
CUNY LAW REVIEW

Beyond
RESISTANCE
BUILDING SOLIDARITY THROUGH
MOVEMENT LAWYERING

A symposium of attorneys, organizers, and scholars to envision a confrontation of fascism, the reclamation of power, and an equitable future.

March 15th, 2025

CUNY LAW REVIEW

The City University of New York Law Review publishes work from leading social justice scholars and public interest practitioners. We provide a forum for community advocates, organizers, and allies to influence and radicalize legal practice. These aims are motivated by the Law Review's larger social justice vision: to address the consequences of structural oppression, and to challenge these structures themselves.

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Scholarship for Social Justice

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The panels and keynote address will be held in the Auditorium on the 2nd floor.

10:00-10:30

CHECK-IN + BREAKFAST

Atrium
2nd floor

10:30
11:30

Panel
**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING
& MOVEMENT LAWYERING**

*Moderator: Professor Marbré Stahly-Butts—CUNY School of Law
Speakers: Dana Rachlin—Co-Founder and Executive Director of We Build the Block; Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson—Co-Executive Director of The Highland Research & Education Center; Ejeris Dixon—Founding Director of Ejerie Labs; Anthony Posada—Supervising Attorney for the Community Justice Project at The Legal Aid Society*

11:45
12:45

Panel
**ECONOMIC JUSTICE &
MOVEMENT LAWYERING**

*Moderator: Cristina Gallo—Partner at Cohen, Weiss, and Simon
Speakers: Professor Jacob Remes—Gallatin School of Individualized Study at NYU; Retu Singla—Partner at Julien, Mirer, Singla & Goldstein; Professor Renee Hatcher—Visiting Professor at George Washington School of Law; Andy Morrison—Associate Director of the New Economy Project*

12:45-1:30

LUNCH

Atrium
2nd floor

1:30
2:30

Panel
**NYC GOVERNANCE &
MOVEMENT LAWYERING**

*Moderator: Professor Chaumtoli Huq—CUNY School of Law
Speakers: Senator Jabari Brisport—State Senator Representing New York's 25th State Senate District; Linda Tigani—Executive Director of the NYC Commission on Racial Equity; Fahd Ahmed—Executive Director of DRUM-Desis Rising Up & Moving of New York City*

2:30
3:15

Keynote Address
PROF. NINA FARNIA

3:15-4:00

TIME TO CONNECT

Atrium
2nd floor

ON TODAY'S PROGRAM

We organized this event in response to Donald's Trump's re-election, seeking to contribute what we see as missing in the popular conversation and in the confrontation of this regime.

This work didn't start on Trump's inauguration day in 2025, nor did it start on his inauguration day in 2017. The most effective means of fighting back against the ascendant right wing is not sending lawsuits to die at the doorstep of the ultra-conservative Supreme Court, or showing up every four years to vote. The only way through this precarious moment is political organizing and mobilization. Only through these vehicles can we harness our collective power to oppose fascism in all its forms.

The people have power-- not only to disrupt the current structure, but to envision a new, equitable society. Our program today is designed not only to present defensive measures, but to help lawyers and activists envision a more positive, imaginative, and just world.

We hope that this event will elucidate a way forward and inspire empowerment that is undeterred by a regime that threatens violence and fear.

PANEL ON COMMUNITY ORGANIZING & MOVEMENT LAWYERING

10:30–11:30
Auditorium
2nd floor



A discussion of how organizing on the local level can suppress the rising tide of fascism, and how lawyers can work with activists and organizers to disrupt the current power structure by putting power in the hands of the people.

