Lisa Bennett has advocated on behalf of low-income persons since 1989. Her current work in the JustChildren program focuses on education and special education rights of juveniles by providing individual representation to court-involved youth in the City of Richmond’s schools, by training parents and other professionals, and by advocating for positive policy and legislative changes. Lisa obtained her law degree from the University of Richmond.

Eddie B. Ellis, Jr. a Washington, DC native, is a reentry advocate/consultant, trainer, mentor and motivational speaker. His lived experience as a formerly incarcerated person provides invaluable insight and depth into his work that allows him to connect with and engage the community in which he serves. In 2009, Mr. Ellis founded One by 1, Inc., a non-profit organization that strives to reduce recidivism, support men, women and youth with experience in the criminal justice system, and sustain healthy communities. He consults and provides trainings to industry professionals, serves as an expert panelist within multiple disciplines including youth development, reentry, criminal justice and prison & sentencing reform. Currently, Mr. Ellis consults individuals who have been released under the Clemency Act offering case management and various reentry support. He conducts life skills workshops for men, women and youth to help them develop the critical coping and decision-making skills needed to keep their life on the right track. Mr. Ellis’ professional experience, certifications and trainings allow him to serve as a multi-layered resource to the community. He has written and published several resource guides offering service referrals, practical tips and inspiration to former offenders and parolees resettling into the Washington, DC metropolitan area. He also develops reentry/reintegration resources to support the successful transition of men and women from incarceration back into society, the community, their family and their own life. Mr. Ellis’ expansive advocacy efforts include bringing attention to the treatment and protection of rights of individuals with disabilities who are or who have been incarcerated. Mr. Ellis is a 2017 Criminal Justice Disabilities Fellow under RespectAbility, a nonprofit organization that focuses on disability advocacy.

He is a former board member and committee Chair of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association. Mr. Ellis works hard to ensure that individuals reentering society are well informed, sufficiently equipped to make better choices for themselves, and that they are truly given a second chance.

Elizabeth Lancaster is a Senior Assistant Public Defender in Loudoun County. She has spent the last 12 years focusing primarily on juvenile practice and adult felonies arising from the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Elizabeth has handled almost every detention hearing in Loudoun for the last decade, and helped to transition Loudoun into a Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) site. She has also taught several juvenile CLE’s for certification credit. Elizabeth is a graduate of the George Mason School of Law (2004), and is admitted to practice in the Commonwealths of Virginia and Kentucky. She graduated from the American University in 2000, where she was an NCAA Division I scholar athlete, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.
Julie McConnell is a Clinical Law Professor and Director of the Children’s Defense Clinic at the University of Richmond School of Law. Through the clinic, she and her students represent on a pro bono basis, indigent youths throughout Central Virginia who are charged with acts of delinquency. The clinic also represents young people in post-conviction serious offender reviews and adults seeking resentencing on mandatory life sentences they received as minors. Additionally, the clinic represents guardians seeking custody of undocumented children in special immigrant juvenile status cases. Previously, she served six years as a prosecutor in the Richmond Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office, where she was a supervisor in the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. In that office, she specialized in the prosecution of violent juvenile crimes, domestic violence, elder abuse, child physical and sexual abuse, and domestic homicide cases. She is a frequent speaker on the topics of best practices in juvenile representation, trauma-informed practice, elder abuse, the impact of child abuse and sexual abuse on children, and clinical education. For more than four years, she was part of a multi-disciplinary team funded by the Office on Violence Against Women, which conducted trainings on the successful prosecution of elder abuse for law-enforcement and prosecutors throughout the state. Prior to becoming a prosecutor, McConnell served for five years as an assistant public defender and before that as a law clerk for the Honorable James W. Benton in the Virginia Court of Appeals. Before law school, she worked with the Virginia ACLU and as a community organizer and lobbyist for several not-for-profits in the Virginia General Assembly and served as a counselor and special education teacher at a group home for delinquent youths. She earned her law degree cum laude from the University of Richmond School of Law and her undergraduate degree from Agnes Scott Women’s College. In 2011, she received the Oliver Hill Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court’s “Unsung Hero” Award. In 2015, she was appointed by the Governor to a four-year term on the Advisory Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention and in 2016, she was selected to serve on the Virginia Bar Association’s Commission on the Needs of Children. In 2017, she was selected as the Richmond YWCA’s Outstanding Woman in Education.

