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Boston District Attorney Rachael Rollins shares Six Secrets for Success with RWU School of Law

This Wednesday afternoon, Rachael Rollins delivered the Martin Luther King Jr. Keynote Lecture at the Roger Williams School of Law



RWU law students with Boston District Attorney Rachael Rollins. Image Credit: Xaviea Brown

January 25, 2019 | Julia Rubin

BRISTOL, R.I. – Boston's new District Attorney [Rachael Rollins](#) is changing the culture of criminal justice.

She vows to stop criminalization of mental illness, addiction, and poverty. She has literally and figuratively unlocked the esteemed 7th floor of the DA's office, opening lines of communication with senior leadership. She is welcoming conversations with those who disagree with her and using her voice to make progress.

This Wednesday afternoon, Rollins, the first African-American woman to serve as district attorney in Massachusetts and the first female DA in Suffolk County, shared her secrets for success as this year's Martin Luther King Jr. keynote speaker at the Roger Williams School of Law, in the Honorable Bruce M. Selya Appellate Courtroom.

Audience members had the honor of soaking up Rollin's wisdom, learning not only about her groundbreaking platform, but also about the lived experience and professional drive that make her uniquely qualified for this role.

"I am the District Attorney of Suffolk County," Rollins told the crowd. "I have a younger brother that's currently incarcerated. I bring that lived experience to work with me every single day when I sit down to make decisions."

The understanding and empathy gained from family experience, along with countless professional accomplishments – including serving as a state and federal prosecutor, Chief Legal Counsel for Massachusetts Port Authority, member of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey's Advisory Council on Racial Justice and Equity, and now, Suffolk County DA – make her a true trailblazer for our students.

So how did she do it?

Read her six secrets for success and live every day like you're Rachael Rollins.



1. "Be grateful. Every morning when you wake up is a day to be grateful for. I wake up and even if it's just for five seconds, I'm like 'thank you – I am alive' and then I determine what my day is going to be like."
2. "I'm good at everything I do, because I only do three things. We need to be very deliberate about what we're doing."
3. "I say this to everyone, but especially the women in the room. Know your worth. The greatest thing that ever happened to me was I know what I am worth."



4. "I cannot tell you how many people said to me – 'there's never been a woman that's done this before. There's never been a visible person of color that's done this before. There's no way you can win being DA in Boston.' You've got to put all the noise out of your head and just focus on doing the work."

5. "Always do what's right, not easy. If it's right, it doesn't matter if you're vilified. You have to do what's right, especially if you're an elected official."

6. "Failure happens. Where people are exceptional is how quickly you react after you fail. Learn from that mistake and then pick yourself up and start moving onto the next thing."

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