MARBRÉ STAHLY-BUTTS

moderator

Marbré Stahly-Butts, co-founder and former Executive Director of Law for Black Lives, has worked closely with organizers and communities across the country to advance and actualize radical policy. She co-founded and served on the Leadership Team of the Movement for Black Lives Policy Table and was one of the chief architects of the Vision for Black Lives Policy Platform. She was a co-founder of the National Bail Out Collective and the People's Coalition for Safety and Freedom. Before her role at Law for Black Lives, Marbré worked as Deputy Director of Racial Justice at the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD). She joined CPD as a Soros Justice Fellow in Fall 2013. Her Soros Justice work focused on organizing and working with families affected by aggressive policing and criminal justice policies in New York City in order to develop meaningful bottom-up policy reforms. While in law school, Marbré focused on the intersection of criminal justice and civil rights and gained legal experience with the Bronx Defenders, the Equal Justice Initiative, and the Prison Policy Initiative. Before law school, Marbré received her Masters in African Studies from Oxford University and studied in Zimbabwe, where she focused on community responses to violence. She also taught in South Africa at Nelson Mandela's alma mater. Marbré graduated from Columbia University, with a B.A. in African-American History and Human Rights. She is a professor of law at CUNY School of Law.

Co-Founder and Executive Director **We Build the Block**

Dana Rachlin has successfully designed and scaled transformative initiatives that unite nonprofits, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders to share resources, exchange expertise, and achieve unprecedented levels of cooperation. Recognized multiple times by the New York Times for her pioneering work, she has led high-impact projects in public safety, harm reduction, justice reform, and community resilience. As a former elected official, she spearheaded judicial selection reforms and has played a key role in nonprofit advocacy, leading initiatives that foster innovation, sustainability, and social equity.

Her ability to bridge policy with practice and foster strategic partnerships across sectors makes her a catalyst for large-scale, systemic change. With deep experience in hyper local and public-private partnerships, and international collaboration, she has worked with delegations worldwide to create sustainable, scalable solutions that address pressing social challenges.

Currently, Dana serves as the Associate Director of Punishment to Public Health at John Jay College, where she works with local district attorneys and communities to implement public health-centered safety solutions that move beyond traditional punitive responses. Additionally, she is the co-founder of We Build the Block, an organization that recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary. We Build the Block employs credible messengers—community leaders with lived experience—and is transforming how they are trained, supported, and treated in the workplace, with a strong emphasis on trauma-informed leadership and professional sustainability leading to increased public safety and community wellness.

DANA RACHLIN



Former Co-Executive Director
The Highlander Research & Education Center

ASH-LEE WOODARD HENDERSON

Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson is an Affrilachian (Black Appalachian) woman from the working class, born and raised in Southeast Tennessee. She is the first Black woman to serve as Co-Executive Director of Highlander Research & Education Center. As a member of leadership teams in the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), Ash-Lee has contributed to the Vision for Black Lives and BREATHE Act. She has served on the governance council of the Southern Movement Assembly, the advisory committee of National Bailout Collective. She is a long-time activist who has worked in movements fighting for workers, for reproductive justice, LGBTQUIA+, environmental justice etc.

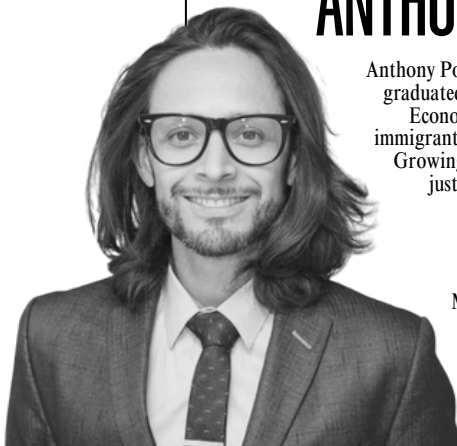


ANTHONY POSADA

Community Justice Unit The Legal Aid Society

Anthony Posada is a Supervising Attorney for the Community Justice Unit of the Legal Aid Society. Anthony graduated from CUNY School of Law where he received his JD in 2012 with a specialization in Community Economic Development, Immigration and Deportation Defense. Anthony is also the son of a Colombian immigrant father, recently deported, who spent more than two decades incarcerated in the US prison system. Growing up fully aware of the affirmative targeting of poor people and people of color by the US criminal justice system, Anthony early on turned his attention to seeking justice for those people systematically targeted and cast aside in the very country where they hoped to prosper.

