



***VOLUNTEERING FOR MBA
INNOCENCE INITIATIVE:
PROMOTING CONVICTION
INTEGRITY***

*Sponsored by:
Civil Rights and Social Justice Section*

**Massachusetts Bar Association
20 West Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111**

Please note that the information requested in this form should be completed and submitted via this link. The questions are listed below for your reference only:

<https://forms.monday.com/forms/c2e899c3008704fddf6493c6646d9331?r=use1>

MBA Attorney Volunteer Application Form for MBA Innocence Initiative

Thank you for your interest in conducting post-conviction screenings for CPCS and/or in providing assistance to Massachusetts innocence organizations in their post-conviction advanced case screening or investigations.

Please note: your answers will be preserved should you need to exit this form prior to submitting. Simply click on the original link and your form will re-open with your saved progress.

Name: _____

Name of Law Firm or Legal Practice: _____

Business Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Year of Law School Graduation: _____

Year of MA Bar Admission: _____

Civil law practitioner? Yes No

Criminal law practitioner? Yes No

What CPCS panel(s) are you currently on?

CAFL

Criminal Trial Panel (Bar Advocate)

- Mental Health
- None
- Post Conviction Panel
- SORB/SDP
- YAD

In what counties do you take CPCS panel cases? (List all that apply).

What types of cases are you certified by CPCS to litigate? (Check all that apply.)

- Adult district court criminal trial
- Adult district court post-conviction
- Adult murder post-conviction
- Adult murder trial
- Adult superior court criminal trial
- Adult superior court post-conviction
- Delinquency cases
- Mental Health cases
- None
- SDP cases
- YO cases

State Courts you have practiced in (at any time) (check all that apply).

- Appeal Court of SJC
- Boston Municipal Court
- District Court

- _____ Housing Court
- _____ Juvenile Court
- _____ Land Court
- _____ Probate and Family Court
- _____ Superior Court

Federal Courts you have practiced in (at any time) (check all that apply).

- _____ Other Federal Courts
- _____ U.S. Court of Appeals
- _____ U.S. District Court
- _____ U.S. Supreme Court

State and federal administrative agencies you have practiced in (please list):

Total number of trials or evidentiary hearings you have litigated:

Total number of trials or evidentiary hearings you have litigated over one week:

Please specify the types of witnesses/evidence involved in these trials or hearings:

What is your experience working with, examining or cross-examining experts?
(please identify types of experts):

What is your experience working with investigators?

Total Number of appeals argued in state court: _____

Total Number of appeals argued in federal court: _____

What is your experience writing memoranda of law and appellate briefs?

What type(s) of volunteering are you interested in? (Check all that apply)

Option 1: I'm interested in volunteering to provide initial screening of CPCS' applicants claim for post-conviction relief (after receiving CPCS-sponsored training). (Would require a limited time commitment per matter of about 10-15 hours)

Option 2: I'm interested in volunteering my specialized expertise for an innocence organization's advanced case review or investigation of a post-conviction claim. Projects will be assigned on an as-needed and as-requested basis (which may involve a limited time commitment or a more significant time commitment, depending on the circumstances and a volunteer's availability).

Have you previously worked on a post-conviction claim? ___ Yes ___ No

Have you previously worked on a post-conviction claim with an innocence organization? ___ Yes ___ No

Please identify areas of specialized expertise (check all that apply):

- Arson (cause and origin)
- Biomechanical engineering
- Cause of Death/Medical expertise
- Chemistry
- Forensic Accounting
- Immigration (vacating deportation orders)
- Mental Health (related to criminal responsibility, competency to waive rights)
- Other
- Police misconduct/ civil accountability
- Public Records Requests (making and litigating)

Briefly describe the nature and extent of your specialized expertise in each identified area, including any work with experts.

If you speak and/or read another language, please specify:

Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Faculty Profiles

RICHARD W. COLE, ESQ., principal of Cole Civil Rights and Safe Schools Consulting, is a former Assistant Attorney General and Civil Rights Division Chief at the Massachusetts Office of Attorney General. Cole provides policy, investigative and technical assistance and training to educators on civil rights, school climate, and race relations, and in preventing and addressing discriminatory harassment, bullying and hate crimes in schools and cyberspace. He also performs school climate audits, facilitating student and staff focus groups, followed by a detailed report and action plan, to assist schools in promoting equity, inclusion, and intergroup relations and in preventing and addressing discriminatory harassment and bullying.

