

Center For Civil Rights

A Center of UNC School of Law

THE UNC CENTER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS works to dismantle structural racism by challenging discriminatory policies and practices that have led to the exclusion of low-wealth, non-white families and the underdevelopment of the neighborhoods in which they live. The center uses community-based, high-impact advocacy and outreach to secure social, economic and environmental justice for these communities. The center focuses on elevating families and communities above the boundaries of race, class and place.

The UNC Center for Civil Rights was founded in 2001 by Julius L. Chambers, the former director-counsel to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. (LDF), and former chancellor of North Carolina Central University. Theodore M. “Ted” Shaw, also a former director-counsel to the LDF, serves as director. The center has risen to national prominence as a bastion for strategic civil rights advocacy.

Through innovative impact litigation and legal advocacy, commissioning new civil rights legal scholarship, and mentoring young and future attorneys, the center brings attention to injustices across North Carolina and the South and provides action models for advocates, scholars and lawyers across the country.

The center’s work focuses on education, environmental justice, equitable access to services, fair housing, and community engagement.



Ted Shaw, Julius L. Chambers Distinguished Professor of Law and Director; Jennifer Marsh, Director of Research, Community Services & Student Programs; Elizabeth Haddix, Adjunct Professor of Law & Senior Staff Attorney; Mark Dorosin, Adjunct Professor of Law & Managing Attorney

www.law.unc.edu/centers/civilrights

Developing the next generation of civil rights advocates



Founding director and civil rights visionary Julius L. Chambers

Areas of Practice

School Integration,
Diversity and Equity
Environmental Justice
Fair Housing
Equitable Access to
Public Services
Civic Engagement

CONTACT

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Student Opportunities

UNC Center for Civil Rights Fellowships

The center annually awards a recent law school graduate with a two-year fellowship. Fellows work under the direct supervision of the center's senior lawyers. Fellows have primary responsibility for one program area — either community inclusion or education — and may contribute to other areas as well. Fellows conduct legal research, represent center clients, and draft legal and policy documents. A primary objective of the fellowship program is to ensure that future generations of attorneys are equipped to continue the ongoing struggle to secure fair and equal opportunities for low-income individuals and people of color.

Summer Internships

The center offers several internship positions each summer for rising 2L and 3L students. Interns work 12 to 14 weeks at the center, assisting with a variety of legal issues including public education, community engagement, housing, and environmental justice. Past activities have included meeting with community groups; drafting legal memoranda, pleading and articles; conducting factual investigations; and assisting in the planning of strategic conferences.

Externships

www.law.unc.edu/academics/externship/

The center is a placement site for the UNC School of Law Externship Program. The center participates in the three different academic options; the fall/spring three-credit program, the summer five-credit program and the full-time 12-credit Semester in Practice program. Externs' work at the center is similar to that of a summer intern, but they receive academic credit for their work and are required to participate in programming through the Externship Office.

Pro Bono & Other Opportunities

Through UNC School of Law's Pro Bono Program, the center offers many opportunities for students to participate in civil rights advocacy. Projects are listed through the Pro Bono Program or developed in collaboration with student groups. Individuals may contact the center directly to develop a pro bono project if one is not available. Previous opportunities have included research projects, wills clinics, and direct civic engagement outreach in client communities. Additionally, the center hosts a variety of lunch programs for students to learn more about the practice of civil rights law, including guest speakers, discussions of current cases, or court reenactments.

Election Protection

Since 2004, the center has hosted the North Carolina Election Day call center as part of the national, non-partisan Election Protection voter advocacy and information program. Election Protection is the nation's most ambitious non-partisan program for preventing voter disenfranchisement. The coalition of state and national allies seeks to ensure that every eligible voter is able to cast a ballot that is counted. Center staff train law students on North Carolina election law and then those students staff the hotline and directly engage with voters to provide the information they need. Hundreds of students have staffed the hotline over the last 10 years.



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