His work at the Legal Aid Society began as a Public Defender in the county of Queens where he represented people on misdemeanors and felonies. Anthony then transitioned into the Community Justice Unit (CJU), where he provides wrap-around legal services to New York City's Crisis Management System (CMS), which is composed of community groups and city agencies working to reduce gun violence using a public health model. His advocacy also involves legislative initiatives, impact litigation cases, and movement lawyering. Anthony's work does not stop with his job. In 2010 he started Project Attica: Community Through the Arts, a collective of lawyers, activists, community members, and artists dedicated to spreading the message of using art to empower underserved youth and communities.



Founding Director Ejerie Labs

EJERIS DIXON

Ejeris Dixon is an organizer, writer, and strategist with 25 years of experience leading organizations within racial justice, LGBTQ, anti-violence, transformative justice and economic justice movements. They are the Founding Director of Ejerie Labs where they focus on building movement strategy towards creating transformative futures and curtailing rising fascism. Ejeris serves as the host of the Fascism Barometer, a podcast and learning hub that discusses fascism's rise in the United States, and how to organize against it. Ejeris is also the co-editor of Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement with Leah Lakshmi Piepza Samarasinha. Over the past twenty-five years Ejeris has directly worked on thousands of incidents of violence and directly organized around more than a hundred murders of Queer and Trans People of Color. Ejeris is a proud Queens resident and member of the New York City organizing community having worked at Community Voices Heard, Families United for Racial and Economic Equality, the Audre Lorde Project, the New York City Anti-Violence Project, Communities United for Police Reform, and Transform NYC.



PANEL ON ECONOMIC JUSTICE & MOVEMENT LAWYERING

11:45-12:45
Auditorium
2nd floor

A conversation about using economic justice to empower communities by building solidarity among the working class and fighting for an equitable division of capital, as well as how wealth re-distribution informs issues of free speech, immigration, and labor.



CRISTINA GALLO

moderator

Cristina Gallo is a partner at Cohen, Weiss, and Simon. She practices primarily in the areas of labor and employee benefits, providing counsel to unions and representation in elections, negotiations, and arbitration proceedings and to benefit funds in compliance matters. Prior to joining Cohen, Weiss and Simon LLP, Ms. Gallo was an associate with Kennedy, Jennik & Murray P.C., where she also practiced in the labor and employee benefits areas. Ms. Gallo previously worked at the firm of Friedman & Anspach.

Ms. Gallo attended UCLA School of Law on a public-interest merit scholarship and graduated with honors and with specializations in Public Interest Law and Policy and Critical Race Studies. During law school, she was submissions and staff editor of the Los Angeles Public Interest Law Journal. Prior to law school, she worked as a strategic campaigner at the union UNITE HERE for five years in New York City.

Partner Julien, Mirer, Singla & Goldstein **RETU SINGLA**

Retu's firm, Goldstein & Singla, A Working Peoples Law Office is a highly visible national labor law practice representing warehouse, service, grocery store, hospital, life insurance, higher education, call center and public sector workers. The firm is considered a national expert on labor law successfully pushing for stronger federal labor laws. Retu is a member of the Legal Network for Gender Equity & TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, Fast Food Justice and Law for Black Lives. She has served as a delegate of international accompaniers by the National Electoral Council (CNE) of Venezuela to observe the expanded audit of the April 14, 2013 Special Election immediately following the March 5, 2013 death of President Hugo Chavez and a Delegate to the 2008 International Conference of the Role of Unions and Labor Lawyers in Havana Cuba. Retu holds a Bachelor of Arts from the New School for Social Research and a Juris Doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles, Program in Public Interest Law and Policy.

Retu believes that movement lawyering takes direction from directly impacted people and from organizers, as opposed to imposing legal expertise. It means building the power of the people, not the power of the law. As a movement lawyer she works within the larger civil rights and labor movement to help change the conditions that lead to worker exploitation so as to strengthen the grassroots base of the labor and civil rights movement. Her practice is based on anti-oppressive and democratic principles to create an environment that mirrors progressive change that is movement centered.



