

For Immediate Release  
December 5, 2024

**The Race and Private Law Section of the  
American Association of Law Schools  
Announces Professor Mehrsa Baradaran as the  
Inaugural Recipient of the Patricia J.  
Williams Award**

*The Award Recognizes a Legal Scholar who has Made Outstanding Contributions to the field of  
Race and Private Law*

*San Francisco, CA— December 5, 2024* — The Race and Private Law Section of the American Association of Law Schools (“AALS”) is delighted to announce that it will recognize Professor **Mehrsa Baradaran** with the Section’s inaugural **Patricia J. Williams Award** in January 2025. The Award, named in honor of critical race theorist, feminist legal theorist, and private law trailblazer Patricia J. Williams, honors a legal scholar who, like Professor Williams, has made outstanding scholarly contributions to the study of race and private law.

The Race and Private Law Section of AALS, founded in 2024, has received overwhelming support, and stands at well over 100 members strong. It seeks to promote the communication of ideas, interests, and activities among members and to make recommendations on matters of interest in the teaching and improvement of private law relating to race, ethnicity, and national origin. Says

**Carliss Chatman, Section Chair**, “With a focus on contracting and private ordering, the Race and Private Law Section focuses on the essential nature of private law in shaping other legal doctrines, alongside its pivotal role in the distribution of social and material advantages that often determine racial and economic disparities. Because of its focus, the Section’s founding members unanimously agreed that our Section Award must bear Professor Williams’ name as a tribute to her groundbreaking legacy as a scholar of race and contract, and that there would be no better inaugural awardee than Professor Baradaran.”

### **2025 Patricia J. Williams Award Ceremony**

Due to ongoing labor negotiations between Unite Here—an organization representing Hilton San Francisco Union Square hotel workers—and Hilton, the Race and Private Law Section has decided to host its award ceremony virtually as an act of solidarity with the workers. The Section will provide information about the dates and time of the ceremony in the coming weeks.

### **About the Honorees**

**Patricia J. Williams** is the University Distinguished Professor of Law and Humanities at the Northeastern University Law School. Professor Williams holds a joint appointment between the School of Law and the Department of Philosophy and Religion in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. She is also director of Law, Technology and Ethics Initiatives in the School of Law and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. She is also the James L. Dohr Professor of Law Emerita at Columbia Law School. Formerly a deputy attorney for the Office of Los Angeles City Attorney, staff lawyer for the Western Center on Law and Poverty, and a MacArthur fellow, Professor Williams has earned renown as a pioneer in the fields of critical race theory, law and

literature, and feminist legal thought. Professor Williams is the author of many books, including the contemporary legal classic *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, and most recently, *The Miracle of the Black Leg: Notes on Race, Human Bodies, and the Spirit of the Law*.

**Mehrsa Baradaran** is Professor of Law at University of California, Irvine School of Law. She previously served as the Robert Cotten Alston Chair in Corporate Law at the University of Georgia School of Law and the Robert Braucher Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard School of Law.

Professor Baradaran's scholarship is widely published in top law reviews, including the Harvard Law Review Forum, and the Vanderbilt Law Review, but she has also earned acclaim as the author of *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*, *How the Other Half Banks: Exclusion, Exploitation, and the Threat to Democracy*, and most recently, *The Quiet Coup: Neoliberalism and the Looting of America*. Professor Baradaran's writing has attracted national and international attention and respect, and she is the recipient of numerous awards for her writing on banking and the racial wealth gap.

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