

# Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke Speaks at Becker Legacy Speaker Series

May 5, 2022

By: Gary C. Rosen, In Memoriam - Alan S. Becker (1946-2020), In Memoriam - Gary A. Poliakoff (1944-2014)

Becker & Poliakoff, in partnership with the University of Miami School of Law, recently welcomed **Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke** as the keynote speaker of the **Alan S. Becker and Gary A. Poliakoff Preeminent Leaders in Law Speaker Series**. The educational forum, established in honor of the firm's founding members (Becker, J.D. '69, and Poliakoff, J.D. '69), strives to connect those seeking to understand the complexities of the law with legal practitioners who have real world experience applying the law in a variety of contexts.

Clarke addressed the law's role in reforming our society, and she shared some of the wisdom she has gained in her journey to becoming Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. She cited the Groveland Four, which Florida's legislature called a "shameful chapter in the state's history," though she called its resolution an example of "what thoughtful, determined legal advocacy can do."

She shared that her inspiration to practice law came from a high school trip to federal court, where she saw the trying of a case about desegregating schools in Hartford, Connecticut: "I looked at these lawyers at work and thought, 'Wow, the law is a really powerful tool for trying to bring about change in this country.'"

Becker's **Managing Shareholder Gary Rosen** led a Q&A session with her after the lecture where she discussed her early experience in law, the strain that public defenders are under, the current "crisis of hate" across the country, and the importance of the Voting Rights Act.

When Gary asked her about the recent appointment of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, she said, "Our courts, our institutions, should reflect the diversity of the communities they serve."

She added that she enjoyed "this great privilege and this great honor of leading the Civil Rights division at this moment."

She concluded with final advice for audience attendees: "You should be able to wake up and enjoy the work that you're doing."

**Click here** to watch her inspiring full lecture.

To learn more about the **Alan S. Becker and Gary A. Poliakoff Preeminent Leaders in Law Speaker Series**, please **click here**.

