



Haiti's Systemic Crisis and Haitian Migrants at the US-Mexico Border

Conference Participant Bios

Roberson Alphonse (Le Nouvelliste)

Roberson Alphonse is a Haitian journalist who writes extensively about social, Economic and political issues. He is a staff writer for Le Nouvelliste, one of Haiti's oldest and most reputable newspapers.

Leonidas Bachas, Ph.D. (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences)

As Dean of the largest academic unit at the University of Miami, he oversees 20 departments and 11 interdisciplinary programs, as well as the Lowe Art Museum. Dean Bachas earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Athens, Greece, his M.S. in Chemistry and Oceanic Sciences, and Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Michigan. He is an active researcher in nanoscience and biological chemistry. Prior to joining the University of Miami, Dr. Bachas was a member of the University of Kentucky faculty where he served as Chair of the Department of Chemistry, Frank J. Derbyshire Professor of Chemistry and Associate Dean for Research and Academic Programs.

Marleine Bastien (Family Action Network Movement - FANM)

Under Bastien's leadership, FANM has provided an array of social services while also organizing around issues such as immigration, housing, health access, education reform, gender equity, gentrification, climate justice and human rights. Bastien is the former Chair of the Florida Immigration Coalition and Vice-Chair of the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition. Over the course of 30 years, Bastien has worked on many important campaigns, including: The Haitian Immigration Refugee Fairness Act of 1998, Temporary Protected Status, The Dream Act, Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Living Wage and Miami-Dade County's Human Rights Ordinance, Education, and the Children's Trust Campaigns.



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Caroline Bettinger-López

Caroline Bettinger-López is a Professor of Law and Director of the [Human Rights Clinic](#) at the University of Miami School of Law. She also serves as an [Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations](#) and is a recipient of a [Roddenberry Fellowship](#) for her [COURAGE in Policing Project](#). She is lead counsel on [Jessica Lenahan \(Gonzales\) v. United States](#), the first international human rights case brought by a domestic violence victim against the U.S. She has [worked extensively with advocates and government officials in Canada](#) on issues of violence against Indigenous women and girls, challenged [Stand Your Ground laws](#), and collaborated with advocates in Miami and Haiti to [stop U.S. deportations to post-earthquake Haiti](#), and [litigated against the Dominican Republic](#) for its mass expulsions of Haitian nationals and Dominicans of Haitian descent.

Toni Cela, Ph.D. (University of Miami and INURED)

Toni Cela is an anthropologist whose research interests include: anthropology of disaster and recovery; disaster health; Haitian youth identity formation; anthropology of education; migration and education; and diaspora and development. As Coordinator of [INURED](#) she has worked on various research projects on violence and human insecurity. In 2016, she and Dr. Louis HERNs Marcelin were awarded a Spencer Foundation grant titled, The Socio-cultural Costs of Pursuing Higher Education for Women in Haiti. In 2017, she co-published, [Haitian Youth in the Americas](#), a multilingual volume focusing on migration, generations and Haitian youth identity formation processes in the Americas.

Jacqueline Charles (Miami Herald)

Recognized as "Haiti's Ambassador to the world," by former U.S. President Bill Clinton, Jacqueline Charles is a Pulitzer Prize finalist and Emmy-Award winning Caribbean correspondent at the Miami Herald with responsibility for Haiti and the English-speaking Caribbean. She has also written extensively throughout her career about U.S. immigration issues and its impact on the Haitian community. Her 2016 project on a dangerous, 7,000-mile trek by Haitians through 11 Latin American countries to reach the U.S. was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists and the French-American Foundation. In 2018, she was awarded the Maria Moors Cabot Prize for coverage of the Americas.

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Onz Chery (Haitian Times)

Onz Chery started his journalism career as a City College of New York student with The Campus. He later wrote for First Touch and Elite Sports NY before joining The Haitian Times in 2019. Onz covers the Haitian-American community in Florida. He is also a Report for America corps member.

Brian Concannon (Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti)

Human rights lawyer Brian Concannon is a Board Member and founder of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH). He lived in Haiti from 1995 to 2004, where he served as a Human Rights Officer with the United Nations and Co-Managing Attorney with the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux*, a public interest law firm. Brian's work addresses the root causes of migration from Haiti by challenging policies by the Haitian government and the international community that undermine democracy, rights and sovereignty in Haiti. He advocates through lawsuits, engaging with political leaders

Marvel Dandin (Radio Kiskeya, Haiti)

Marvel Dandin is the Director General and co-founder of Radio Kiskeya, one of the leading radio stations in Haiti. He began his career in 1978 under the tutelage of Jean Dominique at Radio Inter Haiti, the first independent radio station in Haiti.

Pierre Espérance (Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains)

Pierre Espérance actively promotes and defends human rights and improving the living conditions of the most impoverished. After serving as the coordinator of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, he worked in Manila with Philippino detainees. He began working with the National Human Rights Defense Network from its inception in 1995 in order to promote the rule of law in Haiti and help Haitians assert their rights. He now serves as its Executive Director.



