

MEREDITH B. ESSER

EDUCATION

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER, Washington, DC
Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, May 2010

Honors: Order of the Coif
 Recipient of the International Association of Trial Lawyers
 Student Advocacy Award

Bar Admissions: New York (2010), Florida (2012)

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, London, UK
Master of Science in Gender Studies, *with distinction (highest honors)*, December 2005

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, Hanover, NH
Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Studio Art, *cum laude*, June 2003

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Wyoming College of Law

Assistant Professor of Law & Director of the Defender Aid Clinic

July 2023 – Present

- Direct the Defender Aid Clinic including teaching a clinical lawyering skills seminar related to criminal legal advocacy in the postconviction context with a particular emphasis on developing sentencing mitigation arguments for early release efforts.
- Supervise students in cases involving second look advocacy including in parole revocation proceedings, federal sentence reductions and compassionate release motions, and general litigation aimed at decarceration and early release.
- Teach doctrinal courses in topics related to criminal legal advocacy and prison policy.

University of Denver Sturm College of Law

Clinical Teaching Fellow, Civil Rights Clinic, Denver, CO

July 2022 – May 2023

- Supervised students in major civil rights litigation against the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) including in federal district court and appeals before the Fifth and Tenth Circuit Courts of Appeal.
- Developed and taught seminar component of clinical course on topics including appellate litigation, Eighth Amendment rights and remedies; client interviewing and counseling; trauma-informed lawyering; prison law and prison abolition.

Adjunct Professor of Prison Law & Policy, Denver, CO

Spring 2018 & Spring 2019

- Developed and led seminar course on the constitutional rights of incarcerated people.

LAW REVIEW PUBLICATIONS

- Meredith Esser, *Extraordinary Punishment: Conditions of Confinement and Compassionate Release*, 92 FORDHAM L. REV. 1369 (2024). Available [here](#).
- Meredith Esser, *Who Bears the Burden When Prison Guards Rape?*, 109 IOWA L. REV. ONLINE 188 (2024). Available [here](#).
- Meredith Esser, *Unpunishment Purposes*, 109 MINN L. REV. (forthcoming, 2025).

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Federal Public Defender of Colorado and Wyoming

Feb. 2016 - July 2022

Assistant Federal Public Defender, Appellate Division, Denver CO

- Represented indigent clients in the Districts of Colorado and Wyoming and before the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Notable litigation wins:

- *United States v. Braxton*, 61 F.4th 830 (10th Cir. 2023) (reversing denial of motion to suppress and holding that inevitable discovery doctrine did not apply to gun seized pursuant to warrantless search of defendant's backpack).
- *United States v. Broadway*, 1 F.4th 1206 (10th Cir. 2021) (reversing denial of motion for sentence reduction under the First Step Act's crack-cocaine provision).
- *United States v. Giannukos*, 908 F.3d 649 (10th Cir. 2018) (reversing and remanding defendant's gun convictions after trial for illegal possession of firearms because district court plainly erred in incorrectly instructing the jury regarding the definition of constructive possession).
- *United States v. Uram*, 96-cr-00102-ABJ, ECF No. 503 (D. Wyo. November 2, 2022) (order granting immediate compassionate release and vacating sentence of life imprisonment).
- *United States v. M.L.* (D. Alaska) (order granting immediate release and vacating 120-month sentence for survivor of institutional sexual abuse while in custody).

Federal Public Defender of Eastern Washington and Idaho

Sept. 2014 - Feb. 2016

Assistant Federal Public Defender, Trial Division, Spokane, WA

- Represented indigent clients in the Districts of Eastern Washington and Idaho and before the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Arnold & Porter LLP

Nov. 2012 - Aug. 2014

Litigation Associate, New York, NY

- Conducted commercial civil litigation in state and federal court; maintained active pro-bono practice including challenging conditions of confinement in federal supermax prison and working under court-appointed monitor in landmark New York stop & frisk cases.

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

The United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Law Clerk to the Honorable Rosemary Barkett, Miami, FL

Aug. 2011 - Sept. 2012

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Law Clerk to the Honorable Russell F. Canan, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division, Washington, DC

Sept. 2010 - Aug. 2011

PRESENTATIONS, MEDIA & LECTURES

Presenter: Second Look Network Annual Conference in Tulsa, OK.

- *Unpunishment Purposes* (June 12, 2024) (discussing my forthcoming article *Unpunishment Purposes* and its relevance to second look advocacy).
- *Medical-Legal Partnerships in Second Look Advocacy* (June 11, 2024) (discussing my work with medical professionals in pursuing early release for clients suffering severe medical conditions).

Presenter: Second Look Network Virtual Event

- *Conditions of Confinement and Early Release Advocacy: Inspiration From the New Federal Sentencing Guidelines* (December 5, 2023) (discussing my article *Extraordinary Punishment: Conditions of Confinement and Compassionate Release*).

Presenter: NYU Clinical Writers Workshop

- *Unpunishment Purposes* (October 2023) (discussing work-in-progress with fellow conference attendees).

Presenter: Annual 2023 Wyoming Federal Criminal Justice Act Panel CLE, Laramie, WY

- *The World Needs More Compassionate Release* (October 12, 2023) (discussing newly-enacted federal compassionate release sentencing guidelines and presenting to members of the federal Criminal Justice Act panel in Wyoming).

Featured in Douglas Berman's SENTENCING LAW & POLICY blog:

- Featuring my article *Extraordinary Punishment: Conditions of Confinement and Compassionate Release*, at https://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/2023/08/extraordinary-punishment-conditions-of-confinement-and-compassionate-release.html
- Featuring my article *Who Bears the Burden When Prison Guards Rape?*, at https://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/2023/11/who-bears-the-burden-when-prison-guards-rape.html
- Featuring my article *Unpunishment Purposes*, at https://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/2024/04/unpunishment-purposes.html

Interviewed on Public Defenseless with Hunter Parnell

- *Another Supreme Court Decision Stopping Innocent People from Getting Their Day in Court w/ Alison Guernsey and Meredith Esser* (podcast episode November 2023) available at <https://www.publicdefenseless.com/episodes/gaw4llak8f4dgx4-j5fw2-jmlym-xn7h8-2wze8-xzmce-phw8r-5hsgb-4aldf-ge2pk-y5dgn-pp9ay-l75w2-tlkw-c-bk9jc-m6pjz-smpft-nslea-pdsdr-49b8j-9nc47-rhzd-l-g4kyd-yefbm-k5y8s-wj8sf-jyzf7-24baw>