Since September 2018, on behalf of the Massachusetts Bar Association (“MBA”), Cole has served as Co-Chair of the MBA-convened Massachusetts Conviction Integrity Task Force, and its predecessor, the Massachusetts Conviction Integrity Working Group, consisting of key Massachusetts criminal justice stakeholders. Richard received the MBA’s 2018 “Volunteer Recognition Award” for “helping to establish the MBA as a thought leader in the areas of immigrant rights and criminal justice reform.” He is a former Chair of the MBA’s Civil Rights and Social Justice Section Council.

Cole has successfully litigated precedent-setting civil rights, discrimination and public interest law cases in K-12 education, policing, hate crimes, mental health, employment, mortgage lending and housing. Prior to joining the Attorney General’s Office, Cole was a partner in Stahlin, Bergstresser & Cole, P.C. He also was a VISTA, staff and then managing attorney at Greater Boston Legal Services, where he managed its Roxbury community office, and then helped establish and lead its Individual Rights Unit. Cole is a graduate of Boston University School of Law and George Washington University.

DAMIAN TURCO, ESQ., serves as president of the Massachusetts Bar Association for the 2023-24 membership year, which began on Sept. 1, 2023. Turco is the founder and managing partner at Turco Legal PC, a 12-attorney divorce and family law firm with offices in Andover, Boston, Newburyport, and Newton. Since 2008, he and his practice have represented clients through complex divorces, child custody cases, adoptions, and other family law matters. He’s been lead counsel in hundreds of matters, both in Florida and Massachusetts, and today his role is that of a senior strategist in both the litigation and business interests of the firm and its client matters.

Turco is also the co-founder and president of JusticeApp, Inc., a legal technology company with the mission of eliminating injustice nationwide. JusticeApp is a mobile app that aggregates free legal resources and offers low-cost legal form generation and secure data storage designed to simplify the legal system for unrepresented parties. He established JusticeApp to serve as a reliable resource for those litigants in the justice gap, those in need of legal help without the resources to secure it.

Since 2013, Turco has been an active and contributing leader and volunteer at the MBA, working meaningfully and intentionally to improve the organization, its membership and the legal community at large through service. A former chair of the MBA’s Law Practice Management Section, Turco developed and launched an MBA Mock Interview Program, which has benefited hundreds of graduating law school students by providing them with job interview skills through mock interviews with MBA lawyer volunteers.

In addition, he previously chaired the Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Scholarship Committee, the MBA’s Digital Marketing Committee, and the Annual Gala Committee, and served on the MBA’s Civility and Professionalism Committee. Turco has also volunteered as a judge and a coach with the MBA’s High School Mock Trial program, and volunteered with the MBA’s Law Day program, taking the initiative to collaborate with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to expand the program’s reach.

Since 2016, Turco has served on the MBA’s Budget & Finance Committee and the Executive Management Board. He’s lobbied both the state and federal legislatures for increased funding for legal aid on behalf of the MBA and its membership. He’s also built effective working relationships with leaders in the Trial Court, law schools, and affinity and county bar associations across the commonwealth.

Outside of his MBA involvement, Turco has served in leadership on the New England Bar Association, including as president for the 2023-24 term, collaborating with bar leaders at the other New England state bar associations on best practices and emerging challenges. He was also one of three attorneys to reestablish the Greater Newburyport Bar Association to a thriving, local legal community and served as the organization's treasurer and on its board for several years. He has also served in leadership roles at Lawyers for Affordable Justice, a Boston-based legal incubator founded by Boston College, Boston University and Northeastern University law schools, and he served on the board of the Legal Advocacy and Resource Center (LARC), a phone-based legal access resource. Turco's performed extensive volunteer work in the community, including at the Greater Boston Food Bank, St. Francis House Day Shelter, and other homeless and day shelters across the commonwealth.

