There were no lawyers in my family. We had never sued or been sued. I barely knew any lawyers’ names. I enrolled at Columbia Law School sight unseen. When I entered in 1975, though, the name I heard fast and often was Lynn Walker, Class of 1970. She was the first black woman ever on the Columbia Law Review. Could any of us rise to that gold standard? It was energizing to strive to her standards of excellence. But she was still then the stuff of somewhat mythical legend.

I started my very first job after law school in the Honors Program at the Justice Department. *When, what to my wandering eyes should appear, right down the hall in an office so near, the first black woman to be Section Chief, in the Civil Rights Division we held so dear.*

Lynn Walker, in the flesh, in person, in real life, in three dimensions. It was then that I knew awe. A razor sharp mind, prolific writer, legal strategist extraordinaire, whiz of an administrator. But I kid you not: Lynn could get joyous and belt out the lyrics from the latest releases from Marvin Gaye or Earth, Wind & Fire, swooning with the best of us. She could also get pensive and recite from memory the classical poetry of the Harlem Renaissance, like:

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

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** Professor of Law, Associate Dean for Experiential Education, and Director of the Disability Rights Law Clinic, American University Washington College of Law.
It was captivating. She transported the listener to distant thoughts. It was not until we parted cities that I realized she was quoting from the famed writer and poet Countee Cullen. What an embarrassment to me since it was my own father who was recruited from his post as an English professor at North Carolina A&T to take over Cullen’s poetry classes at Frederick Douglass Junior High School 139 in Harlem after Cullen’s early death. I cannot recall for sure, but I hope I drew that connection for her at some point later when I got the nerve to overcome my own shame.

There was no Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA)\(^2\) when I joined Justice. The negotiations over getting one and what it should cover were intense. The resistance on the Hill to yet more federal government overreach reminded one of lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification. But those, breathing the firebrand urgency of now, brooked no acceptance of anything short of the absolute. She showed effective leadership. She knew how to deploy arguments when squeezed between civil rights absolutists and civil rights opponents. She knew how to get results. But you met with Lynn and you had better be prepared, not purely doctrinaire. I can imagine her saying to the opponents, “Do you want to negotiate with Stokely and Bobby Seale, or do you want to negotiate with me?” To the hard core, I’d guess it would come out, “Do you want a bill or do you want nothing? Would you rather have us step forward or keep our broken feet locked in cement?” But there was no question about where her heart was. She wanted as much as we could get. CRIPA became law in 1980 and bears Lynn’s pen strokes and persuasion all over it.

I’m not the only witness to the force of her intellect, personality, and good judgment. Bob Dinerstein arrived the year before I did. He saw Lynn, new to the Department, integrate with grace and aplomb the different cultures and approaches of two offices newly merged into one section, but she could certainly be tough and demanding when that was called for. He enjoyed how supportive she was of the line attorneys and how she gave them room to operate while providing guidance (or correction) when needed. Bob recalls her supervising the team that litigated the massive prison case of *Ruiz v. Estelle*\(^3\) that threatened to swallow the whole section. He walked into Lynn’s office many times to talk about something only to have the conversation turn quickly to some issue in *Ruiz* that she had to resolve. Resolve it she did, with a steady hand still gripping the rudder.

Lynn was a great one for inserting a personal touch into the office atmosphere. Bob spent much of his time in 1979 in Alabama conducting discovery in the landmark right-to-treatment and right-to-habilitation


\[^3\] 688 F.2d 266 (5th Cir. 1982).
case of *Wyatt v. Ireland*. A very powerful hurricane hit Mobile, named “Hurricane Bob.” Lynn got a newspaper clipping about how “Hurricane Bob” was ravaging Alabama, and gave it to him with her note attached proclaiming that the true hurricane was his presence in the state for the U.S. Department of Justice. He treasures a “To whom it may concern” letter of recommendation she volunteered to write for him to make it easier to have references for his future efforts.

Lynn’s professionalism was apparent in all she did, perhaps never more so than after her promotion to deputy assistant attorney general before she had to work under a new administration that did not share the agenda to which she had dedicated herself for advancing civil rights enforcement. Yet she kept many of her complaints to herself, worked internally to salvage what she could, and eventually, of course, went on to do great things at the Ford Foundation and elsewhere. She provided a model for how to manage a painful professional transition in a way that preserves one’s dignity and core beliefs while continuing to perform one’s job.

We lost her far too soon, but her accomplishments will outlive us all.

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A TRIBUTE TO LYNN WALKER HUNTLEY

Anthony D. Romero*

Lynn Walker Huntley was one of America’s great champions of civil rights. Her accomplishments will continue to make ours a better world for decades—assuredly outliving her short life, which ended on August 30, 2015.

Her paper credentials must not be glossed over, even though Lynn was much more than the summation of her curriculum vitae.

Lynn entered college at Fisk University and later earned her A.B. degree in sociology with honors from Barnard College. She was the first African American woman editor of the Columbia Law Review, and she graduated cum laude from Columbia Law School in 1970. After law school, she would clerk for Judge Constance Baker Motley in the Southern District of New York, also a leading figure in the civil rights movement. As a young lawyer at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF), she represented prisoners in the Attica uprising and helped pen the winning Supreme Court brief that declared the death penalty to be cruel and unusual punishment. After the LDF, she was tapped to be the first African American woman section chief at the U.S. Department of Justice and was subsequently promoted to serve as deputy assistant attorney general.

Lynn’s work reflected her ideals about equality and fairness. Central themes throughout her career were civil rights, racial justice, employment discrimination, and criminal-justice reform. She championed prisoners’ rights, successfully litigating cases to require proper medical and psychiatric care for inmates, end segregated living and dining facilities, and protect prisoners’ constitutional rights.

Lynn joined the Ford Foundation in 1982 to serve as program officer for civil rights under the leadership of Franklin A. Thomas. She would come to Ford with decades of experience working on civil rights and social justice at a critical juncture in the history of civil rights—when the “Reagan revolution” was threatening to unravel years of progress toward racial justice and equality. Following several promotions, she would ultimately serve as the Foundation’s director of the Rights and Social Justice Program. After leaving Ford, she joined the Southern Education Foundation to direct the Comparative Human Relations Initiative, a study of race, poverty, and inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. She would subsequently serve as the president of the Southern Education Foundation from 2002 to 2010, the South’s only African American-directed public charity, which focused on improving education for low income students.

* Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union.
Lynn’s legacy, however, is much greater than the chronicling of her many accomplishments and accolades. Lynn was a woman with a towering intellect, which she assiduously deployed to make the world a better place. She started groundbreaking programs that continue to make a difference in civil and human rights to this day.

At the Ford Foundation, Lynn created the African American Church Initiative, realizing from the career of her beloved father, Reverend Laurence Neal Jones, that the African American church was a bulwark of strength and resilience within the African American community worthy of private philanthropic support. She launched an initiative on minorities and the media, which would endeavor to address distorted views of how racial and ethnic minorities were portrayed by the media and their underrepresentation in media professions. Lynn would provide vital support to minority elected and appointed officials, so that they could better discharge their duties vis-à-vis their constituents. She would create a Hispanic leadership program at Ford and deepen the Foundation’s engagement on immigrants’ rights at a moment of severe xenophobic backlash against immigrants. She helped launch “Eyes on the Prize,” the seminal documentary on the U.S. civil rights movement.

To help her with these initiatives, Lynn recruited an army of some of the most talented professionals to grace Ford’s halls. With a keen ability to discern talent among yet-untested professionals, she brought to Ford a cohort of professionals who would amplify her vision and give it greater impact. She hired a young Emmett Carson, who subsequently would go on to head the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation. She tapped Mary McClymont, who now heads the Public Welfare Foundation, to scale up the Foundation’s work on immigrants’ rights. She found an emerging leader in Mora McLean, who would subsequently head up the Africa-American Institute working on U.S.–Africa relations. She hired Marcia Smith, who would later serve as vice president of Atlantic Philanthropies and help produce award-winning documentaries. Reverend Robert Franklin accepted the call to work for Lynn, long before he would be tapped to head Morehouse College. She hired me two years out of law school to serve as program officer for civil rights.

Those of us who answered the call to work for Lynn knew the standards would be high and the expectations great. We were hired by her to serve a cause, to make a difference, to throw open the doors of opportunity to the “least among us.” She would lead us with clarity, resilience, doggedness, intelligence, and elegance. She would irrigate and fertilize our souls and spirits with unflinching support, love, and the best of humor. We would learn to laugh at ourselves and learn from our failings. We would revel in her always-ready jokes. Following the belly laughter, we would once again put our shoulders against the boulders of injustice that stood in the way of those who demanded our help.
Lynn Walker Huntley took the words “and justice for all” to heart. Her life was distinguished by creativity, vision, idealism, and good humor—all in the pursuit of justice.
LYNN WALKER HUNTLEY: COLUMBIA LAW REVIEW ALUMNA AND CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATE

On Behalf of the Columbia Law Review

What a time it must have been to be alive in 1968. The United States was deep in the throes of the Vietnam War, with public support drastically waning after the Tet Offensive and the My Lai Massacre. One of the modern era’s founding fathers, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, and cities were ablaze as riots ensued across the country. Then-presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated just two months later, further deepening the national air of tragedy. In many respects, it was a year of tragedy.

But there was also triumph. That year, two African American men—Tommie Smith and Jon Carlos—won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the Olympics in Mexico City for the 200-meter dash. They raised their fists as a symbol of resistance against racial discrimination and pride in their blackness while the national anthem blared. The Fair Housing Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, prohibiting race-based discrimination in the sale, rental, and transfer of property, and opening the gates for African Americans to begin to enter into the middle class. And Lynn Walker Huntley had the strength and courage to accept a position on the Columbia Law Review, making her the first African American woman to do so.

