

Inaugural Kathy Boudin Lecture



May 19th, 2023

*Schomburg Center for Research in
Black Culture*

Program

Welcome

Cheryl Wilkins and Geraldine Downey

Opening Remarks

Angela Y. Davis

Panel Discussion

Angela Y. Davis, Debbie Kilroy, Francis Adjei, and Jose Saldana, moderated by Soffiyah Elijah

About the Kathy Boudin Lecture

Kathy Boudin was unwavering in her passion and fierce commitment to ending mass incarceration, to investing in the power of those who have been locked away, and to building communities of care and support. Kathy, who co-founded the Center for Justice and the Release Aging People in Prison campaign, among many other projects and organizations, left us on May 1st, 2022. In one of the many efforts to honor and celebrate Kathy, we have started the annual Kathy Boudin Lecture, to carry forward her legacy of care, justice and community.

Organized by the Center for Justice at Columbia University in partnership with the Columbia School of Social Work and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. This lecture is made possible by the Kathy Boudin Freedom Fund which is supported by countless individual donors. To learn more visit: centerforjustice.columbia.edu

Speaker Bios

Angela Y. Davis is professor emerita of history of consciousness and feminist studies at University of California, Santa Cruz. An activist, writer, and lecturer, her work focuses on prisons, police, abolition, and the related intersections of race, gender, and class. She is the author of many books, from *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* to *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*. Her most recent book, written with Gina Dent, Erica Meiners and Beth Richie, is *Abolition.Feminism.Now*.

Debbie Kilroy OAM is one of Australia's leading advocates for protecting the human rights of women and children through decarceration – the process of moving away from using prisons and other systems of social control in response to crime and social issues. Debbie's passion for justice is the result of her personal experience of the criminal (in)justice system and an unwavering belief that prison represents a failure of justice. After her release in 1992, Debbie established Sisters Inside, which advocates for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system and responds to gaps in the services available to them. Sisters Inside isn't just another service provider: it is an organisation of women with shared experiences supporting each other to change their lives and change the system.

Francis Adjei is a Ghanaian-American filmmaker. In addition to coordinating the Echoes of Incarceration crew's freelance projects with musicians and fashion designers, Francis spearheaded the crew's collaboration with Sesame Workshop, creating media to raise awareness about children with incarcerated parents.

Jose Hamza Saldana is Director of RAPP, Release Aging People in Prison Campaign. RAPP is a grassroots community organizing and advocacy campaign co-founded by a collective of formerly incarcerated people. RAPP works to end mass incarceration and promote racial justice through the release of older people in prison and those serving long-term prison sentences as a means of uprooting greater forces of injustice that upholds legacies of racism, revenge, perpetual punishment and the control of Black and other communities of color. Jose is formerly incarcerated. He was released from state prison in January 2018 after 38 years of incarceration. During the decades of incarceration, Jose had obtained a college degree. More importantly, he had committed himself to advocating for systemic solutions to the social and economic condition that People of Color inherit at birth, which has often led to perpetual incarceration.

Soffiyah Elijah is the Executive Director of the Alliance of Families for Justice. Established in 2016 in NY, the mission of the Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ) is to support families of incarcerated people and people with criminal records, empower them as advocates and enable them to marshal their collective power to achieve systemic change. Prior to founding AFJ, Ms. Elijah was the Executive Director of the Correctional Association of NY where she was the first woman and the first person of color to lead the more than 170 year old organization. Ms. Elijah has dedicated her life to human rights and social activism, and is a frequent presenter at national and international forums on criminal justice policy and human rights issues. An accomplished advocate, attorney, scholar, and educator, Ms. Elijah has practiced criminal and family law for more than 40 years.