

ISSUE
SEPT
2026



NEWSLETTER OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF AKRON
SCHOOL OF LAW

The Center for Constitutional Law

Events

**Supreme Court
Review, Constitution
Day, Sept. 17, 2026**

Prof. Melissa Murray,
NYU Law, *Book Talk,*
The Constitution, A
Guide for the Modern
Reader, Oct. 1, 2026

Prof. Tracy Thomas,
Book Talk, The First
Woman Judge, Oct. 22,
2026 (12:15 & 5:00pm)

Con Law Book Group,
beginning Fall 2026

Prof. Julie Suk,
Fordham Law, *The*
Shadow Court, Jan. 27,
2027 (virtual)

Virtual Symposium,
Doing History in Law,
Feb. 26, 2027, featuring
keynote by **Prof.**
Jonathan Gienapp,
Stanford University

Constitution Day 2027,
Dean Erwin
Chemerinsky, Berkeley

60th Anniversary of
the 25th Amendment,
with Bliss Institute of
Applied Politics

All events free & open to public

CENTER DIRECTOR
Tracy Thomas



Professors CJ Peters, Bernadette Genetin, Jess Miers, Tracy Thomas, Mike Gentithes & Ashley Keith speak at "The Supreme Court Review."

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Congress Facilitates Research on Constitution

Congress established the Center for Constitutional Law at The University of Akron in 1986 as one of four national resource centers dedicated to legal research on constitutional issues. Akron Law created the John F. Seiberling Chair of Constitutional Law to fulfill this mission. The Center fosters scholarly research, public education, and student engagement on current topics of constitutional import.

The Center for Constitutional Law at Akron sponsors annual symposia with leading national scholars and papers are published in its faculty-edited journal, ConLawNOW. Its inaugural professor was U.S. Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg. Other speakers from the judiciary have included Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Judge Jeffrey Sutton of the federal Sixth Circuit, and Nancy Abudu, now judge on the Eleventh Circuit. It also sponsors a distinguished lecturer series that has welcomed scholars like Larry Solum, Reva Siegel, Ernie Young, Julie Suk, Maggie Blackhawk, Katie Eyer, Mary Anne Franks, and Paula Monopoli, among others. The Center partners with Akron's renowned Bliss Institute of Applied Politics for law and politics programming.

The Center facilitates research by its affiliated faculty in a variety of constitutional subjects including federal courts, civil rights, criminal justice, the U.S. Supreme Court, and constitutional theory.

The Center has a recognized legacy of scholarship in constitutional history pioneered by founding director Dean Richard Aynes, including amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court also written by then-assistant director, Wilson Huhn. Collectively, the Center scholars' research has appeared in leading law journals such as the *Yale Law Journal*, *Harvard Law Review*, *Georgetown Law Journal*, *Columbia Law Review*, *Iowa Law Review*, *Harvard Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*, and *University of Pennsylvania Constitutional Law Journal*.

The Center is directed by Tracy Thomas, Seiberling Chair of Constitutional Law, who has served in this role since 2015. She teaches Constitutional Law-Individual Rights, Remedies, Family Law, and Legal History. She is the author of over thirty articles on constitutional law, remedial equity, and equality, and her scholarship has appeared in leading law reviews including the *Stanford Journal of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties*, *Minnesota Law Review*, *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal*, and *Constitutional Commentary*. She is also author of *The First Woman Judge: The Life & Legacy of Florence Allen* (U.Cal. Press 2026). Her work has been cited by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second and D.C. Circuits, and the Supreme Courts of Georgia, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington.

FACULTY

BERNADETTE BOLLAS GENETIN



Professor Genetin teaches civil procedure, litigation, and federal courts. Her research focuses on federal rulemaking, with a concentration on the intersection of federal procedural rules and congressional statutes and the conflict resulting in separation of powers and federalism issues. She is currently working on an article entitled *The Allure of Procedural Simplicity Meets the Erie Doctrine—Again*.

MIKE GENTITHES



Dean Gentithes's teaching and research focus on criminal procedure, constitutional law, legal theory, and legal writing. He has published more than twenty-five articles in law reviews across the country, including the *Georgetown Law Journal*, the *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*, and the *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*.

BRANT LEE



Professor Lee teaches property, employment discrimination law, social justice lawyering, and feminist and race theory and the law. He previously served as Assistant Dean of Diversity and Social Justice Initiatives at Akron Law.

CHRISTOPHER (CJ) PETERS



Dean Peters teaches and writes in the areas of constitutional law, legal and constitutional theory, and federal civil procedure. He is the author of *A Matter of Dispute: Morality, Democracy & Law* (Oxford Press). His articles have been published in the *Harvard Law Review*, the *Yale Law Journal*, and the *Columbia Law Review*.



