state guidelines
- **50th Anniversary Warrior for Dignity for All Award:** *Kisha Petticolas*
 - A tireless advocate for her clients and her community on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Assistant Public Defender Kisha Petticolas was a leader in the effort to secure the removal of the Talbot Boys statue from the grounds in front of the Talbot County Courthouse. She was a named plaintiff in the lawsuit that successfully led to the statue's removal and engaged former Maryland Public Defender Paul DeWolfe on the issue, resulting in OPD's involvement as an organizational plaintiff. Richard Potter and the NAACP Talbot County were also plaintiffs in the litigation; the ACLU of Maryland and Crowell & Moring LLP served as counsel.

"On behalf of the Maryland State Bar Association, we applaud the Office of Public Defender for its fifty years of service to the Maryland legal community," said Anna Sholl, incoming Executive Director, Maryland State Bar Association. "For decades, OPD attorneys and staff have worked tirelessly to provide superior representation to their clients while also tackling systemic obstacles that impact clients' lives, and working toward meaningful criminal justice reform. We thank them for their leadership and look forward to honoring OPD at the upcoming November Gala."

To purchase tickets to the Maryland Office of Public Defender 50th Anniversary Gala, visit [MSBA.org](https://www.msba.org).

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