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PERSPECTIVE

# Police misconduct is focus of Hueston funded foundation

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**P**olice misconduct is the focus of the Social Justice Legal Foundation's inaugural project.

The foundation, founded in January by Hueston Hennigan LLP, has taken on five complaints of police misconduct that it will investigate for possible civil actions as a part of the ACLU of Louisiana's initiative "Justice Lab: Putting Racist Policing on Trial."

"From our perspective, we wanted to partner with an organization that had an established vision," foundation Executive Director Shubhra Shivpuri said in an interview Wednesday. The initiative not only aligned with the foundation's mission, but provided an opportunity for the foundation's fellows to learn hands on how to conduct an investigation and work with clients.

The foundation launched with a \$10 million pledge by Hueston Hennigan and is a national collaboration between Columbia Law School, North-

western University Pritzker School of Law, Stanford Law School, UCLA School of Law and Yale Law School, along with a group of trial lawyers, judges, activists and scholars.

Members of the foundation's board of advisers include former California Supreme Court Justice Carlos R. Moreno and Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Alexander C. D. Giza. Board directors include president John C. Hueston and partners Brian J. Hennigan, Moez M. Kaba, Vicki Chou and Marshall A. Camp of Hueston Hennigan.

Created in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, the foundation focuses on advancing social justice through litigation and training the next generation of lawyers with a commitment to civil rights with a focus on criminal justice, housing and homeless discrimination, LGBTQ+ rights and voting rights, among others.

As a part of the Justice Lab, the foundation will be looking into police misconduct claims involving constitutional violations such as excessive force, false arrests and unlawful stops, searches and seizures.

"We are trying to fill a gap for folks who have a lack of representation," Nora Ahmed, ACLU of Louisiana's legal director, said in an interview. "We definitely have civil rights attorneys on the ground everywhere that focus on the death cases and the maiming cases, but we do not have civil rights lawyers on the ground that focus on the daily indignities that Black and brown people face just by virtue of their existence."

The initiative looks to not only provide representation, but also to study the impact litigation has on police misconduct with the hopes of replicating the same initiative in other states, Ahmed added.

"These cases are very difficult and it's not getting easier. But, we can't give up," Shivpuri said, calling the partnership an invaluable experience for the foundation.

"This is a great training opportunity for the fellows. And for us as a foundation to get our feet wet and hit the ground running, but there are more things to come," Shivpuri said. ■

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