



## News Release

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### Thomas Jefferson School of Law Faculty Fellow Beth Caldwell Is named a Soros Justice Fellow

SAN DIEGO - Thomas Jefferson School of Law Faculty Fellow Beth Caldwell has been honored as a recipient of a 2012 Soros Justice Fellowship from Open Society Foundations, headquartered in New York.

According to the official news release, "The 2012 Soros Justice Fellows will tackle issues at the core of the Open Society Foundations' work, such as addressing barriers that people face upon leaving prison, the harsh treatment of youth in the criminal justice system, and the impact of incarceration on communities of color. They will also be working on cutting edge reform efforts around the country, like projects to trim criminal justice costs in local jurisdictions and the role of architecture in social justice issues. "

Professor Caldwell, along with co-awardees Joel Medina and Erin Siegal, will produce a series of written and multimedia stories about the impact that mandatory, permanent deportations have on individuals, families, and communities."

"I feel honored that I was selected as a Soros Justice Fellow," said Professor Caldwell. "It is a privilege to be among a community of scholars and practitioners working on cutting edge criminal justice issues. My fellowship project aims to raise awareness about the consequences of crime-based deportations by producing a series of articles and television segments that share the stories of deportees and their family members. I am researching the topic in Mexico by interviewing people who have been deported, as well as government officials and representatives of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations). This project fits nicely with a law review article I am writing that explores deportation as cruel and unusual punishment. A portion of the article focuses on the experiences of people who have been deported, and I am incorporating primary research from interviews into this section."

Professor Caldwell is a prolific writer on the issue of juvenile justice. She has just published an article in the *University of San Francisco Law Review*, titled: "Twenty-Five to Life for Adolescent Mistakes: Juvenile Strikes as Cruel and Unusual Punishment." The article explores the impact of permanent felony strikes on juveniles convicted of crimes and that long prison sentences that often result.

As she states in her article: "Quite simply, California's three strikes sentencing scheme often results in cruel punishments. When third strike sentences are imposed on the basis of juvenile conduct, the cruelty is even more pronounced. Over five hundred people are serving twenty-five years to life in California as a result of at least one juvenile strike. Many more are living with two juvenile strikes on their records such that any brush with the law will send them to prison for twenty-five years to life.

Thousands of youth are accused of strike offenses in juvenile court each year and are then confronted with a complicated web of decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. Three strikes is not effective

in reducing crime, and it is particularly unjust as applied to youth. According to the tenets set forth in Graham, the use of juvenile strikes should be abolished.”

Professor Caldwell also recently published an article in the *Maine Law Review*, titled “Appealing to Empathy”, which examines the issue of presenting mitigating evidence in juvenile cases that are likely to produce long prison sentences that last well into adulthood.

According to her article: “Juveniles prosecuted in adult courts face serious consequences – including spending the rest of their lives in prison – despite their immaturity and often traumatic upbringings. The Supreme Court has recognized the categorical diminished culpability of adolescents. The culpability of some young offenders is particularly diminished because of the details of their lives. It is critical for attorneys to uncover and present mitigating information at sentencing hearings because such information may have an impact on the rest of their young clients’ lives.”

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