



Erica Suter Named Director of the University of Baltimore/Maryland Office of the Public Defender Innocence Project Clinic

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The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) and The University of Baltimore School of Law (Baltimore Law) are pleased to announce that attorney Erica J. Suter will serve as the Director of the Innocence Project Clinic. The previous director, Michele Nethercott, retired this spring.

The Innocence Project Clinic was established in 2008 as a joint project of the OPD and Baltimore Law; it is also affiliated with Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project. The clinic secures the exoneration and release of individuals who have been wrongfully convicted and works to minimize the likelihood of future wrongful convictions by advocating for related systemic reforms. Michele Nethercott has been the clinic's only director since its start 13 years ago, after serving as a trial attorney and Forensics Division Chief with OPD for 20 years. [Since leading the clinic, she has secured the exoneration of 12 people.](#)

“The Innocence Project Clinic helps to redress the ultimate injustice – the wrongful conviction of innocent individuals – and provides future lawyers with relevant skills and experience to pursue justice throughout their careers,” said Ronald Weich, Dean of Baltimore Law. “Under Michele’s tenure, the clinic had tremendous successes for clients and our students. With her expertise, passion and commitment, we are confident that Erica will further grow the clinic’s impact and work.”

According to Paul DeWolfe, Public Defender of Maryland: “The investigations and advocacy led by Michele Nethercott and the Innocence Project Clinic have secured the freedom of people who spent many years in prison for crimes they did not commit and helped restore their good name. Importantly, they have also shown time and again that Maryland’s justice system is not perfect and that post-conviction review is vitally important. Under Ms. Suter’s leadership, the clinic will be well-situated to provide exemplary representation to people who have been wrongfully convicted and address the systemic issues that cause these injustices to occur.”

Ms. Suter joins the clinic from private practice, where she has been widely recognized as an accomplished appellate and post-conviction criminal defense attorney. Ms. Suter has also served as an Adjunct Professor at UDC’s David A. Clarke School of Law, worked with students enrolled in the Making an Exoneree class at Georgetown University, and collaborated with OPD’s attorneys and staff on individual cases, attorney training, and broad reform goals.

Said Ms. Suter: “As the impact of systemic racism has begun to gain mainstream attention, particularly with respect to disparities in the criminal justice system, it is important to recognize that the biases often result in wrongful convictions. Exonerating those who have been wrongfully convicted is fundamentally important to advancing justice. I am excited to have a leadership role in this vital work.”

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