



Session 13 | Voices from Inside: The Importance of Lived Experience in Jail and Prison Oversight

August 11, 2020

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT

Involving stakeholders in the oversight process has been one of the tenets of civilian oversight since it first emerged in the early twentieth century. Particularly important to oversight of jails and prisons is the participation of people with lived incarceration experience. However, the formerly incarcerated are under-represented in the oversight field, though they are directly affected by its work. Their first-hand experience provides insight into the culture of jails and prisons and can help to inform the work of civilian oversight.

This panel will take a look at the importance of direct participation by formerly incarcerated individuals not only in the oversight process but in the criminal justice system as a whole. We will hear from criminal justice advocates and oversight practitioners about the issues surrounding reentry, how it looks to oversee systems in which you were once incarcerated, and how the formerly incarcerated can assist oversight entities to effect positive change in the criminal justice system.

Speakers:

- Obie Anthony, Founder, Exonerated Nation, Oakland, CA
- Rudy Reyes, Mentor, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Los Angeles, CA
- Angee Schrader, Assistant Ombuds-Gender Equity & Re-Entry, Office of Corrections Ombuds, Dupont, WA

Moderator:

- Stacey Nelson, Monitor, Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General, Los Angeles, CA

Speaker Biographies

Obie Anthony | Obie was sentenced to life without parole for a murder he did not commit when he was 19 years old. California incarcerated him for 17 years. When he was exonerated and released in 2011 Obie didn't even have identification – no social security card or birth certificate. After seventeen years in prison, he didn't know what to write on his resume, how to land a job, or even how to use a cell phone. He had to learn on his own how to establish his life again. That's when he dedicated himself to supporting other exonerees to meet their basic needs after release.

Obie was instrumental in the passage of California Assembly Bill No. 672 (nicknamed and cited as "Obie's Law"). The bill requires the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to assist exonerees with transitional services, including housing assistance, job training, and mental health services. In 2016, Obie founded Exonerated Nation, and is committed to transforming the experiences of exonerees after release, and building a community that can provide safety, stability, and healing to wrongfully convicted Californians. Obie is a proud recipient of the 2017 Rockwood Leadership Institute Returning Citizens Fellowship and a regular speaker at Loyola Project for the Innocent, the Innocence Project, and other community dialogues about exoneration and incarceration.



2020 Annual NACOLE Conference | *Oversight in Uncertain Times: The Path Ahead*

Please note, content and speakers subject to change.

Rudy Reyes | Rudy Reyes grew up in the farmland of California's Central Valley. At fourteen, while incarcerated in the California Youth Authority, he dreamed of being a gang leader. He achieved his goal, entering the CDCR system at 18, and winding up in the SHU at Pelican Bay as a validated leader of the Nuestra Familia prison gang. After 27 years in the CDCR prison system, 20+ years in the Security Housing Unit (SHU), Rudy came to Christ and made the decision that he could not serve two masters so he walked away from the gang lifestyle. After transitioning out of Corcoran SHU and into Kern Valley State Prison Transitional Housing Unit (THU), he landed back in general population, leading the reform effort at High Desert State Prison (HDSP), one of California's most racist prisons. He paroled in January 2017 and is focusing his time and efforts in developing rehabilitative programs within CDCR and the Los Angeles area. He is also an active member of Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous (CGA). He is currently a member and mentor on the policy team with the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) that lobbies the California legislature for just laws in this state especially centered around sentencing and rehabilitation. Rudy attends and is a member of a local church and works in the film industry as a freelancer and is a partner in his own film company THDC.Production that focuses on socially impactful issues.

Stacey Nelson | Stacey Nelson graduated law school in 2014 where she focused her studies on domestic and international criminal justice issues. She also volunteered with the Loyola Law School Project for the Innocent and assisted in the exoneration of a man who had spent 34 years incarcerated innocently behind bars. After graduation, she became a Monitor at the then-newly-created Los Angeles County of Inspector General (OIG), where she worked beginning in November 2014. In her work, Stacey focuses on issues related to the use of force, prisoner grievance systems, misconduct investigations, as well as conditions of confinement generally. In 2018, she took a short leave from the OIG to pursue humanitarian work in Uganda and created Kope Foundation, an organization whose long-term goal is to jumpstart the local economy in an area affected by a decades-long war. Stacey returned to the OIG in June 2019, where she continues to work today and continues to support Kope Foundation from afar as an ambassador in the US. Prior to law school, Stacey was a professional athlete who represented the United States on the USA Softball Team. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy from the University of Florida and grew up in Southern California.

Angee Schrader | In 2019, Angee began work for the Office of the Corrections Ombuds, an independent office that serves the state of Washington by investigating complaints related to incarcerated persons' health, safety, welfare, and rights. Angee served first as the Early Resolution Manager tasked with building an intake team to answer the live hotline and resolve issues at the lowest level for the incarcerated population. After promoting to Assistant Ombuds of Gender Equity and Reentry, she now covers issues in the both state women's prisons and all issues related to work releases within the state. Angee's prior experience with incarceration functions as an essential asset of her team's ability to create change; she offers firsthand knowledge and experience from an incarcerated person's point of view.

After being released from Mission Creek Corrections Center in March 2012, Angee dedicated herself to addiction recovery and re-entry work, ultimately leading to her current position overseeing Washington prisons. Most recently, Angee was granted the opportunity to serve as an alternate chair for the newly formed Criminal Sentencing Task Force as a voice of the incarcerated. This task force's goal is to review state sentencing laws and improve the effectiveness of the sentencing system in Washington State. This year, Angee will simultaneously begin coursework to obtain an Associate's Certificate in Paralegal Studies with hopes to thereafter pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice.



2020 Annual NACOLE Conference | *Oversight in Uncertain Times: The Path Ahead*

Please note, content and speakers subject to change.



2020 Annual NACOLE Conference | *Oversight in Uncertain Times: The Path Ahead*

Please note, content and speakers subject to change.