

Donna Coker

Donna Coker's scholarship focuses on criminal law, gender and race inequality. She is a nationally recognized expert in intimate partner violence (IPV) law and policy. Her research concerns the connection between economic vulnerability and IPV; restorative justice responses to IPV and sexual harm; and the intersections of gender and race subordination in criminal law doctrine, policy, and application. Her research is interdisciplinary and influenced by scholarship in critical race feminism, restorative justice, public health, and criminology.

Professor Coker is a leading critic of the disproportionate focus on criminal justice responses that characterizes U.S. IPV policy. Her widely cited research illustrates the negative impact of this focus on women marginalized as a function of poverty, race, and immigration status. In 2014, she co-organized a national conference of more than 200 academics across disciplines, service providers, attorneys, activists, and students. The conference, *Converge! Reimagining the Movement to End Gender Violence*, furthered gender violence activism and policy that is anti-racist, supports alternatives to crime-centered approaches, and addresses structural inequality. In 2015, she was the co-investigator for a national survey of service providers regarding police response to domestic violence and sexual assault. With more than 900 respondents, the survey uncovered significant police bias on the basis of gender, race, class, immigration status, and LGBTQ identity.

Professor Coker's research regarding the use of restorative approaches to IPV and sexual harm has influenced work in the interdisciplinary fields of restorative justice and domestic violence in the United States and abroad. Her empirical study of Navajo Peacemaking use in domestic violence cases was one of the first empirical studies of Peacemaking and the first to focus on domestic violence cases. Her recent work examines the use of restorative justice responses to campus sexual assault.

Her work on the nature of "heat of passion" doctrine uncovered gender related assumptions imbedded in criminal law doctrine. She continued to explore gender and racial bias in her *Criminal Law Stories* chapter on *Wanrow*, a self-defense case frequently cited as the first "women's self-defense" case. She co-edited *Criminal Law Stories* (2013) with Professor Robert Weisberg (Stanford Law).

Before attending law school, Professor Coker worked in the domestic violence field for 10 years. This work began in 1978 when she became the sole staff person for a newly opened battered women's shelter in Little Rock, Arkansas. In subsequent years she was the Coordinator of a community based battered women's project in Honolulu, Hawaii, overseeing advocacy and support for more than 100 women a year.