Katherine Poindexter was born and raised in North Carolina. She attended University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeking a Bachelors in Fine Arts; and later attended North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina where she acquired a Bachelors of Art in Sociology, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Kappa Delta, and National Honors Society.

Katherine was employed as a bail bondsman with Poindexter & Associates, Inc., for six years prior to attending law school. It was through this experience, that Katherine was first exposed to the criminal justice system, where it became overwhelmingly clear to her that inequity exists and impacts the community, particularly those members who are poor, uneducated and/or under-represented. Katherine attended law school at the University of Richmond, T. C. Williams School of Law. She participated in the juvenile delinquency clinic, engaged in juvenile representation with her third year practice certificate, served as a law clerk at two local criminal defense law firms, and took every criminal law and family law practice class in which she was able to enroll. She regularly participated in and won several trial advocacy competitions, such as the Virginia Trial
Lawyers Association Competition (1st place, 2002), the Public Interest Law Association and Moot Court competitions. Katherine currently serves on the Richmond Bench Bar Planning Committee and the Robert E. Shepherd, Jr. Juvenile Law and Education Conferenced Planning Committee.

Upon graduating from University of Richmond Law, Katherine became an Assistant Public Defender for the City of Richmond. Since 2013, Katherine has been in private practice as a solo practitioner and continues to focus her practice on criminal defense (adult and juvenile), family law and personal injury.

Jonathan Rapping Founder and President of Gideon’s Promise, is an Associate Professor of Law and the Director of the Honors Program in Criminal Justice at Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School. Prior to joining the JMLS faculty, Professor Rapping was the Chief of Training for the Orleans Public Defenders and was instrumental in the rebuilding of that office in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Before joining the Orleans Public Defenders, he was the first Training Director for the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC). In that capacity, he developed the GPDSC Honors Program, designed to recruit young public defenders to offices throughout the state and to provide them with the training and support needed to help transform indigent defense representation in those jurisdictions. Prior to that, he was the Training Director for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. Rapping has designed training programs and supervised new lawyers for the past fifteen years. He had been a public defender for twelve years prior to joining the faculty at JMLS and occasionally continues to represent indigent clients in the South. He has tried a wide variety of cases, both adult and juvenile and has represented clients charged with offenses ranging from misdemeanors to capital murder. Rapping also currently serves as a Lecturer on Criminal Law at the Harvard Law School and was previously an adjunct professor of trial advocacy at Georgetown University. He continues to design and participate in training programs for public defenders across the country and routinely presents at conferences nationwide. Rapping and Gideon’s Promise recently partnered with the Office of the Public Defender Maryland to help raise the standards of presentation in that state. This partnership is the first state system to completely adopt the Gideon’s Promise model.

In 2007, Rapping was awarded a Soros Fellowship to design and implement Gideon’s Promise with an eye towards grooming a generation of defenders that will drive reform in the South. In recognition of his work in New Orleans, he was a co-recipient of the Lincoln Leadership Award, given by Kentucky’s Department of Public Advocacy to honor leadership in national efforts to improve indigent defense. In 2009 Professor Rapping was selected as one of Harvard Law School’s Wasserstein Public Interest Fellows in recognition of his contribution to the public interest legal arena. In 2011 The American College of Trial Lawyers awarded Gideon’s Promise the prestigious Emil Gumpert Award recognizing the organization’s contribution to the fight to ensure justice for poor people accused of crimes. Rapping and Gideon’s Promise were awarded both the Sentencing Project Award by the National Alliance of Sentencing Advocates and
Mitigation Specialists, and the Gideon’s Promise Award by the Southern Center for Human Rights in recognition of its contribution to ensuring equal justice for the most vulnerable members of society, and the 2015 Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Award from Emory University. Rapping was the 2014 Inspire Award recipient from Cardozo School of Law. He was named an inaugural member of the Purpose Economy 100. In 2014 Rapping was awarded the prestigious MacArthur ‘Genius’ Fellowship for his work with Gideon’s Promise.