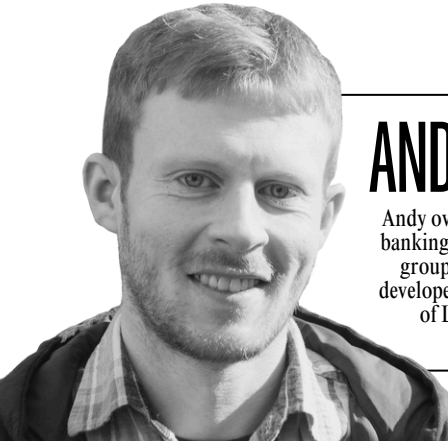


JACOB REMES *Professor NYU Gallatin*

Jacob Remes is clinical associate professor in NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with an associated appointment in the Department of History and an affiliated appointment in the NYU-KAIST Global Innovation and Research Institute. He studies and teaches the working-class and labor history of North America, with a focus on urban disasters, working-class organizations, and migration. He is the author of *Disaster Citizenship: Survivors, Solidarity, and Power in the Progressive Era* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), the editor, with Andy Horowitz, of *Critical Disaster Studies* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), and a founding co-editor of the *Journal of Disaster Studies*. He is on the organizing and bargaining committees of Contract Faculty United - UAW, the nation's largest recognized union of full-time, non-tenure track faculty in the private sector.

Visiting Professor GW Law RENEE HATCHER

Professor Renee Hatcher is a Visiting Associate Professor of Clinical Law and the Director of the Small Business and Community Economic Development Clinic. Professor Hatcher is visiting GW from University of Illinois Chicago School of Law (UIC Law), where she is an assistant professor of law and the Director of the Community Enterprise & Solidarity Economy Clinic. Since March 2024, Professor Hatcher has also served as the Co-Director of Chicago Community Wealth Building Ecosystem at CUPPA's Center on Urban Economic Development. Professor Hatcher has significant experience providing legal support to worker centers, worker cooperatives, and community-based initiatives with an eye toward empowering workers and community residents. Her legal advocacy and research focus on legal and non-legal strategies such as solidarity economy to build power and create equitable development practices and healthy communities predominantly in Black, low-income neighborhoods.



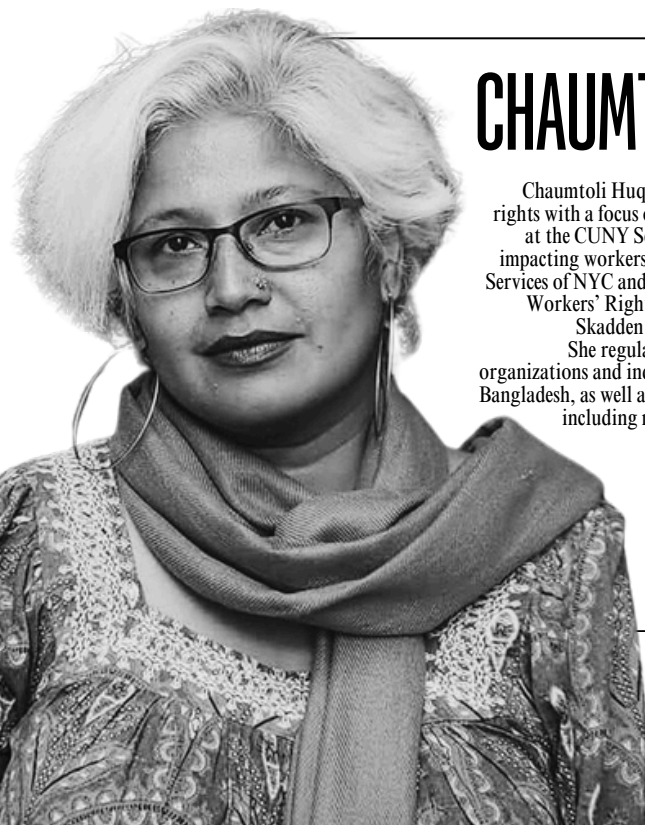
ANDY MORRISON *Associate Director The New Economy Project*

Andy oversees New Economy Project's coalition organizing, communications, and strategy for public banking and other economic justice campaigns, collaborating with community, civil rights, and labor groups and cooperatives. Previously, at NYPIRG, he directed the organization's statewide canvass, developed policy and organizing strategies, and trained student activists. He serves as a board member of LES People's Federal Credit Union and lives on the Lower East Side with his family. Andy is a graduate of CUNY School of Law and Columbia University.