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Leonie Hermantin (Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center)

Ms. Hermantin is the Director of Development for Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center in Miami, Florida. From 1996 until 2008, Leonie worked in Miami, first as a Visiting Professor at FIU's School of Architecture. She subsequently served as Executive Director of the Haitian-American Foundation (HAFI) a community agency, providing services addressing the growing needs of Haitians and Haitian Americans living in Miami-Dade County. She went on to become Director of Research and Strategic Planning at the Haitian Neighborhood Center, Sant La. In 2008, Leonie's sights turned to Haiti's rural communities and from 2018-2011, she served as the Deputy Director of the Lambi Fund of Haiti, a Haitian-led community foundation, focusing on the needs of Haiti's rural population.

Carine Jocelyn (Haitian Women's Collective)

Currently the Chief Executive Officer of Diaspora Community Services in Brooklyn, New York, (formerly known as the Haitian Women's Program), Ms. Jocelyn has over 12 years of experience working in Haiti. In 2007, she established a community health center in Port au Prince which continues to be locally operated. Further in 2014, she was hired as the Executive Director of Profamil, the leading provider of family planning and sexual and reproductive Health in Haiti. In 2017, to continue her commitment to Haiti and to women and girls, she founded The Haitian Women's Collective- building a network of women led organizations throughout Haiti.

Jonathan M. Katz (Freelance journalist)

Jonathan Myerson Katz is a former Associated Press correspondent in Port-au-Prince and the author of *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*. After surviving the 2010 quake, Katz broke the story that United Nations peacekeepers had caused a devastating post-quake cholera epidemic, and helped force the UN to issue an apology six years later. He is a contributor to the New York Times, Foreign Policy, the New Republic and other publications. His next book, *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire*, will be published in January by St. Martin's Press. You can subscribe to his newsletter at katz.substack.com.



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Felicia M. Knaul, Ph.D. (Univ. of Miami Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas)

Felicia Marie Knaul is Director of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas and Hemispheric and Global Affairs and a Professor at the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami. A health and social sector economist, Knaul maintains a strong and synergistic global program of research and advocacy anchored in Mexico, where she is Senior Economist at the Mexican Health Foundation. In 2008, she founded Cáncer de Mama: Tómatelo a Pecho, a Mexican non-profit agency that has promoted research, advocacy, awareness, and early detection of breast cancer since its inception, and has since expanded to promote women's health broadly.

Robert E. Maguire, Ph.D. (George Washington University)

Bob Maguire's first visit to Haiti was in 1974. From 1979 to 1999, he was the Inter-American Foundation's Haiti representative, travelling to and within the country extensively. At George Washington University, from which he retired from the full-time faculty in July 2017, he created the Focus on Haiti Initiative and taught courses on international and post-disaster development. His most recent publications are an edited volume, *Who Owns Haiti? People, Power and Sovereignty* (University Press of Florida, 2017), and an essay, "Haitians Seeking Refuge in the United States: Unwelcomed Huddled Masses," in *The Haitian Crucible* (in press).

Lillian Manzor, Ph.D. (University of Miami)

Lillian Manzor specializes in 20th and 21st century Latin American, Hemispheric Caribbean and Latine Theater and Performance Studies. She is co-editor of the book series *Sualos*, published jointly by Havana's Editorial Alarcos and Miami's CTDA Press. She is the Founding Director of the Cuban Theater Digital Archive, a digital publication that serves as a space for communication between politically divided communities. Her research has been funded by grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Cuban National Council for the Performing Arts.



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Louis HERNs Marcelin, Ph.D. (University of Miami and INURED)

Louis HERNs Marcelin is the Director of the University of Miami's Global Health Studies program. He is an anthropologist and cultural epidemiologist whose research examines questions related to health and human security, and the roles of power, violence, and marginalization in society. In 2007, he founded the Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. INURED is a transnational and transdisciplinary institute with the mission to contribute to the development of high-level research and scientific training in Haiti with the aim of improving the educational, socio-economic, and political condition of that society. INURED has served as a conduit for cross-disciplinary collaboration between University of Miami students and faculty, their peers from other universities, with local community stakeholders through participatory action research.

Jocelyn McCalla (JMC Strategies)

Jocelyn McCalla is the founder of JMC Strategies. He is the former Executive Director of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR). McCalla has long been involved in international human rights and U.S. policy analysis and advocacy, first as Associate Director of the NCHR from 1986-1988, and then from 1988 to March 2002 as its Executive Director. In that capacity, he became the leading advocate of human rights-based U.S. policies toward Haitian refugees, immigrants and their motherland, testifying frequently before the U.S. Congress, and working with a wide range of non-governmental organizations, U.S. Government, UN, and OAS officials to promote human rights in Haiti.

Jhonson Napoleon (Azure College)

Jhonson Napoleon is a father of three, entrepreneur, investor, builder, and public speaker. In 2008, he became the president of Azure College and is the founder and CEO of Azure Media.



