

Los Angeles Superior Court – Public Information Office

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**NEWS**



**March 8, 2018**

## **LASC HOSTS INAUGURAL YOUNG MEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**



*Judge Firdaus F. Dordi instructs high school students on how to tie a tie during a breakout session at the Los Angeles Superior Court's inaugural Young Men's Leadership Conference on March 8 in downtown Los Angeles.*

On March 8, the Los Angeles Superior Court hosted its inaugural Young Men's Leadership Conference. The half-day event was attended by more than 150 middle and high school students throughout Los Angeles County. Having hosted in previous years two Young Women's Leadership Conferences which garnered accolades, the Court was happily obliged to expand the program to include the community's male students.

"After the success of our Young Women's Leadership Conferences, it is exciting to be able to bring this program to the young men in our community," said Judge Yolanda Orozco, chair of the conference. "I hope the students gain the confidence to reach for the stars and not set arbitrary limitations on their future goals."

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The young men heard from a number of distinguished speakers including, from LASC, Presiding Judge Daniel J. Buckley, Assistant Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile and Judges Nicole Bershon, Beverly Bourne, Dennis J. Landin, Yolanda Orozco, and Jose I. Sandoval; Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas; Justice Luis A. Lavin, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Court of Appeal; Dr. Tyrone Howard, associate dean and professor, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and founder & executive director of Black Male Institute at UCLA; and former UCLA athlete, turned actor, Donovan Carter.



*LASC's Young Men's Leadership Conference brought together more than 150 middle and high school students throughout Los Angeles County to learn about the legal profession and hopefully consider a career on the bench.*



"We need, our community needs, our country needs more people of color reflected on our benches, in our schools, in every profession," Presiding Judge Buckley said to the students at the conference. "You are our future leaders. Go after your goals and strive to be the next leaders in our communities."



*Above: Presiding Judge Daniel J. Buckley speaks to conference participants.*  
*Below: Dr. Tyrone Howard hosts a discussion with panelists Adrian Huerta, Ph.d., and UCLA student Martin Capuchino.*

"It is a powerful image to see a host of bright, young, talented men before me," said Dr. Howard, addressing the attendees. "Your potential and your future matter. There are doctors in this audience right now, attorneys in this audience right now. There are engineers, psychologists, social workers, teachers, and law enforcement officers. There are a lot of professional futures in this audience right here today and part of my goal here today is to help you all realize it."

The event also included a panel discussion moderated by Judge Rupert A. Byrdsong and included panelists Judge Kelvin D. Filer and Judge Paul T. Suzuki and Commissioner Armando Durón. The panelists spoke about their childhoods, difficulties they faced growing up, and their journeys to the bench.

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"It doesn't matter how much money you have or don't have, whether you come from an immigrant family, a family of divorce, a single family home, if your parents are maybe in jail or prison or have issues with drugs or alcohol, it doesn't mean you can't make it," Judge Suzuki told the young men in attendance. "No matter your circumstances, and you may need help along the way, but you can be successful."

The conference is designed to bring together students and community leaders with diverse backgrounds to discuss their personal and professional journeys.

"We hope these young men will be inspired by the judicial officers and professionals they meet and follow in their footsteps to careers in the law and as judicial officers," said Judge Orozco. The conference also included breakout sessions with judicial officers and community leaders. Students learned how to tie a tie and were able to take the ties home with them. Breakfast and lunch were also provided to the students.

"We hope the students walk away from the conference knowing they are not alone, that the judges, lawyers and community leaders they heard from today came from similar circumstances or faced similar challenges on their paths to success," said Judge Bershon.



*Judge Rupert A. Byrdsong (at podium) moderates a discussion with (at table, from left to right) Judge Kelvin D. Filer, Commissioner Armando Durón and Judge Paul T. Suzuki about their childhoods, the difficulties they faced growing up and their journeys to the bench.*

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*For more information or to obtain copies of the images included with this story, contact LASC's Public Information Office at (213) 830-0815 or [publicinfo@lacourt.org](mailto:publicinfo@lacourt.org).*