

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION

WELCOME

LISA RYAN

Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

MUSICAL SELECTION

“LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING”

African-American National Anthem

(poem by James Weldon Johnson, music by J. Rosamond Johnson)

VERMONT LAW AND GRADUATE SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

OPENING REMARKS

RODNEY A. SMOLLA

President of Vermont Law and Graduate School

INTRODUCTION OF MODERATOR AND PANELISTS

BETH M^CCORMACK

Interim Dean of Vermont Law School

PANEL PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION OF APPRECIATION

MAIA YOUNG JD’24

President, Black Law Students Association (BLSA)

MUSICAL SELECTION

“WE SHALL OVERCOME”

(hymn by Charles Albert Tindley)

VERMONT LAW AND GRADUATE SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF



CHIEF JUSTICE PAUL L. REIBER

Justice Reiber of Chittenden, Vermont, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 20, 1947, and became a resident of Vermont in 1976. He graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia (BA, 1970) and Suffolk Law School in Boston (JD, 1974). He is married to the former Sandra Sherburne, and they have two daughters. Justice Reiber served in the private practice of law in Rutland and as a partner in the law firm Kenlan, Schweibert & Facey from 1986 until his appointment as an associate justice by Governor James Douglas in October 2003. He was sworn in as chief justice of the Vermont Supreme Court by Governor Douglas on December 17, 2004.

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ASSOCIATE JUSTICE WILLIAM D. COHEN

William D. Cohen (“Bill”) JD’84 of Rutland Town, Rutland County, grew up in Rutland and was educated through the Rutland Public School System. He graduated from Rutland High School in 1975, followed by a year as a chair lift operator for Killington Mountain Resorts. He then went on to obtain an undergraduate degree from The George Washington University, with a BA in Environmental Science, and a JD from Vermont Law School. Justice Cohen started his career as deputy state’s attorney, followed by working in private practice at two separate law offices in Rutland. During this time, his focus was primarily on statewide civil litigation. In 1999, he was appointed as a state superior court judge. On December 5, 2019, Governor Phil Scott appointed him to the Vermont Supreme Court as an associate justice. In his free time, Justice Cohen is an avid participant in endurance sports, including biking, skiing, and running. He is married to Barbara Buck, and they have two adult children.



ASSOCIATE JUSTICE NANCY WAPLES

Justice Waples of Hinesburg in Chittenden County is the daughter of Chinese immigrants. Born in Toronto, Canada, her parents eventually settled outside of New York City. Justice Waples became a U.S. citizen in 1977 and a resident of Vermont in 1993. She graduated from the College of William and Mary in Virginia (BA, 1982) and St. John's University School of Law in New York City (JD, 1987). She was an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in New York City where she split her tenure between the appeals bureau and the trial division. She served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Vermont and was assigned to the Rutland Office prosecuting general crimes in the southern part of the state. Prior to her appointment to the Superior Court in January 2015, she was a partner in a Burlington based law firm. Justice Waples is married to Gregory Waples, chief of appeals in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Vermont. They have two sons, three cats, and four dogs. On April 15, 2022, she was sworn in as the 137th justice of the Vermont Supreme Court by Governor Phil Scott.

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**CHIEF
SUPERIOR JUDGE
THOMAS A. ZONAY**

Judge Thomas A. Zonay JD'88 is the chief superior judge for the state of Vermont. He was appointed to the bench by Governor James Douglas in 2007 and appointed as chief superior judge in 2021. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was an attorney in private practice and before that he was a police officer in Woodstock, Vt. Chief Superior Judge Zonay received a bachelor's degree in food industry from Delaware Valley College and a juris doctor from Vermont Law School. He is the chair of the Vermont Sentencing Commission. He is the past chair of the Vermont Public Access to Court Records Committee, the Vermont Judicial Education Committee, the Vermont Criminal Rules Committee, and has served as a member of the Vermont Judicial Conduct Board, and the Vermont Judiciary Advisory Council (chair of Budget Committee). He has served on the Vermont Bar Association Board of Managers (President, 2005); was a director of the Vermont Bar Foundation; and is past president of the New England Bar Association. At the time of his appointment to the bench, Judge Zonay was chairman of the Vermont Human Rights Commission and had previously served on other judicial and community boards and committees. He is also a U.S.C.G. licensed Master Captain. Judge Zonay is a member of the faculty of the National Judicial College and is the current chair of the NJC Faculty Council.

OUR GUEST MODERATOR



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY XUSANA DAVIS

Xusana Davis serves as the state of Vermont's executive director of racial equity. She was appointed to the position in June 2019 by Governor Phil Scott. She works with state agencies to identify and address systemic racial disparities, ensures that equity goals and objectives are incorporated throughout the State's operations, and provides strategic and policy guidance on equity issues. Prior to joining the state of Vermont, she served as director of health and housing strategic initiatives at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and as the director of the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus of the New York City Council. She holds a juris doctor with a concentration in International Human Rights Law from New York Law School, where she also directed a civil liberties education program for low-income youth and youth of color. She studied anthropology and philosophy at Fordham University, earning the Rev. J. Franklin Ewing, S.J. Award for writing on the relationship between global human rights violations and the proliferation of HIV/AIDS. Executive Director Davis is first-generation in the U.S., and proud to be a Spanish-fluent Latina who approaches her work from a multicultural perspective.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event successful, especially:

MIKE BANERJEE, Law Clerk to Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber

BRIAN BASHAW, AV Multimedia Manager

BILL BONN, AV Technician

BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

EBEN BROCK, Executive Chef and Food Service Director, **KAT PAIVA**, Catering Manager, and **CAFÉ STAFF**

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

WILLIAM D. COHEN JD'84, Associate Justice, Vermont Supreme Court

XUSANA DAVIS, Vermont Executive Director of Racial Equity

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WHITE RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

MAIA YOUNG JD'24, President, Black Law Students Association

ASHLEY ZIAI, Director of Student Affairs

THOMAS A. ZONAY JD'88, Chief Superior Judge, Vermont Superior Court