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Marie Guerda Nicolas, Ph.D. (University of Miami)

As a multicultural (Haitian American) and multilingual psychologist (Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole), her research is reflective of her background and interests. Her current research projects focus on developing culturally effective mental health intervention for people of color, with a specific focus on immigrant children, adolescents, and families. In addition, she conducts research on social support networks of Caribbean population with a specific focus on Haitians; spirituality and adolescents; and social support and mental health of Blacks. She has published books, many articles, and book chapters and delivered numerous invited presentations at national and international conferences in the areas of women issues, depression and cultural interventions, social support networks of ethnic minorities, and spirituality. Most recently, she co-edited the book *Contemporary Parenting: A Global Perspective*.

Kate Ramsey, Ph.D. (University of Miami)

Kate Ramsey works on Caribbean history and culture. Her research and teaching interests include the politics of religion, law, and performance in the Caribbean; histories of medicine and healing in the Atlantic world; and Caribbean intellectual history, artistic production, and social movements. Her first book, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (Chicago, 2011), centers on the history and legacies of penal and ecclesiastical laws against the Vodou religion in Haiti. It won the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians First Book Prize, the Elsa Goveia Book Prize from the Association of Caribbean Historians, the Haitian Studies Association Haiti Illumination Project Book Prize, and a Médaille Jean Price-Mars from the Faculté d'Ethnologie, Université d'État d'Haïti. She is co-editor and co-curator of the exhibition, with Louis HERNs Marcelin, of *Transformative Visions: Works by Haitian Artists from the Permanent Collection* (Lowe Art Museum, 2015),

Pedro Ríos (American Friends Service Committee – AFSC)

Pedro Rios is director of the American Friends Service Committee's U.S./Mexico Border Program. He oversees a program that documents abuses by law enforcement agencies, collaborates with community groups, advocates for policy change, and works with migrant communities to build collective leadership locally and throughout the border region.





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Carolyn Rose-Avila (Zoom to the Border Coalition)

Trained as an Anthropologist from the University of Colorado. As an activist committed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, have held various management positions in child protection with international non-profits, including FAVACA, Save the Children, INURED and World Vision International. Actively engaged with Haiti since 1984, having resided in-country following the 2010 EQ to lead a Child Rights team in child protection reuniting children separated from their families. Worked in the DR to advocate for Haitian families from *bateyes* seeking the right to birth certificates for their children born in the DR. Since 2018 have worked with asylum seekers on the Tijuana/US border and recently active as a member of Zooming to the Border, a coalition of activists working to shine light on the continuing abuse of the rights of those seeking asylum.

Jean Saint-Vil (Solidarité Québec Haïti)

Jean Saint-Vil is Special Advisor to the Vice Principal of Research and Innovation at McGill University in Canada. Prior to that he spent almost three decades in various leadership capacities including Associate Vice-President in charge of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Secretariat in Ottawa at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). He is the co-founder of Jaku Konbit and AKASAN, two organizations established according to the principles of self-determination and solidarity advocated by Marcus Garvey. He hosts several radio programs including: Bouyon-Rasin on the University of Ottawa station (CHUO 89.1 FM) and Rendez-vous Haïtien on the Carleton University station (CKCU 93.1 FM).



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Honorable Claudette Werleigh (former Prime Minister of Haiti)

Honorable Claudette Werleigh was Haiti's first female Prime Minister serving from 1995- 1996. In 1999 Werleigh became Director at the [Life & Peace Institute](#) in [Uppsala](#), Sweden, and promoted to Secretary General in 2007. In 2010 she served as the Peace Envoy of the Catholic peace organization [Pax Christi International](#) in Brussels, Belgium. Werleigh has engaged in social and educational work in a number of non-governmental organizations in the fields of adult literacy and humanitarian relief. She helped found the League for women's empowerment ("Lig Pouvwa Fanm"), an organization of women seeking political and economic equality and promoting women's participation in politics.

Amy Wilentz (University of California, Irvine)

Amy Wilentz is the author of *Farewell Fred Voodoo: A Letter From Haiti* (2013) and *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier* (1990). She is the winner of the Whiting Writers Award, the PEN Martha Albrand Non-Fiction Award, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rosenthal Award. She won the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award for memoir for *Farewell, Fred Voodoo*, and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in general nonfiction in 2020. Wilentz is MacDowell fellow, the former Jerusalem correspondent for *The New Yorker* and a long-time contributing editor at *The Nation*. She has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Politico*, *The London Review of Books*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and many other publications. She teaches in the Literary Journalism program at the University of California at Irvine, and lives in Los Angeles.

Rep. Marie Paule Woodson (Florida House of Representatives, 101st District)

Ms. Marie Paule Woodson has served in the Florida House of Representatives since November 2020. Born in Port-de-Paix, Haiti, she moved to Florida in 1981. She holds a Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University and a Masters degree in Public Administration and Management from St. Thomas University. She serves on the State Affairs committee and several subcommittees including: Children, Families and Seniors; Health Care Appropriations; Secondary Education and Career Development, among others.



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