

# Book Talk:

## Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama

Wednesday, March. 4  
4.15pm to 5:30pm  
9th Floor Conference Room, 9.64, New Building

As an advocate for poor women and children, Professor Gail Garfield has been active in efforts to reshape social policies and practices in the areas of child welfare, public housing, foster care, drug treatment for women, and violence against women. Professor Garfield holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master Degree in Sociology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, a Master of Arts Degree from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Child Psychology from the Institute of Child Development, both from the University of Minnesota. Her current book is titled, *Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama*.

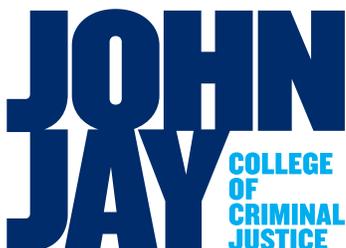
For ten-years she was the executive director of the Institute on Violence, Inc. The focus of the Institute's activities was on African American women's experiences of violence, and the program areas included: research, policy advocacy, technical support, and outreach and education. Prior to this position, she was the senior policy analyst for human services with the Manhattan Borough President's Office. She also directed the Public Policy Program at St. Peters College in Jersey City, New Jersey and worked as a senior research analyst with the Community Services Society.



John Jay Associate Professor  
Gail Garfield

**Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama** explores race and politics in the United States, addressing racial inequalities and injustices that have led to a point in history where, seemingly improbably, Americans have elected (and re-elected) a black man as president. We, as a nation, have taken precarious steps to arrive at the age of Obama, while remaining steeped in contradictions. Our steps on this racial tightrope are a work in progress—a history in the making—that will largely influence who we are and who we hope to become as Americans.

*"Gail Garfield's Tightrope is a compelling investigation of 'who we are and who we hope to become' in the Age of Obama. She combines her moving personal experiences in the Jim Crow South with a seasoned sociologist's insights on America's race evolution. By challenging us on where we have been and where we are on race relations, Garfield shows us the path forward to a more inclusive national community." (Donna Brazile, political commentator for CNN and ABC)*



All are welcome. RSVP: [oar@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:oar@jjay.cuny.edu)



# OAR Book Talk Series Spring 2015: Gail Garfield's "Tightrope"

Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room (9.64NB), John Jay College

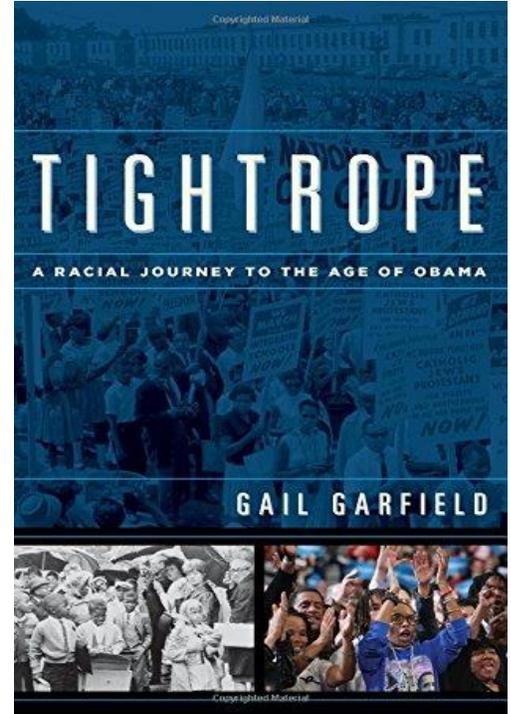
## Discussants

**Gloria Browne-Marshall** (Law and Police Science, John Jay):

Gloria J. Browne-Marshall is an Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY). She also teaches classes in Race and the Law, Evidence, and Gender and Justice. She a former civil rights attorney who litigated cases for Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama, Community Legal Services in Philadelphia, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc.. Professor Browne-Marshall is a member of the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States and a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She addresses audiences nationally. Gloria J. Browne-Marshall has spoken on issues of race and the Constitution in Ghana, Rwanda, England, Wales, Canada, and before the United Nations in Geneva. Professor Browne-Marshall is the author of many articles and several books including "Race, Law, and American Society: 1607 to Present," which includes a chapter on Voting Rights and Race. Her forthcoming book is titled "Black Women and the Law: Salem Witch Trials to Civil Rights Activists." She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the Women's City Club of New York. Gloria J. Browne-Marshall has been the recipient of several honors including the Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award for her work with civil rights and women's justice issues and the Wiley College Woman of Excellence in Law award. An award-winning playwright of seven produced plays, her most recent play "Diversity" examines marriage choices. She is a member of the Dramatist Guild, Mystery Writers of America, National Association of Black Journalists, PEN American Center, and the National Press Club.

**Barbara Katz Rothman**, PhD, is Professor of Sociology, Public Health, Disability Studies and Women's Studies at the City University of New York, where she runs the Food Studies concentration. Her books include IN LABOR; THE TENTATIVE PREGNANCY; RECREATING MOTHERHOOD; THE BOOK OF LIFE; WEAVING A FAMILY: UNTANGLING RACE AND ADOPTION, and LABORING ON, and the forthcoming BUN IN THE OVEN: Crafting An Artisanal Midwifery Movement. (Working title) She is Past President of Sociologists for Women in Society; the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and current President of the Eastern Sociological Society. She is proud recipient of an award for "Midwifing the Movement" from the Midwives Alliance of North America.

**Lynn Roberts** (Public Health, Hunter): Lynn Roberts is an Assistant Professor in the Community Health Education program in the CUNY School of Public Health and serves on the policy committee of the Women and Gender Studies program at Hunter College. She earned her BS in human development from Howard University (1984) and a PhD in Human Service Studies from Cornell University (1990). Prior to teaching at Hunter, Dr. Roberts oversaw the development, implementation and evaluation of several programs for women and youth in NYC, including the Visiting Nurse Service's First Steps Program, a Harlem-based comprehensive program for substance using mothers and their families (1990-1995). Dr. Roberts' current activism and scholarship examine the intersections of race, class and gender in adolescent dating relationships, juvenile justice and reproductive health policies, as well as the impact of models of collaborative inquiry and teaching on civic and political engagement. She has served as a member of the board of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective and is currently co-editing an anthology on Reproductive Justice. Her contribution to the anthology is an essay chronicling the impact of reproductive health policies (or absence thereof) on four generations of women in her family.



**Gail Garfield:** As an activist and scholar, Gail Garfield has blended her dual professional interest of advocating for social justice with scholarship. This duality is seen in her efforts to reshape social policies and practices in the areas of child welfare, public housing, drug treatment, poverty, violence against women, and race and race relations. She has worked as a senior policy analysis with the Community Services Society and the Manhattan Borough President's Office of New York City. As the executive director of the Institute on Violence, she administered the program areas of research, policy advocacy, technical support, and outreach and education targeted toward the African American community. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master Degree in Sociology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, a Master of Arts Degree from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Child Psychology from the Institute of Child Development, both from the University of Minnesota. As an associate professor at John Jay College, she has conducted original research that is reflected in three noteworthy books: Through Our Eyes: African American Women's Experiences of Violence and Violation (Rugters University Press 2005), Through Our Eyes: African American Men's Experiences of Race, Gender and Violence (Rugters University Press 2010), and Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama (Rowman & Littlefield 2014).