PANEL ON NYC GOVERNANCE & MOVEMENT LAWYERING

1:30-2:30
Auditorium
2nd floor

Three progressive leaders on the city level are led by Professor Chaumtoli Huq to discuss their visions for New York City. This conversation will center on how the city can (and does) function as an incubator for progressive policies despite the rise of the right-wing at the federal and state level, as well as the rightward shift in poor neighborhoods.



CHAUMTOLI HUQ

moderator

Chaumtoli Huq is a leading expert on employment and labor law, migration and human rights with a focus on social movements in the US and South Asia. She is a Professor of Law at the CUNY School of Law. Huq has devoted her professional career focusing on issues impacting workers in the US and South Asia. Along with holding leadership roles at Legal Services of NYC and MFY Legal Services, she also served as Director of the first South Asian Workers' Rights Project at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund as a Skadden Fellow, the first staff attorney to the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

She regularly provides strategic advice and support to grassroots social movement organizations and independent collective formations on a wide range of issues both in US and Bangladesh, as well as advises community and labor organizers facing retaliation for organizing including more recently to form a support group of employment lawyers to protect individuals retaliated for Palestine and other political speech.

She is the 2019 Access to Justice Leadership Award by the South Asian Bar Association of New York, the 2020 Daynard Public Interest Visiting Fellowship awarded to nationally recognized public interest leaders, 2022 Wendland Cook Academic Fellow at the Vanderbilt Divinity School. Additionally, she was a 2023 Fulbright US Senior Scholar in Malaga, Spain and Visiting Scholar in Sicily researching South Asian migration to Europe



FAHD AHMED Executive Director **DRUM:Desis Rising Up & Moving of NYC**

Fahd Ahmed has been a grassroots organizer on the issues of racial profiling, immigrant justice, police accountability, national security, and educational justice over the last 16 years. He is currently the Executive Director of DRUM-Desis Rising Up & Moving of New York City, where he has served in various capacities since 2000. DRUM has mobilized and built the leadership of thousands of low-income, South Asian immigrants to lead social and policy change that impacts their own lives- from immigrant rights to education reform, civil rights, and worker’s justice.

Executive Director **NYC Commission on Racial Equity** **LINDA TIGANI**

Linda Tigani is a racial equity leader and community advocate with decades of experience working with and for New Yorkers to drive systemic change and advance social justice. She serves as the Chair and Executive Director of the NYC Commission on Racial Equity (CORE) and previously led equity initiatives at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Linda holds a master's degree in social work from Hunter College.



JABARI BRISPORT Senator **NYS 25th District**

Senator Jabari Brisport is a third-generation Caribbean-American from Brooklyn representing New York’s 25th State Senate district. He first got involved in political activism through the fight for marriage equality and the early Black Lives Matter movement. Before becoming the first LGBTQ+ person of color to serve in New York’s legislature, he was a math teacher at a public middle school in Crown Heights.

As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Children and Families, Brisport focuses on fighting for a just State budget that funds the infrastructure & services New Yorkers need to survive and thrive, especially in times of crisis. Brisport is a vocal advocate of raising taxes on the rich and of policies that place the needs of working-class people above corporate profits -- including a Green New Deal, the New York Health Act, Universal Child Care, and housing solutions like Good Cause Eviction and ending broker fees for tenants.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

DR. NINA FARNIA

2:30-3:15
Auditorium
2nd floor

PROFESSOR ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

Nina Farnia is a legal historian, focusing on the role of modern imperialism in U.S. law and politics. Her publications explore a variety of related subjects, including the evolution of the First Amendment, U.S. foreign affairs, economic coercive measures, and fascism both past and present.

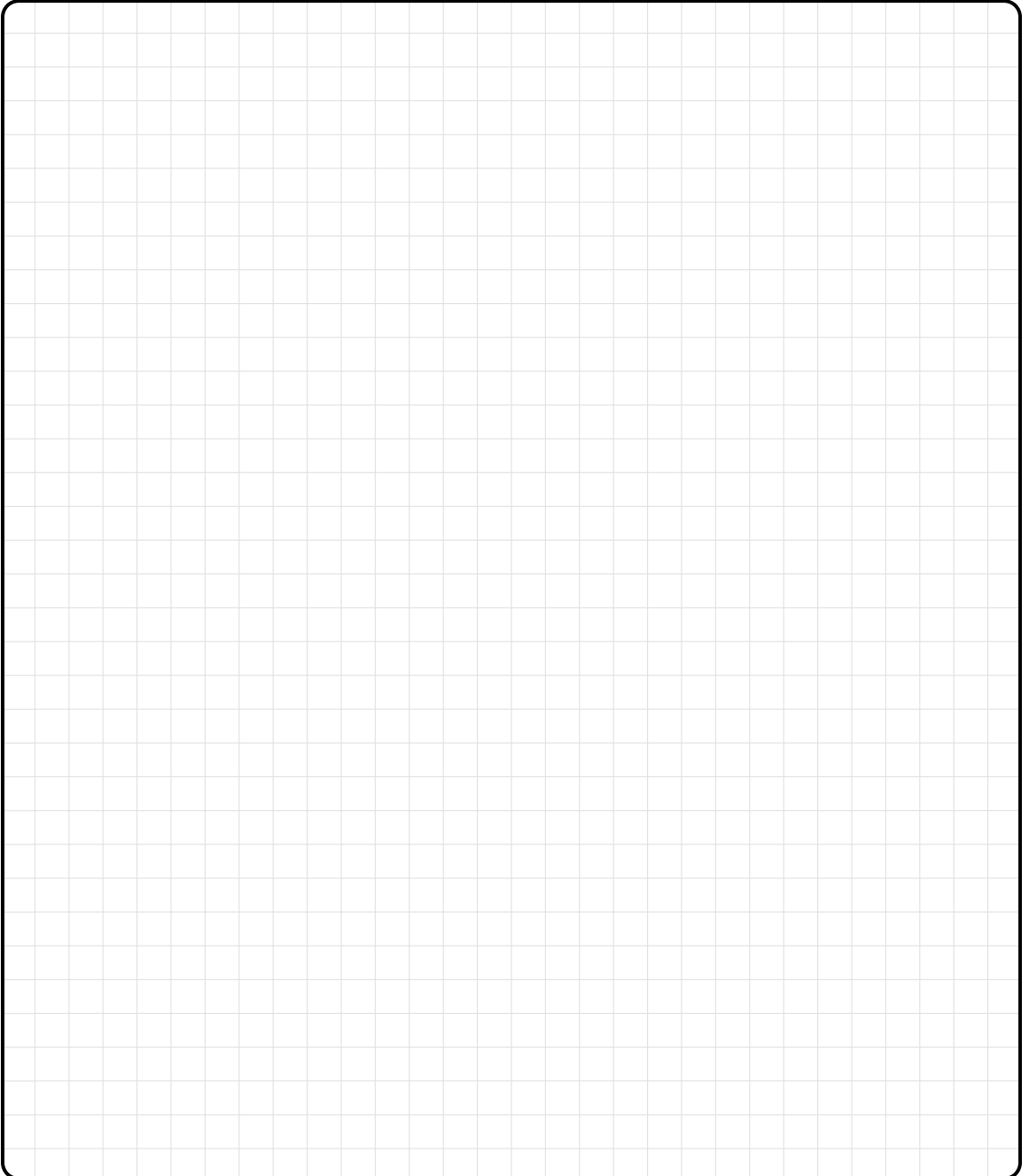
Her doctoral dissertation, *Imperialism in the Making of U.S. Law, 1940-2008*, is the 2023 co-winner of the Julien Mezey Dissertation Award from the Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities, and is the basis of her forthcoming book *Imperialism and Resistance* (Stanford University Press 2026). Her second book will focus on the relationship between imperialism and fascism today.

Dr. Farnia has published in a wide range of academic journals and popular media outlets such as the *Stanford Law Review*, *UPenn's Journal of Constitutional Law*, and *UCLA Women's Law Journal*, among others. She currently serves as an associate editor for *Middle East Critique*.

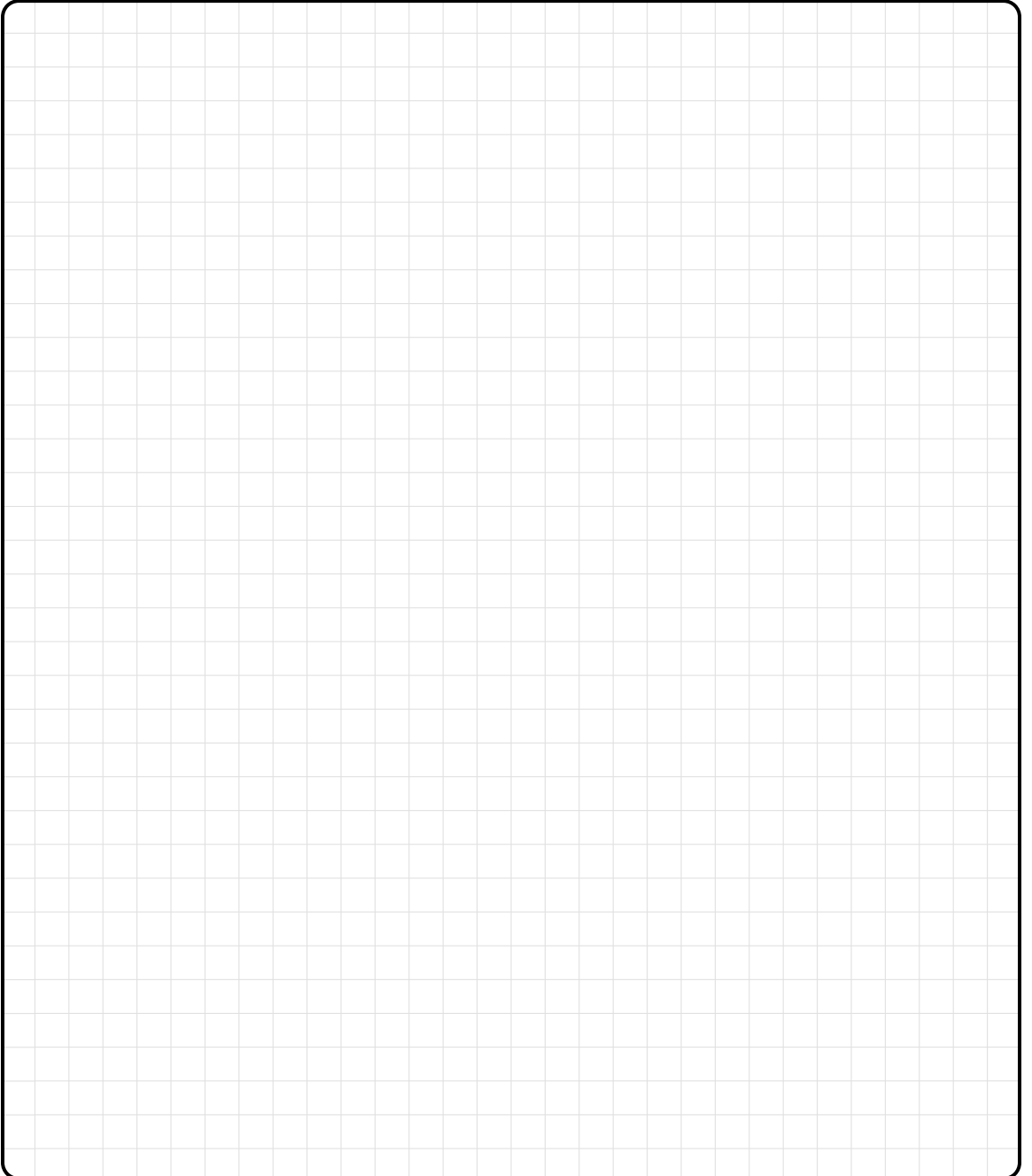
Before entering academia, she was an Equal Justice Works fellow and participated on the legal teams for two Supreme Court cases: *Dukes v. Wal-Mart*, the largest civil rights class action in U.S. history and her fellowship case, *Fazaga v. FBI*, which challenged the use of government informants in mosques in Southern California.