Professor Rapping received a J.D. from the George Washington University School of Law, a M.P.A. from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, and a B.A. from the University of Chicago.

**William Reichardt** (Bill) is recently retired from the full time practice of law and now lives in Annapolis Maryland. He received a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Virginia (1971); a M.Ed. degree in Counseling from the University of Virginia (1976) and a J.D. from George Mason University School of Law (1983). He has been admitted to practice in Virginia and Maryland and now works part time as a pro-bono attorney in Maryland. He uses his Spanish language skills to further his interest in doing pro-bono work in the Hispanic communities.

Bill’s current efforts are focused on consulting with parents, advocates and educators regarding special education and school law. For over 33 years he practiced in the areas of school law, criminal defense and family law, Mr. Reichhardt has litigated criminal and civil cases at the trial and all appellate levels of the Virginia State and Federal courts. He has represented many parents in special education due process cases and Federal Court appeals.

In August 2006, Mr. Reichhardt was appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia to serve on the Virginia State Bar Professionalism Course Faculty where he served for six years. Bill is a co-author of the Juvenile Law and Practice Handbook published by the Virginia Law Foundation and he has lectured extensively on topics related to school discipline, the rights of children, special education, criminal defense practice in juvenile court, and the laws of child abuse and neglect. He is the 2010 recipient of the prestigious Lewis F. Powell Jr. Pro Bono Award bestowed by the Virginia State Bar in recognition of his efforts to provide and support legal advocacy for children.

Mr. Reichhardt is a member of the faculty for the annual Institute of Special Education Advocacy (ISEA) at the William and Mary law school, where he lectures on Special Education Due Process advocacy and school discipline issues. He is a sitting member of the Commission for the Needs of Children for the Virginia Bar Association.

**Eric Reynolds** is an Assistant Attorney General with the Virginia Office of the Attorney General in Richmond, representing and advising the Virginia Department of Social Services, the State Executive Council for Children’s Services and the Office of Children’s Services, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and the Department of Medical Assistance Services. Prior to working at the OAG, he was in
private practice, focusing on family law and serving as a court-appointed guardian ad litem for children and parents’ counsel in child custody and child welfare cases in the Metro-Richmond area. He has been a member of various work groups and advisory panels for the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Commission on Youth, has served on the Chesterfield Court Improvement Team and the Chesterfield Head Start Policy Council, and currently is a member of the Children’s Justice Act/Court Appointed Special Advocate Advisory Board, the Virginia Mass Care Task Force, Virginia’s Three Branch Institute, and the Richmond Community Criminal Justice Board. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond School of Law.

Amy Wollard is a staff attorney and policy coordinator for the JustChildren program of the Legal Aid Justice Center, Virginia’s largest children’s law program, where she has a wide-ranging policy focus that includes dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, decarceration of children from juvenile prisons, and education access and quality. In addition to representing children in education, foster care, and other matters, she has a decade of experience in administrative and legislative advocacy, policy research and writing, and coalition-building around children’s issues. She has written and developed actual and model legislation & frequently presents on child welfare and juvenile justice policy topics at the state and national level, including briefings for U.S. Senate committees, conferences such as the ABA National Conference on Children & the Law, and guest lectures at the University of Richmond Law School, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, and elsewhere. Prior to her role at JustChildren, she spent five years with Voices for Virginia’s Children as the state’s lead advocate on child welfare and foster care policy, where her successes included advocating to extend foster care supports and services up to age 21, and helping to design and implement the education provisions of the Fostering Connections Act in Virginia, a state that is often held up as a model for this work. Amy holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law, and an M.F.A. from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop.