

## Faculty Biographies

**Aparna Bhattacharyya** was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. She has served as Executive Director of Raksha since 1998. Aparna graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. She has volunteered and worked as a Victim Advocate for 5 years for the city of Atlanta's Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP). She also worked as a Project coordinator/Employment Specialist for the Newcomers' Network's Refugee Family Violence Prevention Project (where she developed and implemented the License to Freedom Project). Prior to becoming an employee of Raksha Inc., she also volunteered and served as a steering committee member of Raksha Inc., since its inception in 1995. As a representative of Raksha, Ms Bhattacharyya has served as founding Task Force member and Board Secretary for the International Women's House and a founding member of Tapestri, the Immigrant and Refugee Coalition challenging gender based oppression. She has served as a member of the Georgia Advisory Committee for the U.S Commission on Civil Rights, Board Vice President for Tapestri, Inc, an Advisory Board member for the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women and Advisory Board member for Georgia State's School of Social Work. Aparna served as a Board member for the Dekalb County Domestic Violence Task Force (2006-2012, Chair in 2012) and Vice President for the Cross Keys Foundation in 2011-2012. She was awarded the Indian Professionals Network (IPN) award in 1997 and 1998 for her service to the community. Ms. Bhattacharyya was awarded the Director's Eagle Award from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in 2006, the Georgia Commission on Family Violence Gender Justice Award, and the Dekalb County Domestic Violence Task Force's Deborah C. McDorman Award in 2008. Aparna is an alumni of Leadership Atlanta's Class of 2010, and a 2009 recipient of the Center for Pan Asian Community Service's Asian Women's Leadership Development Grant. She was recognized by the Indian American Cultural Association for Excellent and Continued Contribution to the Community in 2010. She is currently the Chair of VIDA legal Assistance and on the Board of National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project.

**Mary Ann Dutton, Ph.D.** is Professor of Psychiatry, Georgetown University Medical Center and Co-Director of the Community Engagement and Research component of the Georgetown Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science. She is also Associate Director of the Georgetown Center for Trauma and the Community. Dr. Dutton's research focuses on trauma, health and mental health among low-income minority women and veterans. She has received numerous federal grants, including for longitudinal studies, randomized clinical trials involving both mindfulness and telehealth interventions and immigrant women's use civil protection orders. Dr. Dutton is the author of numerous scientific journal articles and books.

**Maria Jose T. Fletcher** is the Co-Director and founder of VIDA Legal Assistance, Inc., a non-profit organization formed in February of 2011 to advance the rights of immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking in persons and other violent crimes. Some of her duties include overall supervision of the agency's attorneys, paralegals, intern students and volunteers, as well as direct representation of low-income immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking in persons, and other related violent crimes.

Ms. Fletcher is actively involved in local, state and national domestic violence and victim's rights organizations. She prepares and conducts educational presentations and training's in the areas of immigration, domestic violence, and trafficking in persons in the United States and internationally. She has been invited to present at conferences, seminars and workshops by the US Department of State, the US Department of Justice, including the Office on Violence Against Women, and by national and international non-governmental organizations to

address the needs of immigrant survivors.

Recently, Ms. Fletcher completed a two year commitment as one of fifteen members of the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women, chartered by the US Attorney General. The role of the committee was to provide recommendations on the prevention of domestic violence to the US Department of Justice and the US Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Fletcher is also the national coordinator of the Freedom Network Training Institute and a board member of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Previously, Ms. Fletcher has been a supervising attorney at Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC, now Americans for Immigrant Justice) and the Director of *Lucha: A Women's Legal Project* from June 2000 until February 2011. Ms. Fletcher has been an advisory board member of the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women and a founding member and past co-coordinator of the Freedom Network to Empower Trafficked and Enslaved Persons (USA).

She received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida and a J.D. from Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

**Denice Labertew** has been an advocate for sexual assault survivors for over 19 years. During law school, she developed and led the first sexual assault civil legal program in California housed within a rape crisis center. She has worked to protect the legal rights of survivors in immigration cases, housing cases, educational settings and accessing veteran's benefits, has contributed to a national manual to help attorneys understand how to represent sexual assault survivors and has served as faculty in the National Sexual Assault Law Institute. Over the past 19 years as an advocate, Denice has also been a hotline counselor, rape prevention educator, self defense instructor and served in executive positions within sexual assault and domestic violence organizations. Denice has a B.A. in Sociology, Women's Studies and a law degree. She currently works as part of the team that provides training and technical assistance to universities and college campuses around the country in developing their responses to sexual and domestic violence and works directly with California Rape Crisis Centers and Sexual Assault Programs in supporting their advocacy work

**Mercedes V. Lorduy** is Co-Director and founder of VIDA Legal Assistance, Inc. Ms. Lorduy has been working with victims of violent crime and primarily with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault for 15 years. Ms. Lorduy's experience representing battered immigrant women includes representation in family court, civil court and before the Department of Homeland Security's Bureaus of Citizenship and Immigration Services and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service), and the Executive Office for Immigration Review. She currently represents migrant farmworker women who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

Ms. Lorduy serves as faculty for national training conferences offered by the various projects of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Additionally, she participates as faculty in trainings on issues related to domestic violence in the military. Ms. Lorduy conducts trainings for local social service providers on the intersection of immigration, domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and human trafficking. Ms. Lorduy also participated as faculty and advisor for the Economic Empowerment Curriculum for Survivors of Domestic Violence a project of the Allstate Foundation and the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Ms. Lorduy also conducts community Know Your Rights forums with the local community on immigrant's rights as victims of crime. Ms. Lorduy has trained and provides technical assistance internationally to organizations that work with victims of domestic violence and sexual violence.

