

# *The Difference We Make Together*



**THE SARITA & CLAIRE WRIGHT LUCAS FOUNDATION**

Annual Report 2020



## *Our Statement of Purpose*

In all we do, the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in the criminal justice system. Through financial support and mentorship, the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation strives to encourage young African American women like Sarita Wright Lucas who are committed to serving the public and pursuing careers as prosecutors.

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*The  
Difference  
We Make  
Together*



## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are making a difference together! The Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation's (SCWLF) last five years were full of accomplishments and opportunities for learning and reflection. While each year has posed its challenges, making it through year five amidst a global pandemic shows that SCWLF has built a sustainable platform, improved the lives of our scholarship recipients, and ultimately continues the legacies of Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas.

Our list of supporters has grown. We have raised awareness of the need for more diversity and inclusion among prosecutors in all jurisdictions. Yet, there is so much more work to be done.

The fact remains that in the criminal justice system, Black women comprise only 1% of prosecutors NATIONWIDE.

Prosecutors possess formidable power to carry out justice. They decide whom to prosecute, what to charge, whether to recommend freedom or incarceration before trial, whether to bargain for a plea and its conditions, and whether to dismiss a case altogether. They hold this authority throughout the life of a criminal case, giving them extraordinary power from arrest through trial, conviction, and sentencing, as well as during appeals.

SCWLF is committed to RAISING awareness of the role of the prosecutor and promoting an understanding of why varied life experiences and perspectives of Black women must be of high value in prosecutorial offices. We encourage and support outstanding young Black women as they take on prosecutors' visible and essential role. In this way, we are working to ensure a fair and equitable justice system.

A recent Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas fellowship awardee said it best.

*"Having Black women in the prosecution office means that the dynamic around Black Americans and the Justice System is changing."*

Thank you, friends and donors, for embracing our mission and your generous support. We would not be celebrating the difference we have made in the Justice System without you.

“  
*Having Black  
women in the  
prosecution office  
means that the  
dynamic around  
Black Americans  
and the Justice  
System is Changing*”

Awardee Quote 2021

## ABOUT THE SARITA AND CLAIRE WRIGHT LUCAS FOUNDATION

Black women prosecutors are trailblazers. They are out-of-box thinkers, leaders, and change-makers. And yet, only 1% of prosecutors nationwide are Black women. For women of color, the prosecutor's career comes with heavy baggage, from inadequate financial compensation to student loan debt to bar exam prep and fees.



### **Enter the Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation:**

Inspired by the life of her late daughter Sarita Wright Lucas and unborn granddaughter Claire, Wanda Geer created the Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation in their honor. By witnessing Sarita follow her dreams in the prosecution office, Wanda had a unique insight into the trials and tribulations that women of color face in the field. She found inspiration in Sarita's dedication to helping those who need it most, her willingness to make sacrifices, and outright tenacity in a profession largely untouched by women of color. Wanda created the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation to support women of color like Sarita as they break into an impactful career field.



# *We Fulfill Our Mission With These Initiatives*

## **The Scholarship**

The journey to the prosecution office is long, tiring, and often financially heavy. Since 2015, the Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation has aimed to ease this financial burden.

Law school debt is irrefutable. What's not so well known is the need for additional funds to prepare for the Bar exam. In addition to the cost of a prep course – at about \$5,000 – many recent graduates must take out personal loans to cover living expenses as they take on the full-time, unpaid work of preparing for the exam.

Unlike many law graduates who head to the private sector, those who choose to work for public agencies are on their own to financially prepare for the Bar exam. Those initial upfront costs are steep enough to steer women of color away from

careers in the public sector, and in turn, the prosecutor's office. SCWLF combats this.

SCWLF proudly offers scholarships to Black women law students dedicated to becoming prosecutors and preparing to take the bar exam. The \$10,000 scholarship consists of two awards. The first \$5,000 covers prep course fees for the bar exam, bar application, and living expenses. This award helps ensure that awardees have the necessary time to study and not worry about their financial income.

The second \$5,000 of the scholarship is the employment incentive. The SCWLF aims to support and encourage Black women to become prosecutors. One year after an awardee obtains employment at a prosecutor's office, they can receive the remainder of their scholarship.

