

**Right to a Healthy Environment in US Law: Justice for Communities Today and Tomorrow  
June 9, 2022**

**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Dominique Day:** Dominique Day is a racial justice accelerator for organizations, institutions, individuals, and communities. She leads DAYLIGHT | Rule of Law • Access to Justice • Advocacy, an access to justice platform that uses training, research, mapping, and advocacy as tools to help organizations, communities, and individuals build intersectional racial justice globally.

Dominique is the Chair of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, a fact-finding body mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate and report on the situation of people of African descent globally. She also is a member of the 2020-21 Global Future Council on Human Rights of the World Economic Forum.

Internationally, Dominique's policy and capacity-building work focuses heavily on racial justice. She is a civil rights and human rights attorney and has extensive criminal and civil litigation experience on behalf of individuals and communities within the Black diaspora, including in post-conflict and transitional States. She holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a juris doctor from Stanford Law School.

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**Session I Implementing Environmental Justice:**

**Ka'asha Bernard:** Ka'asha Bernard is an attorney at Center for International Environmental Law's Climate and Energy Program. Ka'asha's work focuses primarily on halting the petrochemical infrastructure buildout that threatens the global climate and the health of frontline and fenceline communities, particularly across the US Gulf Coast and Appalachia region. Ka'asha graduated from Louisiana State University with a BA in International Studies, concentration in Global Diplomacy in the Middle East. Ka'asha then earned her Juris Doctor from Notre Dame Law School. Prior to joining CIEL, Ka'asha completed a two-year fellowship at Crag Law Center in Portland, Oregon, where she worked primarily on their Climate and Communities programs.

**Ann Marie Chischilly:** Ann Marie Chischilly is the Executive Director at the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP). In addition to managing ITEP's work with Northern Arizona University, state and federal agencies, tribes and Alaska Native villages, she currently serves on several federal advisory committees, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment (now the Independent Advisory Committee on the Sustained National Climate Assessment) and the EPA's National Safe Drinking Water Council. Ann Marie also previously served on the Department of Interior's Advisory on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science from 2013-2015. She has extensive knowledge on topics of Indian Law, Environmental Law, Tradition Knowledges, Water Law, and Tribes/Indigenous peoples. Prior to joining ITEP, Ann Marie served for over a decade as Senior Assistant General Counsel to the Gila River Indian Community (Community), where she played a critical role in implementing the Arizona Water Settlement Act and founded the Community's Renewable Energy Team. In addition to her work with the United Nations on issues of the Protection of Traditional Knowledge, she also co-authored "Guidelines for the Use of Traditional Knowledge in Climate Change Initiatives," an

informational resource for tribes, agencies, and organizations across the United States interested in understanding traditional knowledges in the context of climate change. Ann Marie is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation (Diné). She received her J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law and holds a master's degree in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School.

**Katrina Kuh:** Katrina Fischer Kuh is the Haub Distinguished Professor of Environmental Law at the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University where she teaches Administrative Law, Environmental Law, Climate Change Law, International Environmental Law, and Torts. Her scholarship focuses on climate change and sustainability and she is the co-editor of *The Law of Adaptation to Climate Change: United States and International Aspects and Climate Change Law: An Introduction*.

Before entering academia, Professor Kuh worked in the environmental and litigation practice groups in the New York office of Arnold & Porter LLP and served as an advisor on natural resource policy in the United States Senate. She received her undergraduate and law degrees from Yale and served as a law clerk to Judge Charles S. Haight of the District Court for the Southern District of New York and Judge Diana Gribbon Motz of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. She is licensed to practice in New York.

**Sharon Lavigne:** Sharon Lavigne is a retired special education teacher and lifelong resident of St. James Parish, Louisiana, located along the Mississippi River as part of "Cancer Alley." In October 2018, she founded RISE St. James, a faith-based grassroots organization dedicated to environmental justice in their community. Throughout 2018 and 2019, Sharon mobilized herself and her community against the proposed construction of what would have been one of the largest plastic manufacturing plants in the world. Sharon's grassroots campaign was successful in stopping the construction of the plastic plant. Since then, her organization has been active in safeguarding the environment and residents around St. James Parish. In 2021, she was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.

**Rachel Gore Freed:** Rachel Gore Freed is a human rights lawyer, community organizer, and social justice advocate and educator with a wealth of domestic and international experience. As UUSC's Vice President and Lead Program Officer, Rachel leads the organization's creative and effective approaches to advancing human rights.

Previously serving as the Senior Program Leader for UUSC's Rights at Risk Program, she has spearheaded, planned, and implemented UUSC's work responding to humanitarian crises and advancing the rights of people who are most overlooked or discriminated against in crises such as forced migration, large-scale conflicts, genocide, and natural disasters. Prior to joining UUSC, Freed was deeply engaged in community struggles around the world. This work included successful litigation against Exxon for violations of the Clean Air Act in the Houston Baytown shipping channel, arguing for the right to seek asylum before the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and representing low-income immigrants and detained asylum-seekers pursuing relief from unjust deportation in New York City. She has also helped volunteer youth serve as peace witnesses in Gujarat, Northern India after communal rioting and worked with the legal team that prosecuted former President of Liberia Charles Taylor and leaders of the rebel forces through the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Rachel currently serves on the Steering Committee of the Human Rights Funders Network, the Board of Mavuno in the Congo, and works with progressive women's community organizing groups in the Boston area.

Rachel holds a bachelor's degree with a focus in International Development from the George Washington Elliott School of International Affairs and a law degree from Vanderbilt University Law School.

