



2026 Deep South Capital Defense Conference  
Hollywood Casino – Gulf Coast  
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi  
March 4-6, 2026



## Agenda

### Wednesday, March 4, 2026

8:00 am – 9:45 am  
Pre-Conference Area

#### Registration

8:00 am – 9:45 am  
Cypress A

#### Breakfast

9:45 am - 10:00 am  
Cypress B

#### Welcome

*Andre' de Gruy, State Public Defender*  
*Kelsey Rushing, Capital Defender*  
*Erin Briggs, Training Director*

10:00 am – 11:00 am (1hr)

#### Building Expert Teams

*Claudia Van Wyk, Senior Staff Attorney*  
*ACLU Capital Punishment Project*

11:00 am – 11:05 am

#### Evaluations

11:05 am - 12:05 pm (1hr)

#### Mitigation Reports: Legal and Ethical Issues (ETHICS)

*Russ Stetler, Retired National Mitigation Coordinator*  
*Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel*

12:05 pm – 1:15 pm  
Cypress A

#### Evaluations & Lunch

1:15 pm – 2:20 pm (1hr)  
Cypress B

#### McCoy v LA - Working with Clients with Significant Mental Illness

*Richard Bourke, Director*  
*Louisiana Capital Assistance Center*

2:20 pm – 2:25 pm

#### Evaluations

2:25 pm – 3:25 pm (1hr)  
Cypress B

#### Empirical Evidence that Mitigation Works

*Russ Stetler, Retired National Mitigation Coordinator*  
*Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel*



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## Wednesday, March 4, 2026

3:25 pm – 3:40 pm

**Evaluations & Break**

3:40 pm – 4:40 pm (1 hr)

**Jury Selection: Life and Death Qualification Overview**

*Boyd Young, Chief Attorney*

*South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense*

4:40 pm – 4:45 pm

**Evaluations & Announcements**

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

**Welcome Reception**

**Bridges Private Room**



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## Thursday, March 5, 2026

7:30 am – 9:00 am  
**Cypress A**

### **Breakfast**

9:00 am - 10:30 am (1.5hr)  
**Cypress B**

### **Preserving Error Panel Discussion**

*Greg Spore, Asst. Capital Defender*  
*Kelsey Rushing, Capital Defender*  
*Krissy C. Noble, Capital Post-Conviction Counsel*  
*David Voisin, Capital Habeas Resource Counsel*

10:30 am – 10:35 am

### **Evaluations**

10:35 am – 11:35 am (1hr)

### **Defending Shaken Baby Syndrome/ Abusive Head Trauma Cases**

*Katherine H. Judson, Executive Director*  
*Center for Integrity in Forensic Sciences*

11:35 am – 11:40 am

### **Evaluations**

11:40 am – 12:40 pm (1hr)

### **Developing Theme and Theory of the Case**

*Boyd Young, Chief Attorney*  
*South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense*

12:40 pm – 1:45 pm  
**Cypress A**

### **Evaluation & Lunch**

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm (1hr)  
**Cypress B**

### **Strategic Motion Practice**

*Danalynn Recer, Co-Founder*  
*GRACE - Gulf Region Advocacy Center*

2:45 pm – 2:50 pm

### **Evaluations**

2:50 pm – 3:50 pm (1hr)

### **Settling the Case: Lessons Learned from the Callihan Case**

*Kerry Cuccia, Director*  
*Michael A. Fiser, Trial Counsel*  
*Katie Carter, Fact Investigator and Mitigation Specialist*  
*Capital Defense Project of Southeast Louisiana*

3:50 pm

### **Evaluations & Announcements**



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## Friday, March 6, 2026

7:00 am – 8:30 am  
Cypress A

### **Breakfast**

8:30 am – 10:00 am (1.5hr)  
Cypress B

### **Working Cohesively as a Team with Our Clients and Experts from a Developmental Trauma Lens**

*Kelsey M. Harrington, Owner  
KHarr Investigations, LLC*

10:00 am - 10:05 am

### **Evaluations**

10:05 am – 11:05 am (1hr)

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder and Why it Matters**

*Doug Passon, President and Creative Director  
Doug Passon Law &  
Laurie Sperry, Ph.D., Founder  
Autism Services and Programs*

11:05 am – 11:20 am

Evaluations and Break

11:20 am – 12:20 pm (1hr)  
Cypress B

### **Jury Selection – Race and the Death Penalty**

*Tucker Carrington, Director  
Innocence Project and Professor of Law  
University of Mississippi School of Law*

12:20 pm

### **Closing Announcements & Conference Check-Out**