It might be tempting to understate the courage and fortitude this required, but it was certainly no small feat. Out of a staff of sixty-two editors, Ms. Huntley was one of only five women on the Review. The fear that she might submit a below-average assignment, which could reflect poorly on both women and minorities; the subtle and sometimes unintentional assault on her personhood by well-meaning peers; and the recognition that to some, her very presence on the Review was a per se reduction in the standards and integrity of the journal and would

undermine its prestige—it was 1968 after all—were part of her everyday life. As the first African American woman on the Review, Ms. Huntley had support from the communities and identities she embodied, but integrating that hallowed space meant the burdens rested on her shoulders alone.

Ms. Huntley had a penchant for tackling these burdens, and she made a career of representing some of the most burdened among us. As an attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, she worked on behalf of people convicted of capital crimes, successfully litigating *Furman v. Georgia*, a case in which the Supreme Court ruled the State of Georgia had unconstitutionally imposed the death penalty in several cases.\(^6\) She went on to work in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, where she became the first African American woman to lead the Special Litigation Section and ultimately went on to become the deputy assistant attorney general.

“We must continue to struggle against racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression . . . . We must continue to struggle because to give in and give up is to . . . betray what we stand for. We struggle ultimately in order to affirm our values and who we are,” she said.\(^7\) Ms. Huntley participated in this struggle not only in courtrooms and as a legal advocate, but in as many arenas as she possibly could, confronting structural racism and crashing through its gates at every opportunity. She became the first female president of the Southern Education Fund and worked to provide equal opportunities to students of color as well as low-income students in the South through a range of advocacy efforts and pipeline programs, ultimately raising $44 million during her tenure and doubling the Fund’s endowment for its programmatic efforts.\(^8\) Furthermore, as she toiled to break down barriers to opportunity, she worked to ensure that the stories of how those obstacles had been torn down for her were not forgotten. She helped launch the creation of the *Eyes on the Prize* television series,\(^9\) the preeminent television account of the Civil Rights Movement.

During the 2015 to 2016 year, some of the values Ms. Huntley held dear guided us as we chose a new class of editors: The many tributes written about Ms. Huntley tell the story of a person who was ebullient, but demanding of excellence; intelligent, yet humble; full of humor, yet

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6. 408 U.S. 238, 239 (1972) (per curiam).
9. Id.
serious about her vision and goals. She was also an invested mentor willing to elevate the untested to higher positions, trusting them to rise to the occasion. These are the very characteristics we seek in the Review’s editors. Beyond that, Ms. Huntley was fiercely committed to the ethos of duty and service to others. Today, law reviews across the country—including our own—are assessing what diversity and inclusion mean and how to promote it. In doing so, we ask ourselves a question Ms. Huntley posed to a group of community philanthropists: “What will our message and narrative be about who we are as a [Review]?”10 With every incoming class of editors, we strive to ensure that our narrative reflects our efforts to be more inclusive, representative, and attuned to matters of racial justice than the year before. Ms. Huntley’s recognition that the fight for inclusion is ongoing and takes place on many fronts, not just in courtrooms, guides this mission.

A story recounted by Barbara R. Arnwine, former executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, captures Ms. Huntley’s tireless efforts to create inclusivity and racial justice no matter where she was. Ms. Huntley was part of a team that conducted a comparative study of race and inequality in the United States, Brazil, and South Africa. Due to Ms. Huntley’s fairer complexion, she often was not considered “black enough” in Brazil, meaning Arnwine had to take the lead in discussions about racial dynamics like the “one drop” rule. That did not prevent Ms. Huntley from creating spaces and bringing people together to discuss race-based discrimination: She arranged visits with all of the major Afro Brazilian lawyers, scholars, and advocacy groups in Bahia, Brasilia, Sao Paolo, and Rio de Janeiro. And in typical fashion, her humor provided the necessary levity to keep them “from crying or burning up in outrage at the racist treatment of Afro Brazilians by the government and society.”11 Ms. Huntley’s organizational efforts culminated in a meeting with Nelson Mandela, where all of the study’s participants presented their findings about the subjugation of African peoples. That was Ms. Huntley’s style. She was never fatigued by roadblocks, and no obstacle could rid her of her humor. No matter the odds, when she had a goal, it was difficult to prevent her from reaching it.

Dr. Emmett Carson, who worked under Ms. Huntley at the Ford Foundation, recalled her love of poetry and that one of her favorite poems to recount to him was “In Flanders Fields,” by John McCrae.12 One stanza reads:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you, from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.\textsuperscript{13}

Yes, 1968 was truly triumphant for the \textit{Review}. It was the year we took up our quarrel with the foe. And in return for our victory, we were honored with Lynn Walker Huntley. May we remember that these battles must be continuously fought, and may the rewards always be as bountiful as the life and legacy of Lynn Walker Huntley.