



The Changing Face of Church and State:

How Religious Voices Are Influencing Public Policy

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES



About Northeast Ohio ACS

www.ACSLAW.org

The American Constitution Society for Law and Policy (ACS) is one of the nation's leading progressive legal organizations. Founded in 2001, ACS is a rapidly growing network of lawyers, law students, scholars, judges, policymakers and other concerned individuals. Our mission is to ensure that fundamental principles of human dignity, individual rights and liberties, genuine equality, and access to justice enjoy their rightful, central place in American law.

ACS is a non-partisan, non-profit educational organization. We do not, as an organization, lobby, litigate or take positions on specific issues, cases, legislation or nominations. We do encourage our members to express their views and make their voices heard.

In Northeast Ohio, ACS has a professional chapter and a student chapter at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. The Northeast Ohio Chapter, formed in March 2006, consists of lawyers, judges, law professors, community leaders and other progressive professionals from Cleveland, Akron and surrounding communities. The Case Chapter, founded in 2004, includes more than 60 students and is actively working to organize new chapters on other campuses in the region. Both the student and professional chapters provide innovative lectures, debates and other constitutional programming, as well as networking and social opportunities for members.

For more information about upcoming events and how to get involved, please visit our website at www.NortheastOhioACS.org or email NEOhio@ACSLaw.org for more information on our Professional Chapter.

Rabbi Richard A. Block

Senior Rabbi, The Temple - Tifereth Israel,
Cleveland and Beachwood, Ohio

Rabbi Block was ordained and awarded a Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH, in 1982, receiving awards for academic distinction, sermonic excellence, and writing. Upon ordination, he was chosen Rabbi of Greenwich Reform Synagogue, Riverside, CT. While in Greenwich, he served as the President of the Greenwich Fellowship of Clergy and was a founder of Jewish Community Services of Greenwich, a highly respected social service agency. In 1986, he received the Humanitarian Award of the Council of Churches and Synagogues of Lower Fairfield County, CT, for community leadership “worthy of esteem and commendation” that “made a significant difference in his community and in our whole region.”

Rabbi Block was Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA, from 1987 until 1999. His achievements there included: a process of educational innovation that inspired a national partnership, the “Experiment in Congregational Education;” the creation of a nationally recognized program to integrate emigres from the former Soviet Union in Jewish life; and the Koret Synagogue Initiative, a unique collaboration between synagogues, the Koret Foundation and the Jewish Community Federation, aimed at reinvigorating synagogue life. The Mid-Peninsula Jewish Community Day School, of which he was a founder, created a scholarship fund in his name, and he received the Jewish Family and Children’s Services of San Francisco’s 1999 “FAMMY Award,” “in appreciation of extraordinary caring and dedicated community service.” On October 3, 2002, Rabbi Block received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition, “in recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community.” United Jewish Communities honored him at its 2002 and 2004 General Assemblies “for leadership and dedicated service to [his] community.”

Rabbi Block’s community leadership includes the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and he served as chair of its PACT Committee, overseeing Federation-sponsored programs for Ethiopian immigrants to Israel. Rabbi Block was a Public Representative to the Board of the Cleveland Bar Association and is a member of the Community Vision Council of United Way, Cleveland. He is Secretary of the Reform Pension Board of the Reform Movement and chair of its Strategic Planning Committee and serves as Financial Secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Prior to his rabbinical studies, Rabbi Block graduated with honors from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and Yale Law School, where he was an editor of the law review. He was a law clerk to a US District Court judge and served in the US Navy’s Judge Advocate General’s Corps, including a term as a Special Assistant US Attorney in San Diego, and as a faculty member of the Naval Justice School in Newport, RI. He is the author of numerous publications.

Rabbi Block is a past president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Headquartered in Jerusalem, the WUPJ is the international body of Reform, Liberal, Progressive, and Reconstructionist Jews. Representing nearly 2 million persons in 43 countries, it is the world’s largest organization of religiously affiliated Jews.

He and Susan G. Block, a teacher and community volunteer, have been married since 1969. They have two sons, Joshua, 33, Director of Media Affairs for The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and Zachary, 30, a consultant with Boston Consulting Group.

Gary Daniels

Litigation Coordinator,
ACLU of Ohio

Cleveland, Ohio

After graduating from Kent State University in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in political science, Gary Daniels went to work for the ACLU of Ohio, eventually working his way up to the position of Litigation Coordinator.

After nearly five years with the ACLU of Ohio, Daniels moved to New York City in 2000 and worked for the Center for Constitutional Rights where he ran the Cuba Travel Project, advising and assisting in the legal representation of U.S. citizens who faced government penalties for travel to Cuba.

In 2001, Daniels then joined the staff of the National Coalition Against Censorship, also located in New York City, as their Media Affairs Coordinator. During that time, he was also the sole employee of the Free Expression Network - a coalition of dozens of free speech groups - where he provided content for & edited their website.

He has extensive experience in defending various civil liberties in the press and has been a spokesperson for a variety of issues in local, state & national media.

In late 2002, Daniels relocated to the Cleveland area to start a small business. He returned to the ACLU of Ohio in 2003 to re-assume his role as Litigation Coordinator.

Professor Dena S. Davis

Professor of Law
Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

Cleveland, Ohio

Dena S. Davis teaches church and state, torts, and bioethics at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law (Cleveland State University). She has been a Fulbright Research Fellow in India (1994), a Fulbright Teaching/Research Fellow in Israel (2002), and a Fulbright Senior Specialist in Indonesia (2004). In 1998-99 she was a Visiting Scholar at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NIH) and in 2000-01 she was a SmithKline Beecham Distinguished Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Law, Science and Technology (Arizona State University).