Ms. Lorduy received a B. S. in Social Science from Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; a J.D. from St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami, Florida. She is admitted to the Florida State Bar.

**Jessica Mindlin**, Esq. is the Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)'s National Director of Training and Technical

Assistance. Jessica has been active in the movement to end violence against women for more than thirty years. Before joining the VRLC, Jessica served as the Senior Staff Attorney and clinical instructor for NCVLI and Lewis and Clark Law School, as a statewide support attorney for the Oregon Law Center and Legal Aid Services of Oregon, coordinator for the Oregon Supreme Court-Oregon State Bar Task Force on Gender Fairness, and Legal Access Project Director for the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV). Prior to law school, Jessica worked as a rape victim advocate, a counselor, a legal advocate for battered women, a counselor for runaway youth, and a waitress. Jessica is the 2008 recipient of OCADSV's Midori Hamilton Award. She serves on the Advisory Council of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the editorial board of the Sexual Assault Report, the Advisory Board of Oregon's Center for Women, Politics and Policy, and the Board of Directors of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. She was a founding member of CounterQuo, a national campaign to change the status quo on how we examine and respond to sexual assault.

**Rocío Molina**, Associate Director for National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project at American University's Washington College of Law, is an immigration attorney serving immigrant survivors for over five years. Rocío provides legal counsel, research, technical assistance, and training for the benefit of immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. Prior to this position, Rocío worked with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, where she represented hundreds of immigrants victims in both immigration and family court proceedings. Rocío also is a founding board member of the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC), a free walk-in clinic in Madison, Wisconsin. Before coming to the Wisconsin Coalition, Rocío practiced criminal and family law in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Rocío is a member of the Wisconsin and Illinois State Bars and graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School.

**Leslye E. Orloff** is President of the National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project (NIWAP) and has a distinguished history using the power of the law to advance women's rights, equality, opportunity, and working to assure that all women reap the benefits of legal protections achieved. Prior to founding NIWAP, she founded and was solely responsible for Legal Momentum's Immigrant Women Program (IWP) for 12 years. NIWAP advocates for laws, policies and practices that enhance the legal rights of immigrant women and immigrant victims of violence against women – domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. IWP focused on improved access to immigration benefits, the justice system, public benefits, social services and health care.

Leslye is a co-founder and co-chair of the former National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women and was the Washington, D.C. spokesperson for that organization. In that capacity she was involved in drafting the Protection for Immigrant Victims of Violence Against Women in the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and again in 2000 and 2005, and in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and 2008, legal services access for battered immigrants in 1997 and welfare access for battered immigrants in 1996. She has written local and national training curricula, manuals, and story collections bringing immigrant women's voices to national policy makers. She is a nationally respected trainer of attorneys, victim advocates, police, judges, women's programs, women executives and health professionals on leadership, public policy advocacy, domestic violence, cultural competency, family law, protection orders, the Violence Against Women's Act's immigration provisions, welfare rights of immigrant women crime victims, the nexus between violence against women and immigration law and the how each of us can become involved locally and/or nationally in making a real difference in the world.

During her 17-year litigation career prior to joining Legal Momentum, Leslye founded and directed the domestic violence program at Ayuda, a legal services agency that served the interrelated legal and social service needs of battered immigrant women and children. She has also published numerous social science journal and law review articles on women's experiences with domestic violence, sexual assault and immigration and immigrant victims' legal rights.

Leslye's work on behalf of immigrant women has received national recognition, including the 2007 Sheila Wellstone Award awarded to the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women, the 2007 Annual Rosalynn B. Bell Award, presented to Leslye by the Women's Law Center of Maryland for her contributions to the field of family law, a Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship in 1994 and a Harvard Law School Wasserstein Public Interest Law Fellowship in 2002.

Leslye received her J.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles, and graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. from Brandeis University.

**Edna Yang** has been the General Counsel for American Gateways, formerly the Political Asylum Project of Austin, in Texas since 2006 where she represents immigrant survivors of abuse, immigrant victims of crime, and asylum seekers before the Immigration Service and the Immigration Court. Edna began her work at PAPA in 2002 as the coordinating attorney for the Program Representing Immigrant Survivors of Abuse, providing direct representation to immigrants seeking relief under the immigration provisions of Violence Against Women Act. Edna conducts training sessions for law enforcement officials and social service providers on how to work with, and provide services to, immigrants in the community. She also organizes outreach and educational sessions for immigrant members of the community. From 2004 to 2005, Edna served on the Austin Commission for Immigrant Affairs. She is a member in good standing of the State Bar of Texas and is also a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the National Immigration Project, and the National Lawyer's Guild.