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**Session II Future Generations:**

**Julia Olson:** Julia Olson is the Founder, Executive Director, and Chief Legal Counsel of [Our Children's Trust](#). Julia has been a trailblazing leader, litigator, and legal strategist in climate and environmental law for over 25 years. After graduating from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1997, she created her own law practice in the Bay Area to litigate public interest environmental cases on behalf of grassroots conservation organizations in the West. Julia founded Our Children's Trust - a non-profit public interest law firm that provides strategic, campaign-based legal services to youth from diverse backgrounds to secure their legal rights to a safe climate system - in 2010 when, as a new mother, she realized the shortcomings of environmental statutory law in redressing the greatest threat to her children and children everywhere: the climate crisis. She and her team at Our Children's Trust have since pioneered a globally replicated model for youth-led legal action that draws from and integrates children's rights, constitutional rights, climate science, and the public trust doctrine in order to protect the planet's most vulnerable citizens: children. Julia also holds a bachelor's degree in International Affairs from the University of Colorado Boulder.

**Ramin Pejan:** Ramin Pejan is a senior attorney with the International Program in San Francisco, CA. Ramin was born in Iran and grew up in Vancouver, Canada. He was an undergraduate at Duke University and received his law degree from American University, Washington College of Law. He also received an LLM from McGill University in Montreal, focusing on international environmental law and human rights law.

Prior to coming to Earthjustice, Ramin worked for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Environment Programme on the links between human rights and environmental issues.

From 2005–2010, Ramin worked at the New York City Law Department's Environmental Law Division as an Assistant Corporation Counsel and then as Senior Counsel, where he was engaged in a wide variety of environmental litigation, advocacy, counseling and compliance work in areas of federal and state law. Highlights include being a member of the trial team that won a \$100 million judgment in *City of New York v. Exxon Mobil Corporation* and serving as lead counsel defending against challenges in state and federal courts to the city's efforts to require hybrid taxicabs. His Exxon Mobil trial team was a finalist for Trial Lawyer of the Year awarded by Public Justice in 2010. From 2010–2012, Ramin worked in Bushbuckridge, South Africa as legal counsel for the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), a non-profit focusing on water resource management issues in rural South Africa.

**Samia Shell:** Samia Shell is a human rights and environmental justice advocate based in New York City. She is a first-year law student and Ron Brown Scholar at St. John's University School of Law in Queens, and has been recognized as a New York State Bar Association Environment and Energy Law Section Diversity and Inclusion Fellow. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a concentration in French from St. John's University. In her advocacy, Samia passionately supports the global campaign for universal recognition of the human right to a healthy and sustainable environment. She has organized, moderated, and delivered statements for events focused on governments, youth, and businesses' roles in the recognition of the human right to a healthy environment. She has served as a member of an intergenerational advisory council for a United Nations consultation in North America on children's rights and the environment, and delivered interventions along the consultation's process. In addition, Samia has served as a moderator for the launch of the General Comment No. 26 with special focus on climate change, and provided recommendations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on whether and how the General Comment No. 26 should reflect the Human Rights Council's recognition

of the right to a healthy environment. This summer, Samia will be working at the Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 New York and Caribbean Superfund Branch as a legal intern.

**Jonathan Todres:** Jonathan Todres, distinguished university professor and professor of law, focuses his research on children's rights and child well-being. Todres has published extensively on a range of topics including the implementation of children's rights law; child trafficking; human rights education; legal and cultural constructs of childhood; and human rights and the social determinants of health.

Among his many publications, he is co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Rights Law* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and coauthor of *Preventing Child Trafficking: A Public Health Approach* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2019) and *Human Rights in the Children's Literature: Imagination and the Narrative of Law* (Oxford University Press, 2016). Todres was a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at University College Cork in Ireland (Spring 2018).

Todres regularly works with a number of professional associations and nongovernmental organizations that address issues affecting children's rights and child well-being. Todres serves as a member of the Board of Children, Youth, and Families of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Since 2012, he has also served on three committees of the National Academies: the Committee on Biological and Psychosocial Effects of Peer Victimization: Lessons for Bullying Prevention (2015-2016); the Planning Committee on Increasing Capacity for Reducing Bullying and Its Impact on the Lifecourse of Youth Involved (2014); and the Committee on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States (2012-2013).

Todres received his J.D. from Columbia Law School where he was a Harlan Fisk Stone Scholar, and his B.A. from Clark University.

**Erin Daly:** Erin has served as Interim Dean, Vice Dean and Dean of Faculty, as well as the H. Albert Young Fellow in Constitutional Law at Widener University Delaware Law School. She serves as the US National Correspondent for the Centre international de droit comparé de l'environnement (CIDCE), as a member of the Normandy Chair for Peace and of the Scientific Committee of the Global Pandemic Network and for five years, she served as the Director of the Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment. She has worked at the Université de la Fondation Aristide (UNIFA) in Haiti, where she helped establish a civic education program that brings law students and faculty to local high schools. She has also been Visiting Professor at Paris I Sorbonne, Pakistan College of Law, Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (Brazil), and the University of Cape Town. She is fluent in French and conversant in Spanish. Erin holds a BA from Wesleyan University.

She is the author of [Dignity Rights: Courts, Constitutions and the Worth of the Human Person](#), with a Foreword by former President of the Israeli Supreme Court, Aharon Barak. The first book to examine global dignity jurisprudence, *Dignity Rights* illustrates how courts use dignity rights and values to strengthen political engagement while redefining what it means to be human in the modern world. Her first book, [Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground](#), co-authored with South African scholar Jeremy Sarkin and with a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, examines alternatives to traditional forms of justice in times of political transition.