Interview with Prof. Ben Cohen

Advocate of criminal justice shares his views on law

Professor Cohen teaches doctrinal courses on criminal law and criminal procedure, as well as seminars on death penalty jurisprudence and prosecution function. As both a practitioner and a scholar, he has published twenty articles, including two book chapters, has been cited by the United States Supreme Court and lower courts, and has represented multiple clients at the United States Supreme Court, including in landmark cases Kennedy v. Louisiana and Ramos v. Louisiana. He is currently working on an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court on the legal history of unanimous juries.

Professor Cohen began teaching at Akron Law in 2023. He loves teaching at Akron because the students give him hope for the future of our legal system, and he enjoys watching them grow from 1L to 3L and then seeing what they do in the world after law school.

His path to working in criminal law and with the wrongfully convicted began in South Africa, where he worked with a judge. He was interested in efforts there to improve the legal system and came back to the U.S. inspired to work on the

issues here. He began representing people on death row, and then eventually had a client who was wrongfully convicted of murder.

What interested you in becoming involved with the Constitutional Law Center?

I have always felt like we're all constitutional actors, each of us takes an oath to uphold the Constitution. I see that act of giving meaning to the Constitution as a profound aspect of being a lawyer.

"When these things happen, we lose faith in our criminal legal system when we don't meet those standards."

What role do you think constitutional protections play in preventing wrongful convictions?

I'll give you an example of a case in which the defendant was represented by someone who was well beneath the Sixth Amendment standard for what a person is entitled to, and the prosecutors were indifferent to some of the evidence

in the file, and some evidence was ignored. When these things happen, we lose faith in our criminal legal system when we don't meet those standards.

He talked further about a case of a former client who was wrongfully convicted, the person who committed the murder was out, and the innocent person was sitting on death row. Professor Cohen remarked: "Our Constitution promises to fix that problem, and we as lawyers are the people who make good on that promise."

Are there any Supreme Court decisions in criminal law that you find especially significant or interesting?

For me, *Ramos v. Louisiana* was the high point of 23 years of work bringing a case to the Court, trying to challenge Louisiana's non-unanimous jury system. The Court recognized that the Louisiana law was based on racism, that it had its origins in a desire for white supremacy.

~Interview by Lillian Engelhart

Selected Recent Scholarship

- Cohen, *The Promises of Progressive Prosecution*, 77 RUTGERS L. REV. 1 (2024)
Cohen, *The Perils of Police Driven Prosecution*, 51 VERMONT L. REV. (forthcoming 2026)
Genetin, *Appealable TROs: Restoring Irreparable Harm as the Touchstone for Instant Interlocutory Appeal of Temporary Restraining Orders*, 75 BAYLOR L. REV. 374 (2023)
Gentithes, *The Reality of the Good Faith Exception*, 113 GEORGETOWN L.J. 551 (2025) (with Matthew Tokson)
Gentithes, *Exigencies, Not Exceptions: How to Return Warrant Exceptions to Their Roots*, 25 U. PA. J. CONST. L. 59 (2023)
Thomas, *Reclaiming the Long History of the "Irrelevant" Nineteenth Amendment for Gender Equality*, 105 MINN. L. REV. 2623 (2021)



ConLawNOW Faculty Edited Journal

The Center publishes *ConLawNOW*, an open access, faculty-edited, online journal. The journal offers a venue for legal analysis of current issues of constitutional law as they happen. It offers authors a quick turn-around time of six weeks to publication, designed to help get insights into the public discourse where they can influence the debate.

As an open access journal, it has no paywalls and sweeps wide to global readers in law, academia, the courts, and the press. Essays are typically 5,000 to 10,000 words, though length may vary.

As a faculty-edited journal, law experts in constitutional law and legal writing select and copyedit the articles, providing a high standard of professionalism and peer review in publication.

CALL FOR PAPERS

SCOTUS SYMPOSIUM annually solicits papers on the blockbuster cases from the U.S. Supreme Court's recent term. Papers due each year by August 15.

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM, "Doing History in Law," Feb. 26, 2027, featuring keynote by Stanford Prof. Jonathan Gienapp. Proposals due 11/10/26 conlawjournal@uakron.edu

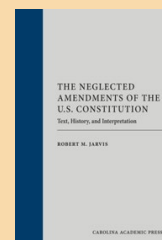
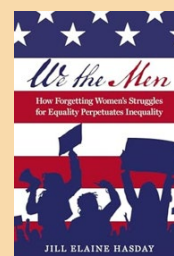
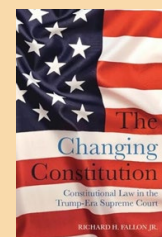
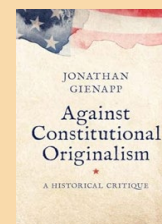
The 2026 Faculty Editorial Board for *ConLawNOW* is Mike Gentithes, Jonathan Moore, Charlie Oldfield, and managing editor, Tracy Thomas. Some recent publications include:

- ♦ [Symposium, SCOTUS Review 2026](#)
- ♦ [Symposium, SCOTUS Review 2025](#)
- ♦ Katie Eyer, [Disentangling Textualism and Originalism](#)
- ♦ Earl Maltz, [The Myth of the Fourteenth Amendment & the Civil Rights Act of 1866](#)
- ♦ Stanley Langbein, [Checks, Balances, Tariffs, & Justice Kavanaugh](#)
- ♦ Scott Dodson, [Personal Jurisdiction and the Fifth Amendment](#)

The journal encourages dialogue and debate from all perspectives. The views and opinions expressed by individual authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or The University of Akron.

BOOK REVIEWS

The faculty and fellows facilitate review of important books on constitutional law by writing and editing book reviews for *ConLawNOW*. Hover over images and right click for reviews or go to conlawjournal@uakron.edu.



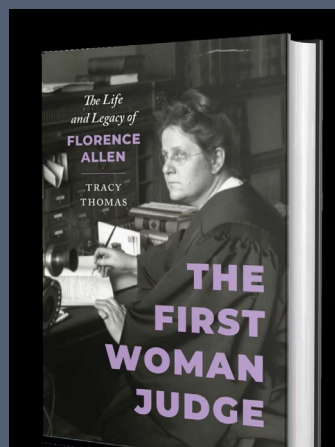
BOOK TALK: *The First Woman Judge*

Center Director publishes legal history

Florence Allen was the first woman judge many times over—first federal appellate court judge, first elected to a state supreme court, and first shortlisted for the U.S. Supreme Court. During Allen's forty years on the bench, the country swung between progressivism and conservatism, with passage of a constitutional amendment for women's voting rights, two world wars, the Red and Lavender Scares, and the New Deal.

Amid these changes, women used their new political standing to transform the courts, first by becoming active agents in the justice system, and then by developing theories of public law, social justice, and fair process. Exploring Allen's fascinating legal life, Tracy Thomas recounts the larger history of how women infiltrated the legal system as judges, lawyers, jurors, and legislators to demand a more representative system of justice for the welfare of all.

[Now available to order.](#)





Meet the Fellows

The Center sponsors student fellowships for research, and fellows also write book reviews, lead programming and speak to the public. Recent fellows include:

Ashley Bierman, '27, Lisa Bodnar, '27, Charles Britton, '28, Mitchell Crawford, '26, Lillian Engelhart, '28, Julius Fout, '27, Kyle Fuller, '25, Taylor King, '25, William Huff, '25, Kim Lloyd, '27, Joey Martinez, '27, Grace Metheney, '26, Nick Moglia, '25, Chelsea Phares, '27, Rachel Simonton, '27, Rebecca Sullivan,

Years in Review

Programming to facilitate research and discussion

• DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

[Paula Monopoli](#), Distinguished Professor of Law, Maryland, *Women as Constitution Makers: Revisiting the Nineteenth Amendment after Dobbs*

[Martin Siegel](#), Professor of Law, South Texas, *Book Talk, Judgment & Mercy: The Turbulent Life & Times of the Judge Who Condemned the Rosenbergs*

[Maggie Blackhawk](#), Professor of Law, NYU, *America's Other Original Sin: Indians & the Constitution in the Shadow of Empire*

[Kate Masur](#), Professor of History, Northwestern, *Book Talk: Until Justice Be Done*, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize

• SYMPOSIA

Levels of Scrutiny: Toppling the Tiers or Restoring the Balance

Women's Leadership in Law & Politics, co-sponsored by The Bliss Institute for Applied Politics at Akron. Papers published in [ConLawNOW](#) vol.16:2

Gender, Health & the Constitution. Papers published in [ConLawNOW](#) vol.15:1

The 19th at 100: From the Vote to Gender Equality. Papers published in [ConLawNOW](#) vol.11:1

• CERTIFICATES

The Center provides certificates for JD students to concentrate their studies in the area of con law. Apply at <https://www.uakron.edu/law/ccl/>.

FELLOWS SPOTLIGHT

Joey Martinez published his note on federal powers, [Antitrust Law in Professional Sports: How Major League Baseball has Continued Being the Exception to the Rule](#), in the Center's journal, *ConLawNOW*, arguing against the exemption.



Ashley Bierman and Grace Metheney spoke on the Akron ZIPS campus radio explaining legal issues of immigration. Grace also spoke at the Barberton Library on the origins of the Sixth and Eighth Amendments.

Center for Con Law Sept 2026

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