— “ —

*What the SCWLF means to me: “Peace of mind.”*

— —

Awardee Aisha T. Adegbuyi



# *Meet Our 2021 Scholarship Awardees*

Imagine preparing to take the bar exam amidst a global public health crisis and countless unknowns. The 2021 Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation scholarship awardees are fighters.

Our 2021 scholarship awardees' strength and perseverance come from their experience, knowledge, and leadership roles. From acting as president of their law school's Black Law Students Association to being editors of their university's law journals to being a mother of six children, our 2021 awardees are inspiring fighters and leaders.

## *Interested in Our 2022 Scholarship?*

apply at:

[saritaandclairefoundation.org/scholarship](https://saritaandclairefoundation.org/scholarship)

Scholarship Deadline: **Applications Must Be Submitted Online by March 28, 2022.**

\*Applicants must graduate from law school by summer 2022

## 2021 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE



### AISHA T ADEGBUYI

Candidate for Juris Doctorate J.D. June 2021

#### American University Washington College of Law

- ★ Journal of Gender, Social & Law – Publications Editor
- ★ Black Law Student Association – Member and mentor to 1L and 2L BLSA students

#### Internships:

- ★ The Honorable Terrence M. R. Zic, Maryland Court of Special Appeals, Rockville, MD – *Judicial Law Clerk*, September 2021
- ★ Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Rockville, MD – *Legal Intern*, May–August 2020
- ★ Office of the Attorney General, Washington, DC – *Legal Intern*, January – April 2020
- ★ Superior Court, Office of the Auditor Master, Washington, DC – *Legal Intern*, September – November 2019
- ★ U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, Office of the Principal Legal Counsel, Arlington, VA – *Legal Intern*, May – August 2019

“  
*This scholarship means the world to me, it means that I can focus completely on passing the bar and realizing my dream of becoming a prosecutor. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.*

Aisha T. Adegbuyi '21

## 2021 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE



### LILIANE M COOPER

Candidate for Juris Doctorate J.D. June 2021

As a mother of six, law school, bar exam prep, and parenting were all pandemic adventures for scholarship awardee Liliane Cooper.

#### Villanova Charles Widger School of Law

- ★ Villanova Parents and Non-Traditional Students Group – Founder and president
- ★ Jeffrey S. Moorad Sports Law Journal – Staff writer
- ★ Black Law Students Association (BLSA) – Historian
- ★ IP Society – Vice-President
- ★ Lorenzini McNulty Women Institute for Women Leaders – Student Ambassador
- ★ Villanova Admissions – Student Ambassador

#### Internships:

- ★ Clinic for Law and Entrepreneurship, Villanova, PA – *Student Attorney*, January – Present
- ★ U.S. Department of Justice Philadelphia, PA – *Law Clerk* (Criminal Division), September 2020 – December 2020
- ★ Delaware Department of Justice Wilmington, DE – *Summer Law Clerk* (Fraud and Civil division), June 2020 – August 2020
- ★ CommScope Horsham, PA – *Intellectual Property Intern*, January 2020 – April 2020
- ★ The Honorable Richard Andrews, US District Court for the District of Delaware – *Judicial Extern*, September 2020 – January 2021
- ★ The Honorable Sheldon Rennie, Superior Court of Delaware Wilmington, DE – *Judicial Extern*, May 2019 – August 2019
- ★ Savencia Fromage & Dairy Wilmington, DE – *Legal Intern*, May 2019 – August 2019



## 2021 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE

### Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law

- ★ Black Law Students Association (BLSA) – President
- ★ Student Bar Association – 3L representative
- ★ General Body Representative
- ★ Master of Legal Studies Representative
- ★ Constance Baker Motley Mock trial competition

### Internships:

- ★ Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, Norristown, PA – *Certified Legal Intern*, present
- ★ Delaware Department of Justice, Wilmington, DE – *Law Clerk*, Summer 2020
- ★ Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, Norristown, PA – *Legal Intern*, Summer 2019



**RICKEISHA EDMONDS**

Candidate for Juris Doctorate J.D. June 2021

— “ —

*I am inspired to become a prosecutor because I want to effectuate change and I want to mend the gap of distrust among minorities and law enforcement,*

