

## Panelist's Biographies

### **Maria Ponomarenko - Associate Law Professor, University of Minnesota Law School**



Maria Ponomarenko is an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she teaches in the areas of criminal procedure, constitutional law, and administrative law. Her scholarship on local administrative law and police governance has appeared in leading publications, including the *New York University Law Review*, the *Northwestern Law Review*, and the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*.

She also is co-founder and counsel at the Policing Project, a non-profit based at the NYU School of Law that works in tandem with policing agencies and community groups to promote more effective, just, and accountable policing. The Policing Project as worked closely with advocates and agencies in more than a dozen jurisdictions including New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Tucson, Nashville, and Camden.

In conjunction with the Policing Project, Professor Ponomarenko currently is spearheading a national effort to develop model legislation on a variety of policing issues. She also is an Associate Reporter for the American Law Institute's *Principles of the Law: Policing* project, which will provide much-needed guidance to legislators and agencies on tackling some of the hardest issues in policing, ranging from police encounters and the use of force, to evidence gathering and internal agency accountability.

### **Cecil W. Rhambo Jr. - Chief, LAX Airport Police**



Cecil W. Rhambo Jr. was sworn-in as Chief of Airport Police on November 6, 2019. Chief Rhambo retired from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 2014 at the rank of Assistant Sheriff. In his 33 years with the Sheriff's Department, Chief Rhambo developed expertise in areas including municipal patrol, emergency management, community partnerships and employee union relations. As an Assistant Sheriff, his responsibilities included LA Metro's rail and bus lines, experience that will serve him well as Los Angeles World Airports builds an Automated People Mover train system, which will connect to Metro's regional rail system when completed in 2023.

Chief Rhambo served as City Manager of the City of Compton from 2017 through July 2019 and Assistant City Manager of the City of Carson from 2014 to 2017. In those positions, he focused on budget discipline, relationships with internal and external stakeholders and economic development.

He received his Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Humboldt State University and his Master's degree in Organizational Leadership from Woodbury University.

**Mark T. Harris – Civil Rights Attorney, Ben Crump Law PLLC**



Professor Mark T. Harris, J.D., an active licensed member of the State Bar of California, is the Director of Pre-Law Studies at the University of California, Merced and the Northern California and Central Valley Managing Attorney for the national law firm, Ben Crump Law. Mr. Harris is headquartered in Sacramento, California where he has practiced law for almost forty years.

Professor Harris has served as an adviser to several notable public sector leaders including The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton, former

President of the United States; the Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., and The Honorable Gray Davis, both former governors of the State of California.

Professor Harris is a law and economics contributor for the Black News Channel on cable television and hosts the "Family Matters Forum" which is a local radio talk show and podcast. Further, he leads thought provoking seminars training K-12 educators throughout the state of California on issues pertaining to social justice, diversity, inclusion and intersectionality.

Professor Harris resides in Sacramento, California with his wife who is a university administrator and classroom instructor. Their sons are law school graduates and advocate on behalf of marginalized community members.

**David E. Mastagni – Partner, Mastagni Holstedt, A.P.C**



David Emilio Mastagni is a partner with the law firm of Mastagni Holstedt, APC, who represents public employee unions and their members. His labor and employment law practice includes administrative hearings, pension litigation, class actions, and appellate litigation in the courts of California and the Ninth Circuit. David is an experienced panel attorney for the Peace Officers' Research Association of California (PORAC) Legal Defense Fund and frequently lectures on police reforms, Constitutional rights, collective bargaining, and public employee discipline. He provided legal analysis and advice on behalf of law enforcement stakeholders during Legislative negotiations and hearings over A.B. 392, S.B. 230, S.B. 1421, S.B. 16, and most recently S.B. 2.

Since graduating from U.C. Berkeley School of Law in 1999, David has attained the highest Peer Review Rating of AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell and was named to Super Lawyers Northern California Rising Stars from 2011-2014 and to Super Lawyers Northern California every year since 2015. He has been named to Top Attorneys in Sacramento by Sacramento Magazine since 2015.

**Geoffrey S. Sheldon – Partner and Chair of Public Safety Practice Group, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore**



Geoff is the Chair of the firm's Public Safety Practice Group, and he is also one of the firm's seasoned litigators. Geoff regularly provides advice and counsel and representation to firm clients on a wide array of matters, including matters involving the Peace Officers Bill of Rights Act, the Firefighters Bill of Rights Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the California Labor Code, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act, the Military and Veterans Code, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, the California and United States Constitutions, the California Public Records Act and similar claims. Geoff is an expert in defending firm clients in traditional employment litigation as well as class and collective action lawsuits involving thousands of employees. He has successfully represented firm clients in FLSA collective actions through trial and appeal, and he has successfully defeated class certification in many of these lawsuits. Geoff has also successfully

handled class actions alleging violations of the FEHA brought by the DFEH and individual employees. Geoff's litigation practice extends to handling federal and state writs, injunctions and appeals. He has successfully argued cases in front of the California Court of Appeal, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the California Supreme Court. As a member of Litigation Practice Group Executive Committee, Geoff helps establish the firm's litigation policies and best practices.

As the Chair of the firm's Public Safety Practice Group he oversees the firm's extensive public safety practice. In addition to help establishing best practices for service to the firm's public safety clients, Geoff routinely assists public agency clients and law enforcement and fire service executive associations with matters such as personnel management, investigation and discipline, unfair labor practices, grievances, medical and other types of leaves of absence, fitness for duty and disability accommodation, and public safety retirement issues.

Geoff frequently conducts trainings for firm clients, and he conducts internal investigations for certain clients.