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Frontmatter and Director's Letter

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2022

THE REPORTER

Social Justice Law Center Magazine

Following in the footsteps of CWRU alumnus **Fred Gray**
to address the inequities in our legal system



SCHOOL OF LAW
CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY

THE REPORTER

Social Justice Law Center Magazine

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ABOUT THE CENTER

Case Western Reserve University School of Law's Social Justice Law Center educates and guides the next generation of lawyers to develop solutions that will rectify inequality, oppression and social inequities created and reinforced by the American legal system.

Learn more at case.edu/law/social-justice.

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

The Reporter is an annual magazine written by students enrolled in a year-long social justice writing seminar at the Center. Taught by Ayesha Bell Hardaway and Ashley Everett, this seminar allows students to fulfill their writing requirement by exploring existing and emerging scholarship, current and proposed laws and judicial opinions on current social justice issues.

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ON THE COVER:

Alumnus Fred Gray, who was recently awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, is a legendary attorney who represented both Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks during the early days of the civil rights movement. Our students hope to follow in his pathbreaking footsteps.



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Ayesha Bell Hardaway

Greetings!

I'm proud to present the inaugural issue of *The Reporter*, a collection of essays written by students at Case Western Reserve University School of Law's Social Justice Law Center.

Our students have long expressed strong interest in a legal education that includes a full understanding of the ways in which the law undermines the nation's ideals and aspirations. Indeed, many enter our institution seeking to understand and rectify the ways that the American legal system creates and compounds societal inequities. *The Reporter*, which I co-teach with Ashley

Everett, is a yearlong course designed to give law students an avenue to write about their review and analysis of contemporary social justice matters. It's the product of their intellectual curiosity and bold commitment to social justice. In this first issue, students grapple with topics such as housing evictions during the pandemic, wrongful convictions, employment discrimination, reproductive rights and domestic terrorism. Everett worked diligently with student-authors throughout the writing process.

Featured on the cover of this issue is perhaps the law school's most famous alumnus, legendary attorney and activist **Fred D. Gray (LAW '54)**—a shining example for today's students. Earlier this year, Gray received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Joe Biden. Gray, who came to our law school with the personal commitment to "[destroy] everything segregated [he] could find,"¹ devoted his entire legal career to remedying institutional racism. Within two years of graduating and passing the Alabama bar, a young and determined Gray represented Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. in the push to make racial segregation illegal in Alabama. It was through his representation of Parks and related involvement in the Montgomery bus boycott that Gray successfully handled the first of his four cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Throughout the years, Gray has returned regularly to campus to connect with our law students and the broader Cleveland community. He continues to inspire all of us to not give up on creating a more just United States.

At a time when our nation is once again abandoning its promises to correct systemic injustices, it is essential that young lawyers understand the breadth, depth and regurgitated nature of the problem. As one student recently reminded me by quoting Octavia Butler, "There's nothing new / under the sun." I am encouraged, however, by the unwavering commitment of the students who authored the articles in this publication. In that way, they personify the rest of Ancestor Butler's quote, "... but there are new suns."

It is my sincere hope that the student essays found in *The Reporter* inspire you to work toward creating a more just legal system. Through our collective efforts, I truly believe that new suns are on the horizon.

Ayesha Bell Hardaway (LAW '04)
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¹ Jonathan L. Entin, "Bus Ride to Justice: A Conversation with Fred Gray," 64 *Case W. Res. L. Rev.* 733, 739 (2014).



Fred Gray poses with Ayesha Bell Hardaway in front of his portrait at Case Western Reserve University School of Law.



Alumnus Fred Gray received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Joseph R. Biden in July.