—  
Rickeisha Edmonds '21

## 2021 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE

### Suffolk University Law School

- ★ Progress to Success mentorship program – Mentor
- ★ Black Law Student Association – Member
- ★ Phi Alpha Delta – Member
- ★ Latin American Law Student Association – Secretary

### Internships:

- ★ Suffolk District Attorney's Office, West Roxbury Division, Boston, MA – *Student Attorney* (SJC 3:03 Certified), June 2020 – Present
- ★ Suffolk District Attorney's Office, Homicide Unit Boston, MA – *Legal Intern*, June 2019 – August 2019
- ★ U.S District Court, District of Massachusetts Boston, MA – *Judge Reginald Lindsay Fellow*, June 2017 – August 2017



**VALERIE NIEVES**

Candidate for Juris Doctorate J.D. June 2021

“  
*Being a prosecutor means having to balance holding people accountable and knowing when to give a person a second chance and integrating them back into the community.*  
”

# Awardee Outcomes

## 2021 AWARDEES

Rickeisha Edmonds  
Liliane M Cooper  
Aisha T Adegbuyi  
Justine Morgan (Fellow)  
Valerie Nieves

## 2020 AWARDEES

Alexis Gbemudu  
Amber Ebanks

## 2019 AWARDEES

Breana Barker  
Nicole Esuola  
Daphneyse Marcelin  
Kaili Moss  
Ashley M. Jones

## 2018 AWARDEE

Christian A. Wynne

## 2017 AWARDEE

Kasha Ambroise

## 2016 AWARDEES

Abolore Oshodi  
Brionna Denby

On June 1, 2021, the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation launched the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation Network: The Journey to Becoming a Prosecutor (and beyond). With its home in a Facebook group, this moderated page now serves as a community not only for our new scholarship awardees studying for the bar and our fellows but our former awardees who have already begun their careers in the prosecutor's office. Additionally, we plan to include current Black female prosecutors outside of the foundation and thought-leaders in the justice system. The network is just one aspect of our support system for our awardees.

### Amber Ebanks

Graduating mid-pandemic, Amber's journey to the prosecution office was unique. Initially committing to JAG, Amber credits her pivot, to The Office of the State's Attorney for Harford County, Maryland, to the network she gained from the Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation.



### Abolore Oshodi

As the first Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Scholarship awardee, Abolore's scholarship outcome is close to the foundation's heart. A Howard Law School graduate, Abolore quickly found her way to the prosecution office. Since 2016 she has been an essential asset to the Delaware Department of Justice. Additionally, she has kept the foundation a priority to her service. From contributing to the foundation Facebook network to regular participation as a foundation ambassador at foundation events, Abolore advocates why Black women prosecutors matter.



If interested in our 2022 Scholarship (applicants must graduate from law school by summer 2022), apply at [saritaandclairefoundation.org/scholarship](https://saritaandclairefoundation.org/scholarship). Scholarship Deadline: Applications Must Be Submitted Online by March 28, 2022.

## THE FELLOWSHIP

In the summer of 2021, the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation launched **The Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation Fellowship**. The SCWLF Summer Fellowship Program aims to provide Black female law students with a paid summer internship opportunity in the Massachusetts Suffolk and Middlesex District Attorney's offices.

Fellows attend professional development programming created by the District Attorney's offices, work in the courts alongside prosecutors gaining real trial experience and receive mentorship throughout their experience. Each Fellow receives a \$7,000 stipend for the 10-week summer program.

# Meet Our First Fellow

We are pleased to announce our first Fellow: Justine Veronica Morgan, candidate for Juris Doctorate JD 2023 from Suffolk University Law School. An active member of her community, Justine is currently the Secretary of the Suffolk University Black Law Student Association and a member of the Women of Color Law Student Association. Here's what Justine says about her experience this summer:

*"I believe this foundation is a vital resource for young women of color, particularly young black women interested in working in the legal justice system. Since there are very few of us in the field already, having a foundation like this provides a strong base and network for women to thrive in and use as a resource when going through law school and later practicing...since there has been a stigma around those that are prosecutors not always protecting people*

*of color in America, this fellowship shows black women in this prosecutorial role and shows that that narrative is now changing."*

## Interested in Our 2022 Fellowship?

apply at:

**[saritaandclairefoundation.org/our-fellowship-program](https://saritaandclairefoundation.org/our-fellowship-program)**

**Deadline: Applications Must Be Submitted Online by December 30, 2021.**

\* Applicants must have completed their 2L year before participating in the program.