She is the author of *Genetic Dilemmas: Reproductive Technology, Parental Choices, and Children's Futures* (2001) and, with Laurie Zoloth, of *Notes from a Narrow Ridge: Religion and Bioethics* (1999). Her most recent project is an analysis of the sermons of Justice Harry A. Blackmun.

Professor Davis received her B.A. from Marlboro College, her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa, and her J.D. from the University of Virginia.

Bettysue Feuer

Former Regional Director,
Anti-Defamation League

Ohio/Kentucky/Allegheny Region

Bettysue started at the Anti-Defamation League in the Fall of 1999. Her law and nonprofit background help her to serve the four state ADL region. Feuer graduated with a BA in 1969 from the University of Michigan and received her law degree from Cleveland Marshall Law School in 1979. Feuer recently retired as the ADL Regional Director.

Bettysue practiced corporate law for approximately three years with Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff, LLP. In 1985 she left the practice of law to become the Regional Director of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism for Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky. In that capacity she served almost 40 congregations assisting them with programming, administration and training. Feuer remained with United Synagogue as the director for more than ten years.

Feuer's main responsibilities at the ADL included programming, training, development and working throughout the region on issues of concern to the ADL and the Jewish Community. Feuer enjoyed being a forceful voice in the communities that comprised her 4 state region.

Feuer is a member of both the Northern Ohio Working Group on Hate Crimes and the West Virginia Hate Crime Taskforce. She has been honored by both the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and the Northern Ohio District of the FBI for her work in the area of community relations.

Feuer is known for the innovative programs and enthusiastic leadership that she brings to non-profit work.

Gary Lankford

President,
FamilyVision

Ohio Restoration Project

Gary Lankford is the President of FamilyVision, a 501(c)(3) non-profit ministry under the National Heritage Foundation. FamilyVision is a leadership training ministry committed to “Building Families, Training Leaders.” FamilyVision accomplishes this primarily by helping local churches develop stronger family-based ministries, and by providing various conferences and seminars.

He is also the founder and Headmaster of FamilyVision Schools / WAHA. FamilyVision schools provide a Christian education for about 1/4 of the cost of traditional Christian schools. He teaches American History, World History, Christian Worldview and American Culture, and Public Speaking.

Gary previously served the Headmaster and history teacher for a classical Christian school. His teaching experience also includes over five years in Campus Crusade for Christ, two years as Director of Christian Education at a evangelical church, and many years teaching children’s church and youth and adult Sunday school classes.

In addition to FamilyVision and FamilyVision Schools / WAHA, Gary served as both a traveling speaker and the Ohio Coordinator for TeenPact, a national youth ministry that teaches students about government and citizenship.

Gary’s professional experience includes stints as a major account rep for a national business equipment firm, as a stockbroker for major brokerage firm, and most recently as a senior account executive with a leading consulting services IT firm.

The Lankfords have been married for twenty-one years, and have four children, ages eleven through eighteen.

Rev. Max Rodas, M.A.

Executive Director,
Proyecto Luz

Pastor Max Rodas has been involved in providing holistic ministry since 1984. Since 1988 he has attempted to be part of the solution to the huge problem of HIV infection among communities of color in the city of Cleveland, Ohio. He began as an educator for Catholic Counseling Center's AIDS Prevention Program for Hispanic Youth and Families. He later worked for the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland as an educator and as a case manager.

For the last 6 years he has served as the Executive Director of Proyecto Luz, an HIV/ AIDS faith-based initiative on the West Side of Cleveland. He is a consultant for his denomination in developing culturally competent, compassionate ministries in the US. His consultation expertise is in the areas of developing faith-based organizations, non-profit management and cultural diversity / competence training.

Pastor Rodas is at the present time assisting the North Central Ohio district of Nazarene churches in developing new congregations for Latinos(as) in the urban, semi-rural and rural areas of this district. He is a Trustee for Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Mount Vernon, Ohio and a member of the Hispanic Community Services Coalition of Greater Cleveland.

Pastor Rodas is originally from Guatemala, C.A., holds a graduate degree from Olivet Nazarene University and was ordained by the Church of the Nazarene since 1984. He is married to Kim Pate-Rodas, and together they are raising 3 children, Natalia, Nathan and Max Enrique. Kim has completed a Master of Science in Social Administration and is the Director of Services at Proyecto Luz.

Under his leadership, Proyecto Luz has gone from an incipient idea to a not for profit, faith-based ministry that serves 130 HIV infected clients and over 300 affected individuals. Proyecto Luz provides the Latino and other urban communities of Cleveland with prevention education, testing, outreach and case management. In the last 3 years, Pastor Rodas has been involved in creating an initiative in Cleveland to increase the capacity of Latino and urban pastors in addressing social, political and health issues. As a result of this initiative the Latino Pastors Coalition has recently been formed and is in the process of incorporating.

Pastor Rodas is now involved in a collaborative effort in planning an initiative that will address the incidence of diabetes among Latinos/as and other urban communities. This initiative is in the strategic planning phase.

Rev. Rodas is called to community transformation and as a result of that he has developed 2 other initiatives, one dealing with children & youth and the other with fathers. He is fully bilingual in Spanish and English.