



Jonathan Rapping Bio

Jonathan Rapping is a nationally renowned criminal justice innovator who is the Founder and President of Gideon's Promise, a nonprofit, public defender organization whose mission is to transform the criminal justice system by building a movement of public defenders who provide equal justice for marginalized communities.

Since its inception in 2007, Gideon's Promise has grown from a single training program for sixteen attorneys in two public defender offices in Georgia and Louisiana to a national enterprise with over 1,000 participants in 40 offices across 27 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization's initial three-year program for new public defenders has expanded into the only comprehensive program model that supports public defenders at all levels of their career. The organization now has programming for new lawyers, supervisors, chief defenders, trainers, law students considering a career in public defense, and the clinical instructors who teach them.

In addition to Rapping's leadership of Gideon's Promise, he is Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal Justice Certificate Program at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School and Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard University Law School. He is a frequent contributor to national conversations on criminal justice reform and has been featured by numerous media outlets that include *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, *Huffpost Live*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Mother Jones*, *Essence* and NPR stations across the country. Rapping has been a speaker at TEDx Atlanta, a frequent presenter to public defender and criminal defense organizations nationally, and routinely lectures at law schools across the country. Notably, Rapping and his work with public defenders was the inspiration for the award-winning HBO documentary "Gideon's Army."

He has also written extensively on issues related to criminal justice reform and has been published in numerous scholarly and professional journals. His contributions have been published by the *National Association of Public Defense*, *Talk Poverty*, *The Nation*, *The Champion*, *Justice Watch*, *The Advocate*, and *Congressional Quarterly Research* to name a few. Additionally, Rapping maintains a blog called *Fulfilling the Promise: Insights to Forging a Path to Meaningful Justice Reform*.

Rapping is the recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant, the American College of Trial Lawyers Emil Gumpert Award, Harvard Law School Wasserstein Public Interest Fellowship, Cardozo Law School Inspire Award, and the George Soros Open Society Fellowship along with many other honors and recognitions. Rapping and Gideon's Promise have received the National Alliance of Sentencing Advocates and Mitigation



Strengthening Public Defenders. Transforming Public Defense.

Specialists Sentencing Project Award, Southern Center for Human Rights Gideon's Promise Award, and Emory University MLK Jr. Community Service Award.

He received a J.D. from George Washington University School of Law; a M.P.A from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University; and a B.A. from University of Chicago. He is the author of *Gideon's Promise: A Public Defender Movement to Transform Criminal Justice*, a book that explores a cutting-edge vision for public defenders in the effort to transform the criminal justice system. The book was released in 2020 by Beacon Press.

Rapping resides in Atlanta, Georgia with wife Ilham and children Aaliyah and Lucas.