## 2021 FELLOWSHIP AWARDEE



## JUSTINE VERONIC MORGAN

Candidate for Juris Doctorate J.D. 2023

Suffolk University Law School.

Suffolk University Black Law Student Association – Secretary

Women of Color Law Student Association – Member

“  
*Representation really does matter in every  
way, shape or form, especially in the legal  
justice system.*

Justine Morgan '21



# *Increasing Our Impact in 2020*

## **2020 Financial Report**

Like many young non-profit foundations, the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation has faced challenges to its growth. At the beginning of 2020 the nation and the world dealt with tremendous challenges. We were unsure if we would be able to support the scholarship awardees in 2020. Despite the uncertainty the pandemic presented, because of support from our friends and donors, we provided two scholarships (\$10,00 each) totaling \$20,000 in money awarded.

— “ —

*The Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Scholarship means everything to me. The scholarship has given me peace of mind to get through bar prep. A lot of people tend to steer clear of the public interest because of insufficient pay but this scholarship will allow me to hold steadfast to my prosecutorial dreams and work my way up the ladder.*

—

Rickeisha Edmonds '21



# *What a difference a Year Makes!*

The SCWLF's December 2020 Annual Event was an overwhelming success! In 2021, we were able to award \$40,000 worth of scholarships. We met our goal to start our Fellowship program, supporting a \$7,000 paid summer fellowship with the Massachusetts Middlesex District Attorney's Office.

We are thankful that our mission of equity and inclusion in prosecutorial offices resonates with so many. Together we are making a difference in the lives of young Black women who choose this challenging career in public service.

— “ —

*Women of color are integral to public service and prosecution because we work at the intersection of all of our identities. Women of color lawyers provide different viewpoints and representation in statistically one of the least diverse professions in the nation.*

—

Amber Ebanks '20

# Our Impact 2020

“  
Representation  
of Black women  
in prosecution  
means having a  
seat at the table  
because it was  
created for you  
by the generation  
of Black women  
before you.”

Valerie Nieves 21

## INCOME STATEMENT 2019 IN THOUSANDS

Individual Contributions	\$36,200K
Sponsorships	\$2,800K
Grants	\$0K
Total Revenue	\$39K

## EXPENSES 2019 IN THOUSANDS

Scholarship	\$20K
Sponsorship Employment Incentives Allotted for 2019 Awardees	\$20K
Fellowship Awards	\$0
Operating Expenses	\$24,500K
Total Expenses	\$64,500K

## INCOME STATEMENT 2020 IN THOUSANDS

Individual Contributions	\$65,800K
Sponsorships	\$4,200K
Grants	\$27K
Total Revenue	\$97K

