Brain Science and Kids: New Policy Approaches

Wednesday, August 14, 2013
11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Agenda

11-11:05 a.m.  Welcome, opening remarks by Representative Wendell K. Willard, Georgia. Esq.

11:05-11:25 a.m.  Elizabeth Cauffman, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology, University of Irvine, California

11:25-11:40 a.m.  Reginald Dwayne Betts, Author, Massachusetts

11:40-11:55 a.m.  Maria M. Schneider, Assistant State Attorney, Juvenile Division, State Attorney’s Office, Florida

11:55-12:05 p.m.  Representative Willard presentation

12:05-12:15 p.m.  Questions and discussion led by Rep. Willard
Faculty Bios

REPRESENTATIVE WENDELL WILLARD represents the 49th District in the Georgia House of Representatives. Since first elected to serve in 2001, Representative Willard has been instrumental in passing several pieces of landmark legislation. Just this year, Representative Willard authored historic juvenile justice reform legislation in the state, which was signed into law in May 2013. Since 2005, Representative Willard has served as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and also serves on Ethics, Ex-Officio of Judiciary Non-Civil, and Vice Chairman of Rules. In recognition of his legislative accomplishments, Chairman Willard has been honored by the Georgia Council on Aging with their Special Legislator Award, the Department of Human Resources with the Leadership award, and by the Association Count Commissioners of Georgia, among others.

REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS is a husband and father of two sons. A poet, essayist and national spokesperson for the Campaign for Youth Justice, Betts writes and lectures about the impact of mass incarceration on American society. In 2011, Betts was awarded a Radcliffe Fellowship to Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Studies. Author of the memoir, A Question of Freedom (Avery/Penguin, 2009) and the collection of poetry, Shahid Reads His Own Palm (Alice James Books, 2010), Betts’ work possesses a careful, complicated and often difficult-to-confront intimacy that challenges conventional ideas about crime, masculinity and redemption. In 2010, he was awarded an NAACP Image Award for A Question of Freedom, and a Soros Justice Fellowship to complete The Circumference of a Prison, a work of nonfiction exploring the criminal justice system's role in the everyday lives of Americans who have not committed crimes. Mr. Betts will be attending Yale Law School in the fall.

ELIZABTH CAUFFMAN is a professor and Chancellor's Fellow in the Department of Psychology and Social Behavior at the University of California, Irvine. Dr. Cauffman's research addresses the intersect between adolescent development and the juvenile justice system. Findings from her research were incorporated into the American Psychological Association's amicus briefs to the Supreme Court in Roper v. Simmons, in which the Court disallowed capital punishment for crimes committed as a juvenile, and in both Graham v. Florida and Miller v. Alabama, in which the Court disallowed the sentencing of juvenile offenders to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In addition to this, she has published over 80 articles, chapters and books on adolescent development. To help inform policy and practice, she works closely with national and local agencies and has served as a member of the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice. She is currently a member of the MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change Initiative and is launching a large scale study titled “Crossroads” which will examine the impact of formally vs. informally processing youth in the juvenile justice system.

MARIA SCHNEIDER is the assistant state attorney in charge of the Juvenile Division for the 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida. Since joining the office in 1993, Ms. Schneider had served as a lead attorney in the felony trial division, the Sexual Battery Unit, the Organized Crime and Gang Activity Unit and the Career Criminal Unit. Upon receiving her JD degree from Nova Southeastern University's Center from the Study of law in 1986, Ms. Schneider was employed as an assistant public defender in Broward County, Fl. Ms. Schneider is actively involved in numerous community and professional organizations that advocate for the rights and wellbeing of children, such as the Florida Bar Juvenile Rules Committee, the Juvenile Justice Board for the 17th Judicial Circuit and the Broward County chapter of Communities in Schools. She teaches as an adjunct professor at Florida Atlantic University, Nova Southeastern University and Nova Southeastern University Center for the Study of Law. She lectures often for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Prosecuting Attorney’s Association and the National District Attorney’s Association.