Turco graduated from Bryant College in 1999, and from New England Law | Boston in 2008. He grew up in Andover and lives in Newburyport with his wife, Melina, and three daughters.

SHARON BECKMAN, ESQ., the founding Director of the Boston College Innocence Program (BCIP), an academic and clinical legal educational program that engages law and undergraduate students in studying the problem of wrongful convictions and working to remedy and prevent these injustices through direct client representation and policy reform collaborations. Named a 2020 Massachusetts Lawyer of the Year, Beckman serves on the Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Eyewitness Identification, the Massachusetts Conviction Integrity Working Group, the Innocence Network's Ethics and Best Practices Committee, and the Criminal Justice Act Screening Panel for the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

A Boston College Law School faculty member since 1996, Beckman is the recipient of the highest teaching awards bestowed by Boston College, including the University Distinguished Teaching Award, the Law School's Award for Faculty Excellence, and the Ruth-Arlene Howe Black Law Students Association Faculty Member of the Year Award. In addition to the BCIP Clinic and Wrongful Convictions seminar, Beckman has also taught the Boston College Defender Criminal Defense Trial Clinic and courses in criminal law, criminal procedure, constitutional law, the Supreme Court, white collar crime, and criminal punishment.

Beckman is an honors graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Law School, where she was Editor-in-Chief of the *Michigan Law Review* and received the Henry M. Bates Memorial Scholarship, the Law School's top honor. She served as a law clerk to the Hon. Sandra Day O'Connor of the Supreme Court of the United States and to Hon. Frank Coffin of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Prior to joining the BC Law faculty, Beckman practiced law for seven years with law firms in Boston and Chicago. Her practice included criminal and civil litigation in state and federal trial and appellate courts, administrative agency proceedings, and internal corporate investigations. A former captain of the Harvard Women's Swimming & Diving and Water Polo teams, Beckman was the first New England woman to swim across the English Channel and was ranked first in the United States and third in the world among female marathon swimmers. A nationally ranked United States Masters swimmer, in 2020 Beckman was inducted into the New England Masters Swimming Hall of Fame.

LISA KAVANAUGH, ESQ., is the director of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) Innocence Program, a unit of the Massachusetts statewide public defender agency that identifies innocence cases and provides litigation support and funding for the investigation and expert resources needed to successfully litigate these cases. A career public defender, she is actively involved in litigating cases, and served as lead or co-counsel in overturning numerous wrongful convictions, including Raymond Champagne, Frederick Clay, Clifton Caldwell, Shaun Jenkins, Darrell Jones, George Perrot and Victor Rosario. She is also actively involved in developing statewide training programs on flawed forensic evidence and other leading causes of wrongful convictions, as well as skills-based training for

post-conviction lawyers. In 2013, she formed a multi-agency Working Group of criminal justice leaders to improve access to post-conviction DNA analysis, reform evidence handling practices, and initiate a collaborative review of cases involving microscopic hair comparison evidence. Since that time, she has secured seven federal grant awards to support staff expansion and new initiatives by CPCS and other Working Group members. Kavanaugh first joined CPCS in 2002 as a staff attorney in the Somerville Superior Court trial unit. From 2007-2009, she worked in the Appeals Unit and litigated numerous felony appeals. She is a 1996 graduate of Yale University and a 2000 graduate of Harvard Law School. A Trustee of the New England Innocence Project, she also presently serves as a member of the Massachusetts Forensic Science Oversight Board and as co-chair of the Massachusetts Bar Association's Task Force on Conviction Integrity.

RADHA NATARAJAN, ESQ., is the Executive Director of the New England Innocence Project (NEIP), whose mission includes correcting and preventing wrongful convictions and supporting people freed after being wrongfully convicted. Prior to joining NEIP as its Staff Attorney, Natarajan spent twelve years as a public defender, including at the Roxbury Defenders, handling serious felony cases in the Massachusetts trial courts. She is a 2000 graduate of Stanford University, where she majored in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, focusing on the role of race in the legal system. She is a 2003 graduate of New York University School of Law, where she was the Managing Editor of the New York University Law Review. Natarajan is committed to fighting for freedom alongside the people, families, and communities harmed by the criminal legal system.



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