## EXPENSES 2020 IN THOUSANDS

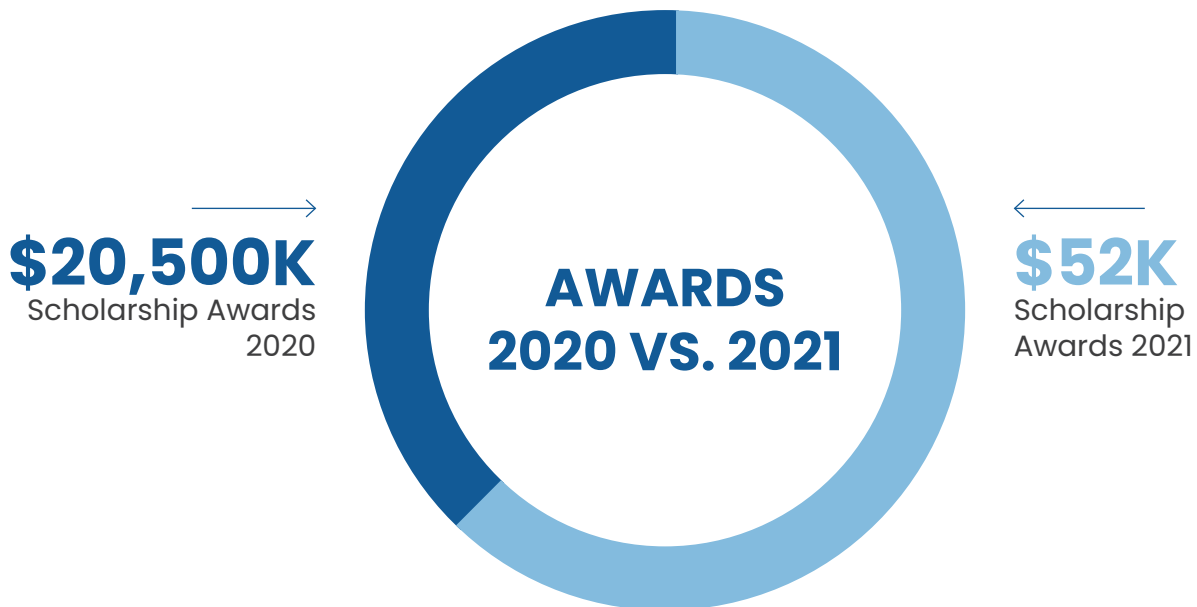
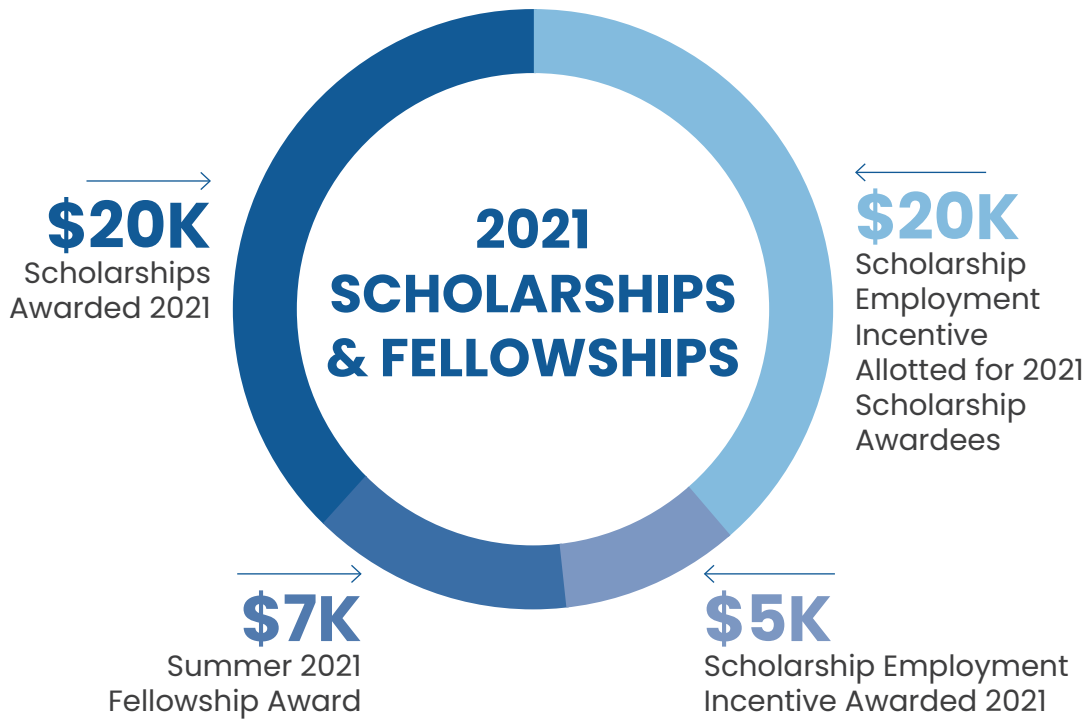
Scholarship	\$10,500K
Sponsorship Employment Incentives Allotted for 2020 Awardees	\$10K
Fellowship Awards	\$0
Operating Expenses	\$38,700K
Total Expenses	\$59,200K

## AWARDED 2021 IN THOUSANDS

Scholarship	\$20K
Sponsorship Employment Incentives Allotted for 2021 Awardees	\$20K
Sponsorship Employment Incentives Awarded to 2020 Awardee	\$5K
Fellowship Awards	\$7K
Total Awarded	\$52K



# *by the Numbers*



# Thank You Sponsors!

**This Work Wouldn't Be Possible Without Your Support.**  
We Are Proud Stewards Of Your Gifts.

**Very Special Thanks To Our Sponsors**  
The Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation  
For their Annual Gifts of \$15,000 since 2020

## 2020 SPONSORS

### **Legal Advocate – \$2500**

Eastern Bank

### **Foundation Friend– \$1000**

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Sharon Bright  
Stephanie Molinari  
Steve McCloskey  
Susan Mulligan  
Valerie Roberson





## NEW FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

For the first time in our foundation's history we are adding new members to our board. This is incredibly exciting and shows promising growth. The Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of two new board members, Bethany Serota and Marisa Tagliareni.

Both Bethany and Marisa are longtime members of the Foundation's Social Media and Outreach Committee.



**Bethany N. Serota, Esq.** is the Deputy Director of Programs and Operations for the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development for the City of Boston. Mayor Walsh charged Bethany with creating Project Opportunity, a program designed to support second chance residents impacted by their criminal record. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Public Safety and the Lawyers Clearinghouse, Project Opportunity offers free CORI sealing and expungement clinics, convenes panels on CORI challenges and solutions, and trains front line workers who support justice-involved individuals. Prior to this role, Bethany served as the Deputy Director for the Mayor's Office of Fair Housing and Equity for the City of Boston where she oversaw investigations of allegations of housing discrimination, increased equitable access to affordable housing, and enforced the Fair Housing Act.

Bethany is a 2020 Fellow graduate of The Partnership, Inc. Bethany co-founded and co-directed G.I.R.L.S. R.U.L.E., an empowerment program for teenage girls in Roxbury. She is also a member of the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association, the Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys, and the Nine Streets Neighborhood Association in Roxbury.



Recently hired as Prosecutor in the California Alameda County District Attorney's Office, **Marisa Tagliareni** served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Middlesex District Attorney's Office in Woburn, Massachusetts for 15 years. Marisa joined the Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation's Boston Steering committee in 2017, she is an active fundraiser for the Massachusetts Chapter of ALS, and has served as a volunteer mentor for the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston.

Marisa received her B.S. from Georgetown University and J.D. from Suffolk University Law School.

## THE FOUNDATION BOARD

Thank You From the Sarita & Claire Wright Lucas Foundation Board

We cannot thank you enough for helping us make a difference!

### **Wanda Geer**

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT  
CEO Tartt's Day Care Centers, Inc.  
Boston, MA  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Antonio Lucas**

VICE PRESIDENT  
Assistant Coach  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Kwamena Aidoo**

TREASURER  
Chief Financial Officer  
Square Button  
New Orleans, LA  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Adam Geer**

CLERK  
Prosecutor  
Philadelphia Department of Justice  
Philadelphia, PA  
Board Member Since 2015

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Vice President  
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Board Member Since 2015

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President/CEO  
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Boston, MA  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Annemarie Puit**

Chief County Prosecutor Delaware  
Department of Justice  
Wilmington, DE  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Mary L. Reed**

President  
Tartt's Day Care Centers, Inc.  
Boston, MA  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Bethany Serota Esq.**

Deputy Director of Programs and Operations  
Mayor's Office of Workforce Development  
City of Boston  
Board Member Since 2021

### **Marisa Tagliareni**

Attorney  
Board Member Since 2015

### **Erick Tyrone**

Principal  
Tyrone Law Group  
Landover, MD  
Board Member Since 2015





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# Interested in supporting Black female representation in the criminal justice system?

The Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation is grateful for the overwhelming offers of support from our friends and neighbors. Many of you have asked how you can help. Here are a few ways you can support us:

- ✦ Donate
- ✦ Are you an Amazon shopper? Please think of us on your next order! Simply start your shopping at **smile.amazon.com** and pick **Sarita and Claire Wright Lucas Foundation** as your charity of choice. AmazonSmile will donate a portion of your eligible purchase price to our organization.
- ✦ Help us to spread the word about SCWLF! Like and share our social media pages and tell your family and friends why you support our mission.