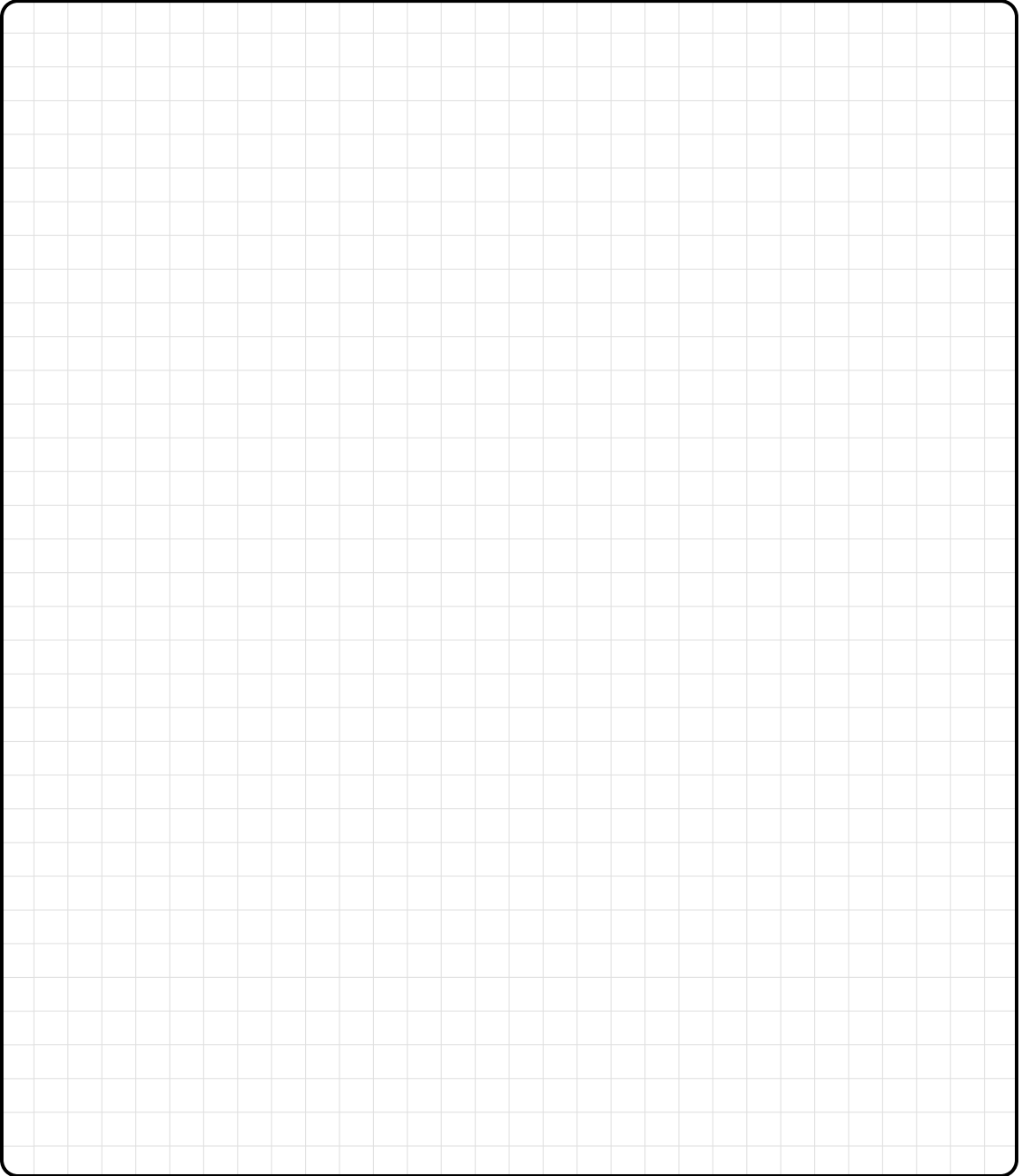


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