



Corporate and Philanthropic Leaders Donate More than a Quarter-million Dollars to Launch Racial Justice Fund in Maine

Hallowell, ME – Corporations and philanthropic leaders across Maine have joined forces to raise \$260,000 to combat racial injustice and inequity throughout the state through the Racial Justice Fund of the Maine Justice Foundation. These corporate FOUNDERS and civic leaders are as follows:

AARP Maine, Androscoggin Bank, AT&T, Baker Newman Noyes, Bangor Savings Bank, Bernstein Shur, Central Maine Power, Deighan Wealth Advisors, Drummond Woodsum, Eaton Peabody, FL Putnam, Gorham Savings Bank, HM Payson, Hancock Lumber, Hannaford Supermarkets, Harvard Pilgrim, Northern Light Health, Pierce Atwood, Preti Flaherty, RM Davis, Verrill, and the Steven and Tabitha King Foundation.

The 21 FOUNDERS, representing a wide range of Maine companies, law firms and professional services committed to racial equity, have created the Fund with gifts of \$10,000 each. The Maine Justice Foundation expresses its profound gratitude for their generosity and commitment. Michelle G. Draeger, Executive Director of the Maine Justice Foundation said: “By supporting the Fund, each of these organizations has recognized that it will take money as well as public support to fully address racial injustice in Maine. The State of Maine is lucky to have such generous and forward-thinking executives leading these organizations.”

In addition, the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation has stepped forward with a major grant to help launch the Racial Justice Fund. The Maine Justice Foundation will continue to seek donations to increase the Fund.

The Racial Justice Fund at the Maine Justice Foundation will support education and advocacy aimed at achieving racial justice, equity and eliminating racism. The goal of the Fund is to support Black, Indigenous, and people of color and to forge social, systemic, and economic solutions to combat racism in our culture, organizations and systems in Maine.

“A critical dialogue about race discrimination is occurring across our nation and state, in our workplaces and inside our homes,” said Draeger. “It is before us as a result of countless public

acts of violence against Black Americans who are engaging in the simple pursuit of daily liberties – watching birds in a park, jogging in the afternoon, sitting in a car, simply trying to breathe. Fundamental change is necessary if we finally want to become a country where every citizen is afforded the freedom of liberty and equal justice, without regard to differences in race. As an institution concerned with equal access to the legal system, the foundation has a responsibility to address racial injustice. As a historically white organization, we also have a responsibility to change and to lead change.”

An Advisory Committee has been created to formulate the specific goals of the Fund, issue a request for proposals and recommend grants. The current members are: co-chairs Dr. Evelyn Silver and Senator John Jenkins, Tim Dentry, Michael-Corey Hinton. Mary Herman, Prof. Marcelle Medford, Angela Okafor, Reginald Parson, Francys Perkins , Spencer Thibodeau, Bill Harwood and Janis Cohen.

Co-chair Senator John Jenkins said, “As a private citizen and elected official, my life has been committed to ending the pain of racism, in our institutions and in our hearts. In this country and state, my belief is that the last few months have revealed a true turning point. Now is the time to bring all Black, brown and indigenous people fully into the fold of American citizenship, with equity and justice. It’s incumbent upon us now to leverage every ally, every dollar, every talent we have to do so. I’m proud to join this effort and help make that opportunity real.”

For a full description of the Racial Justice Fund and the Advisory Committee members, please visit <https://www.justicemaine.org/grants-and-programs/racial-justice-fund/>. (Link will be online by 8:00 PM, September 8.)

Kevin Hancock, Chairman and CEO of Hancock Lumber, said, “I am really proud that Hancock Lumber can be a part of launching the Racial Justice Fund. The concept and practice of ‘justice for all’ has to meaningfully include every person in our country, and I believe Maine can be a leader in that national effort. There is an ethos of fairness, neighborliness, and inclusiveness towards all in Maine that can serve as a platform for creating a society that aspires to work for everyone and is trusted by everyone. Hancock Lumber is committed to doing our part, both in our business practices and in supporting community efforts for equity and justice.”