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→ **FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:**  
**[saritaandclairefoundation.org](https://saritaandclairefoundation.org)**



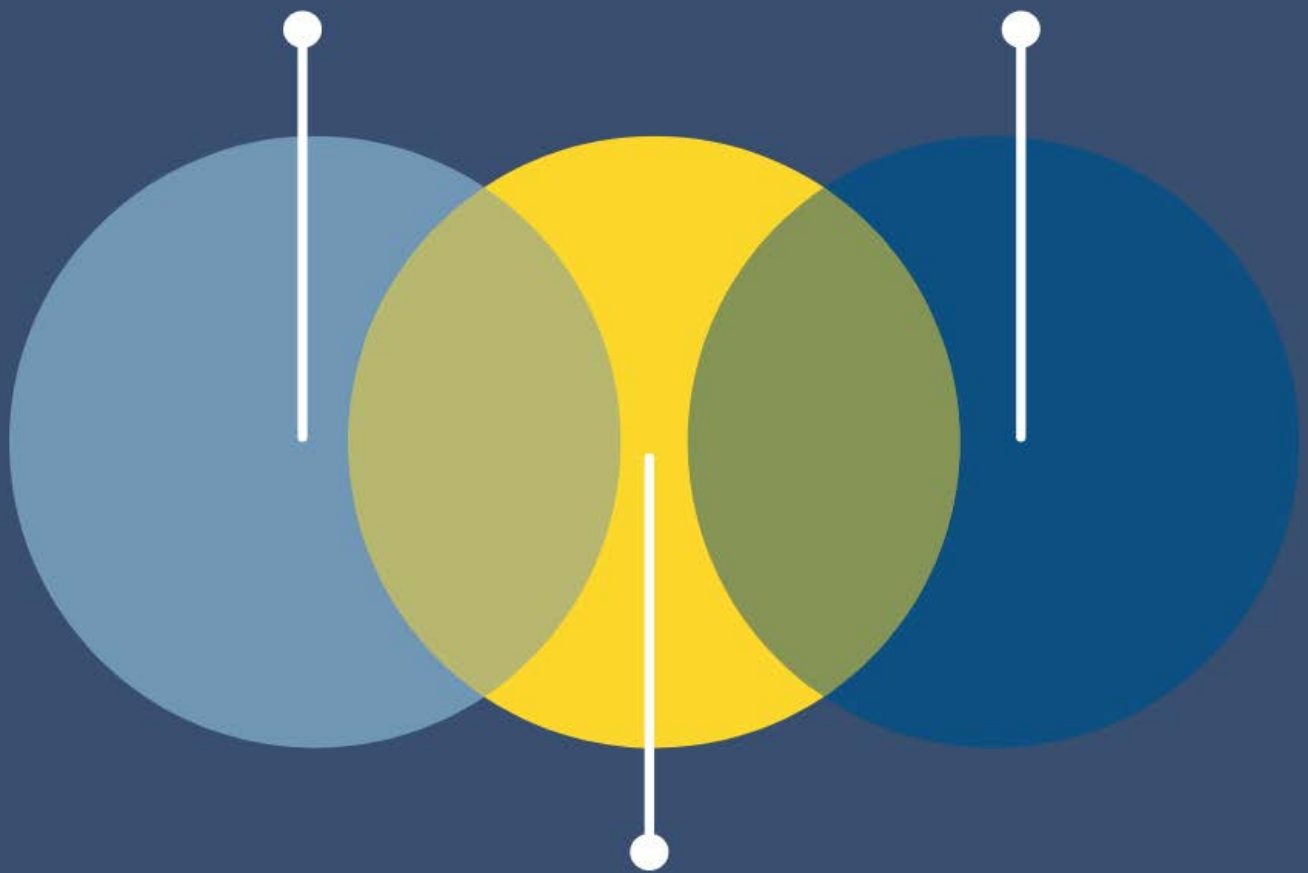
# *The Difference We Make Together*



THE SARITA & CLAIRE WRIGHT LUCAS FOUNDATION AWARDEES

**PASSION FOR  
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**DEDICATION TO  
SEEKING EQUITY**



**SARITA AND CLAIRE WRIGHT  
LUCAS FOUNDATION FELLOWS  
AND AWARDEES**





**SARITA AND CLAIRE  
WRIGHT LUCAS  
FOUNDATION**

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