
Kenneth Lawson

- *Interim Co-Director, Hawai'i Innocence Project*
- *Associate Faculty Specialist*

Degrees

- *BA, Wittenberg College, 1986*
- *JD, University of Cincinnati College of Law, 1989*

Ken Lawson is the interim Co-Director of the Hawai'i Innocence Project and an Associate Faculty Specialist at the William S. Richardson Law School where he teaches Criminal Procedure; Criminal Law; Professional Responsibility; Evidence; and, the Hawai'i Innocence Project, a teaching legal clinic. He had a successful law practice in Cincinnati, Ohio, until his license to practice law was revoked because of misconduct while addicted to prescription painkillers. He pled guilty to the felony of obtaining controlled substances by fraudulent means and was sentenced to 24 months in prison followed by a year of supervised release.

Ken started his legal career as an associate in one of Ohio's oldest and largest law firms. He eventually started his own firm, which grew to 12 lawyers. Over that 18 year period, he was lead counsel in more than a hundred criminal trials, including many murder and capital cases. He also litigated numerous civil rights and police misconduct cases in both federal and state courts and had an active appellate practice. Ken won numerous cases that were considered by many to be "unwinnable." These and many of Ken's other cases were followed closely by the media, and he made numerous appearances on CBS, ABC, CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, Court TV, and numerous radio shows. Some of the

appearances related to his cases but he also was frequently asked by reporters to comment on and explain to lay audiences the legal issues in other newsworthy cases. Ken was selected as one of the top 100 black lawyers by *Black Enterprise* magazine and was selected as one of the top 50 best lawyers by *Cincinnati Magazine*.

Ken's high-profile clientele included NFL star Elbert "Ickey" Woods, NFL star and professional baseball player Deion Sanders, and entertainer Peter Frampton. More important to Ken, he represented many "everyday" people, including a single mother whose 16 year old juvenile son, incarcerated in an Ohio prison for adults, had died after being stabbed 16 times by the leader of a racist hate group, the Aryan Nation. Approximately one-fourth of Ken's cases were done *pro bono*.

Since moving to Hawai'i, Ken has made presentations in the judiciary's juvenile drug court program, a statewide gathering of county prosecutors, annual meeting of the government lawyers section of the bar, state supreme court's mandatory professionalism program, state bar association annual convention, disciplinary board of the state supreme court, several local law firms, and numerous others groups of lawyers. Ken was selected by the Class of 2014 to deliver the graduation address.

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