The Maine Justice Foundation, founded in 1983 as the Maine Bar Foundation, is the state’s leading funder of civil legal aid for poor and vulnerable Mainers. Find us online and support the Racial Justice Fund at www.justicemaine.org.

FMI: Contact Michelle G. Draeger, Executive Director: 620-1351, mdraeger@justicemaine.org

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Advisory Committee of the Racial Justice Fund

John Jenkins, Co-Chair – A graduate of Bates College, Mr. Jenkins is an accomplished author, educator, trainer, leader, national public speaker and long-time public servant. He has served as the Mayor of Lewiston, Mayor of Auburn, a State Senator, a former Director of the Maine State Diversity Commission and served on the Glass Ceiling Commission of the U.S. Department of Labor, among many other positions of significance. <http://peptalk.com/about-the-honorable-john-jenkins/>

Dr. Evelyn Silver, Co-Chair - Evelyn was the director of Equal Opportunity, Associate Vice President for Personnel and Academic Services, and later a Senior Advisor to the President at the University of Maine. She was Chair of the Board of Eastern Maine Healthcare System.

Angela Okafor – Angela is an immigration attorney, a current member of the Bangor City Council (1st immigrant and Person of Color on the BCC) and the owner of two small businesses in Bangor. She is also a member of the Governor’s Economic Recovery Committee. <https://www.bangormaine.gov/content/1538/1751/22996.aspx>

Mary Herman – Director of Special Projects, Maine Department of Education. Mary is an expert facilitator, strategist, and business consultant with over 4 decades of experience. Mary was also the First Lady of the State of Maine during the Angus King administration. <http://www.maryjherman.com/>

Spencer Thibodeau - Spencer is an attorney at Verrill, a Member of the Portland City Council (Chair, Sustainability and Transport Committee and Member, Economic Development Committee) and a Board Member of the United Way of Greater Portland. See additional bio here: <https://www.verrill-law.com/spencer-r-thibodeau/>

Tim Dentry – President & CEO, Northern Light Health. Tim joined Northern Light Health, a health system with nearly 13,000 employees, as Chief Operating Officer in 2016. He also served as interim president of Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center for a brief period. Previously, Tim focused on international health delivery improvement, from Addis Ababa to Abu Dhabi, with institutional backing from Yale University and Johns Hopkins Medicine. Tim hosts a podcast series called *Tim Talk* focusing on racial, social and medical justice issues. <https://northernlighthealth.org/Podcast>

Reginald Parson – Reggie is a Senior Legislative Aide and Policy Analyst to Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, Sara Gideon, and a 2019 graduate of the University of Maine School of Law. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/reginald-parson-j-d-mpa-5a928950/>

Professor Marcelle Medford - Marcelle is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Bates College. Her research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of urban sociology, immigration, race, and ethnicity. Specifically, she examines how black immigrants understand their own ethnically-specific identities in the United States. See additional bio here: <https://www.bates.edu/faculty-expertise/profile/marcelle-m-medford/>

Michael-Corey F. Hinton - Corey is an attorney at Drummond Woodsum in the Tribal Nations Practice Group. Corey is an enrolled member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point. He is a former member of the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse team and the former president of the Native American Bar Association of Washington, D.C. See additional bio here: <http://www.dwmlaw.com/PROFESSIONAL?id=97&attorney=mc-hinton>

Francys Perkins - Francys works for Hannaford as an Assistant Store Manager in Westbrook and has been a member of Hannaford's Diversity and Inclusion Council since 2016. Francys is from the Dominican Republic and has a Bachelor's Degree from the UTESA School of Law, in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

William Harwood - Bill is currently President of the Maine Justice Foundation Board. A graduate of Harvard University (B.A., 1974) and Fordham University School of Law (J.D., 1978), Bill has been a partner at Verrill since 1984. See additional bio here: <https://www.justicemaine.org/about/leadership-board-of-directors/>

Janis Cohen - Janis is currently Vice President of the Maine Justice Foundation Board and Co-Chair of the Development Committee. Janis is a retired attorney, formerly vice-president and managing counsel of the investment lawyers at Unum Group, where her work focused on commercial real estate. See additional bio here: <https://www.justicemaine.org/about/leadership-board-of-directors/>