

Penny Brown Reynolds, J.D., Ph.D.

An executive leader with over 28 years of extensive experience as a strategist, both in the public and private sectors, with proven expertise in strategic planning and implementation, public governance, fundraising, budget development, budget management, providing overall direction and oversight for operations and staff development for law departments and numerous state agencies, including a senior policy advisor and expert on criminal justice, legal, public safety and community development issues.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University System of Georgia, Atlanta, GA 2018 - Present

Dual Appointment

- **Georgia State University, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Atlanta, GA**
Instructor (Teaching Areas: Criminal Law & Race and Criminal Justice, Criminal Procedure)
2020 Outstanding Instructor of the Year, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology Award
- **Albany State University, Albany, GA** 2018 - 2019
Senior Policy Advisor/Consultant, Office of the President
Oversaw the coordination and development of the Student Transformation Success Initiative's strategic plan and related operational plans, budgeting, programming and policy changes. In addition, consulted on establishing higher education priorities, policies, agendas, produces briefing materials, and drafting papers on behalf of the Office of the President.

Supreme Court of Georgia's Office of Dispute Resolution 2006 – Present

Registered Mediator and Arbitrator

- Conducts hundreds of mediations and arbitrations in a wide variety of legal disputes such as complex business litigation, contracts, education, personal injury, business torts, employment, government enforcement actions, product liability, professional malpractice, family, consumer, and divorce actions

Divine Destiny, LLC., Atlanta, GA 2008 - Present

Chief Executive Officer

- A diversified management consulting firm providing services to both public and private sectors in the areas of public policy, higher education leadership, organization strategy, public finance, change management, civil rights, affordable housing, community development and criminal justice
- Manage crisis management, business and legal consulting
- Manage the development and execution of the organization's long-term strategy
- Overseeing non-profit consulting in operational assessment, training and engagement
- Assisting higher educational institutions address strategic issues such as performance improvement, operating efficiency, cost management, and reduction, growth strategy, organizational effectiveness and funding strategy
- Conducted a year-long self-study as a part of the Strategic Planning Task Force to study an institution's first year experience
- Collaborated with members of president's cabinet in the coordination and development of student transformation success initiative strategic plan

The JP Foundation, Inc. 2008 – Present

Chief Executive Officer

A 501(c)(3), non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening families, women, youth, and children and providing a voice for the poor through education and advocacy. Works directly for the Board of Directors to provide the direction in fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization; provides timely and accurate information to the Board of Directors regarding operations and budgeting

- Manage the development and execution of the foundation's long-term strategy
- Manage research and development of white papers on various policy issues
- Collaborate and partner with corporate, government entities and other non-profits
- Chief fundraiser, specifically motivating and facilitating supporters to maximize giving; inspiring new supporters to raise money, while maintaining, energizing and developing relationships with existing supporters
- Oversaw the coordination and development of a Women's Entrepreneur Initiative for over 100 women to launch business in partnership with *The Coco-Cola Foundation*
- Founded an Annual Women's Empowerment Conference drawing over 5000 attendees from 24 states and 3 countries
- Directing the strategy for recruiting, organizing and managing volunteers to carry out various functions within the foundation. Manage both contract staff and volunteer staff of over two hundred
- Manage official communication and marketing efforts; develops and maintains relationships with the national and local media

State Court of Fulton County, Atlanta, GA

2000 - 2008

Judge

- Responsible for all facets of the civil and criminal trials and judicial administration
- Presided over proceedings including both bench and jury trials and hearings
- Presided over cases involving medical and legal malpractice, pharmaceutical litigation, wrongful death, personal injury, business and employment litigation, contracts, product liability, class actions, and misdemeanor criminal offenses
- Oversaw court management of operations and budgetary issues and supervised staff. Served on numerous committees, including courthouse security, case management, law clerk recruitment, communications and E-filing committees
- Stood for re-election without opposition. Never reversed by an appellate court on any criminal decision

Office of the Governor, State of Georgia, Atlanta, GA

1998 - 2000

Executive Counsel to Hon. Roy E. Barnes, 80th GA Governor

- First African American in Georgia's history to serve as legal counsel to the Governor
- Served as the chief legal officer and managed office legal department of attorneys and administrative staff
- Served on Governor's senior management team as a senior policy advisor on civil rights, criminal justice, gender equality, transportation, education, business, and fiscal policy issues
- Executive lead for 15 state agencies (direct reports) providing and developing strategic and budgetary plans for the various agency missions including, the Department of Community Affairs, the state agency that oversaw the groundwork for economic opportunities, from affordable housing to local government assistance programs and economic development; all state Criminal Justice agencies, including Georgia Bureau of Investigations, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Georgia Emergency Management, Department of Agriculture; and the Georgia Senate and the Courts of Georgia and a host of other agencies.

- Responsible for a wide array of issues including official legal opinions, use of executive power, litigation, judicial matters, civil rights protection against discrimination, developed and recommended adoption of civil rights regulations, policies, public finance, organization strategy
- Managed federal program compliance, media inquiries, legislation, regulatory, contracts, executive appointments, investigations, law enforcement, military affairs, community development and planning, intellectual property, open records, all aspects of employment law

Office of Lieutenant Governor, State of Georgia, Atlanta, GA 1997 - 1998
Chief of Staff and General Counsel to Hon. Pierre Howard

- First African American in Georgia's history to serve as chief of staff and legal counsel to a Lieutenant Governor
- Responsible for all facets of the day-to-day operations, administration, legislative and financial affairs of the office
- Developed, reviewed and prepared an annual budget of \$8.1 million, overseeing operations, coordinating the development of administrative and legislative agendas
- Directed the coordination with Senate committees, developed legislation for higher education, gender issues, education, transportation, housing, grants, tax credits and community development and economic initiatives, environmental and criminal justice
- Supervised the Senate offices of research, administrative support personnel, press secretary's office, legislative counsel, constituent and community services division, and legislative personnel

Georgia Attorney General's Office, Atlanta, GA 1994 - 1996
Assistant Attorney General

- Served as legal counsel to various agencies and boards of state government
- Issued legal opinions as requested by heads of state agencies and other officials
- Defended challenges to state laws against state agencies
- Drafted and reviewed contracts and subpoenas, conducted investigations, subpoenas, evidentiary hearings; managed all legal aspects of receiverships of the Department of Insurance
- Represented state agencies/clients on transactional civil litigation, management of discovery, provided legal opinions, drafted legislation and provided legal and policy advice on matters related to assigned cases
- Successfully tried 200 plus administrative hearings

Office of the DeKalb County District Attorney, Decatur, GA 1996
Assistant District Attorney

- Responsible for all facets of criminal prosecution, evaluation of criminal cases, investigation, subpoenas, indictment; the office on arraignments and hearings, oral arguments
- Prepared cases for pre-trial and trials
- Advised and worked with law enforcement personnel on issues, including obtaining necessary evidence to prosecute crimes, handled plea negotiations with defense attorneys

Court of Appeals of Georgia, Atlanta, GA 1996
Law Clerk to the Hon. John, H. Ruffin

- Conducted legal research, preparing bench memos, drafting orders and draft opinions, proofreading, verifying citations, communicating with counsel regarding case management and procedural requirements, and assisting the judge during oral arguments

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP, Atlanta, GA Summer 1992 & 1993
Summer Associate, 1L & 2L

- Researched and analyzed the law on complex issues, prepared memoranda, drafted documents including briefs for submission analyzed and summarized complicated legal documents, including contracts and litigation related matters, performed discovery of various electronically stored data in preparation for litigation, contracts and mergers and acquisitions

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA 1992 - 1994
Law Research Assistant to Associate Dean Corneill A. Stephens

- Conducted research and critically examined legal research on the Uniform Commercial Code Article 2 in preparation for, *Georgia Methods of Practice, Vol. 1*. Performed the research for the updated supplement to *Georgia Methods of Practice, Chapters 1-9 (Volume 1)* and Chapters 63-67, *Georgia Methods of Practice, Vol. 2*

EDUCATION

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA 1994
Juris Doctor

Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL 2021
Ph.D., Criminal Justice
Honors: Phi Kappa Phi; GPA: 4.0/4.0

Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA 2008
Master of Arts, Religious Education
Honors: Top Graduate in Class, GPA: 4:0/4.0

Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA 1991
Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice
Honors: cum laude; Top 5% of Class, Honors College

Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA 2018
Certificate; Women and Power Executive Education Program

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Part-Time Instructor 2018 - Present
 Georgia State University, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Atlanta, GA
 Teaching Areas: Criminal Law & Race and Criminal Justice, Criminal Procedure).
2020 Outstanding Instructor, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology Award

Guest Lecturer 2000 - 2020
 Spelman College, Morehouse College, Georgia State University, Xavier University, Clayton State College and University, Florida State University, Troy University, Florida Memorial College, Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Bethune-Cookman University and Alabama A&M University

SELECTED ACADEMIC HONORS/AWARDS/ACTIVITIES

- APEX Museum, Atlanta, GA, *2020 Scholar-in-Residence Academic Fellowship Law School and Ph.D. Honors/Awards:*
- Member of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, 2020
- Recipient of the *Chancellor Fellows Endowment Scholarship*, 2019

- The Georgia State University Distinguished Student Award, The University's highest student service award, (first GSU law student to have received this distinguished award), 1994
- Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, 1993-94
- National Association of Women Lawyers Outstanding Female Student Award, 1994
- Vice President Student Bar Association, 1992-93
- Vice-President, Reading, Writing, Advocacy, Moot Court Society
- Staff Reporter, Black Letter Law Newsletter
- Spring Graduating Hooding Committee Chairperson
- Founder, African American Heritage Celebration
- Top 5% First Year Moot Court Competition, Semi-Finalist
- Faculty Recruitment Committee, Student Chair
- Black Law Students Association
- Delta Theta Phi Legal Fraternity

Graduate School Honors

- Presidential Scholar's Award
- Achievement Honor Graduate Award in recognition of the high scholastic achievement, Highest GPA (4.0) in graduating class
- I.T.C.'s Costen Award for Leadership

Undergraduate Honors/Awards

Cum laude, graduating after only three years of study, top 5% of class

- Dean's list eight-consecutive quarters
- The Department of Criminal Justice Scholarship Award, 1992
- Member of the Georgia State University Honors Program
- Mortar Board Senior Honors Council
- Member Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- Certified in Family and Community Service in the Field of Sociology

SELECTED ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS

- *Women and the Law: A Guide to Women's Legal Rights in Georgia*. Brown Reynolds, Penny and Jacquelyn Saylor. Ed. Carrollton: Runnymede Press, 1995. Print.
- Brown Reynolds, Penny. (2008), "Getting Through the Holidays During Difficult Financial Days" *Huffington Post*. Print.
- "Domestic Violence: The Role of the Courts & Religious Community," Presentation and article, Morehouse School of Medicine: Violence Prevention Conference: Promoting Healthy Communities, 2006.
- *My Mother Told Me*. Atlanta: Sparrow House Publishing, 2017. Print.
- *Real Talk for Real Sisters: Wisdom & Truth for Today's Women and Teens*. Atlanta: Sparrow House Publishing, 2015. Print.
- Brown Reynolds, Penny. *7 Steps to Peace of Mind*. Atlanta: Divine Destiny Publishing, 2010. Print.
- Editor-in-Chief, *The Fulton Court Reporter Newsletter*. Atlanta: Fulton County Courts, 2005. Print

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY HONORS/AWARDS

- First African American Appointed as Executive Counsel to a Governor in State of Georgia
- First African American Appointed as Chief of Staff & General Counsel for a Lieutenant Governor in the State of Georgia
- Honorary Doctorate, Doctor of Humane Letters, Interdenominational Theological Center, 2019
- Honorary Doctorate, Doctor of Philosophy, Ohio Christian University, 2017

- Honored by the Atlanta City Council for social justice advocacy and community service, 2019
- Inducted in the Gate City Bar Association’s Hall of Fame for distinguished legal career.
- Founding Chair, Judicial Section of the Gate City Bar Association, an affiliate of the National Bar Association
- Life Fellow, Georgia Bar Foundation, Fewer than three percent of Georgia lawyers invited to become members of this elite group, Inducted 2003
- National Urban League 2009 Women of Power Award: National award given for accomplishments and distinguished service.
- National Council of Negro Women, National Community Leader of the Year, 2000
- SCLC 2016 Women of Power Award, 58th National Convention, Atlanta, GA., 2016
- Rainbow Push Coalition, Trombone Award outstanding national business leaders, 10th Annual Creating Opportunity Conference. 2009

SELECTED LECTURES, CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CONFERENCES & MEDIA/ PRESS APPEARANCES

- “10 Keys to Success,” Women’s Entrepreneurial Empowerment Summit, Atlanta, GA., 2019
- “Diversity in Higher Education,” Faculty Development, Nova Southeastern University, 2020
- Keynote Speaker, The Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta, GA. Women in Technology, 2018
- Keynote Speaker, Albany Civil Rights Institute, Albany Georgia, 50th Anniversary of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King Day Celebration, 2018
- Commencement Speaker, Albany State University, Albany Georgia, 2018 Spring Commencement Exercises, 2018; Interdenominational Theological Center, 2019; Ohio Christian University, 2017
- Honored as one of America’s leading intellectuals by CNN and Essence Magazine for the ground-breaking series, *Reclaiming the Dream*, with the Black in America CNN special, 2009
- Speaker, 50th Anniversary March on Washington: S.C.L.C. and Rainbow Push Town Hall Meeting on *Poverty in America*, Washington, D.C. 2013
- Attendee, The White House Meeting for Clergy and Lay Persons in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary March on Washington, 2013
- Keynote Speaker, United Negro College Fund, Anderson County Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, Anderson, South Carolina, 2017
- Keynote Address, 54th Annual Conference of National Association of Student Affairs Professionals, 2012
- “Saving Our Black Boys: What Every Parent Needs to Know,” Panelist, Essence Music Festival, New Orleans, LA, July 2009-2010
- Keynote Address, “How to Encourage and Lead Future Generations,” 14th Biennial Conference, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Atlanta, GA, 2009
- Keynote Speaker, National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division’s 2018 Awards Breakfast, 2018
- Florida Memorial University, Andrew Young Legacy Lecture Series, Miami, Florida, February 2017

BAR ADMISSIONS/ SELECTED MEMBERSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

State Bar of Georgia

Registered Mediator with the Supreme Court of Georgia’s Office of Dispute Resolution

National Bar Association Judicial Council

American Bar Association

Atlanta Bar Association

Gate City Bar Association

DeKalb Lawyers Association
Georgia Association of Women Lawyers
The Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys
Apex Museum, Board of Directors
Silver Life Member, NAACP
S.C.L.C. Women, Board of Directors
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.