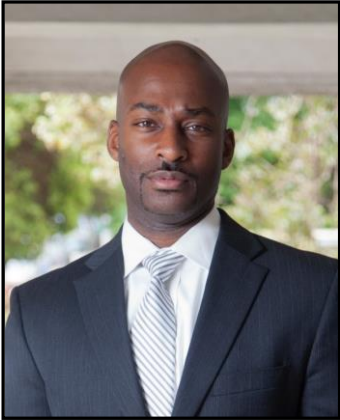


# **BRENDON D. WOODS**

## **PUBLIC DEFENDER, ALAMEDA COUNTY**

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With nearly 20 years of experience in criminal defense litigation, Brendon Woods has held positions of increasing responsibility in the Alameda County Public Defender's Office since he joined the Office as a Post-Bar Law Clerk in 1996. In December 2012, he was appointed Public Defender. He is the first African-American Public Defender in Alameda County history.

Woods leads 160 attorneys, investigators, and support staff, operating out of five branches throughout the County, to provide superior legal defense in more than 3,300 new files monthly. In 2013, his office was named Law Office of the Year by the Alameda County Bar Association.

Woods is a nationally recognized leader and innovator in public defense. He was recently sworn in as the President of the California Public Defenders Association and was honored with the Harvard Law School Wasserstein Public Interest Fellowship for his outstanding public service accomplishments. He shares his expertise at speaking engagements around the country and is considered an expert on many subjects associated with public defense, including holistic representation, racial profiling, community empowerment, police reform, and models of immigration representation.

Woods' commitment to providing inspired holistic representation to his clients led him to hire full-time social workers to link clients with essential services throughout their criminal cases to provide alternatives to incarceration. He established a Clean Slate program to expunge clients' criminal records, and he is leading his office in the shift from horizontal to vertical representation to further improve client services. Woods also hired immigration attorneys, making his office the first in the country – outside of New York – to implement immigration representation within the Public Defender's Office. His Immigration Representation Unit was named Program of the Year in 2016 by the California Public Defenders Association.

Engaging with the community is another passion of Woods', and on June 24, 2017, he held his office's second annual community block party, taking another step toward building relationships with the community that he is fortunate to serve. Woods has also developed a youth know-your-rights program called LYRIC (Learn Your Rights In California), aimed at empowering high school students by teaching them how to safely assert their constitutional rights. In 2015, this program was honored with the Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties, and the Program of the Year Award from the California Public Defenders Association.

Prior to Woods' appointment, the Alameda County Public Defender's Office was rarely engaged in the politics or media surrounding criminal justice, law enforcement, or civil rights matters. Woods took his post determined to take strong positions on issues impacting his clients. In order to address proposed legislation that will impact his clients, he created his office's first policy and legislation committee and he has actively engaged with the media to shed light on instances of local law enforcement misconduct. On December 18, 2014, Woods and his staff proudly led public defenders around the Bay Area in holding a Black Lives Matter rally, in the wake of grand jury decisions to not indict white police officers in the murders of unarmed black men in Ferguson, Missouri and New York City. Shortly after, he created his office's Racial Justice Committee, charged with addressing the impacts of racism in the criminal justice system and the disproportionate incarceration of minorities.

From a young age, Brendon Woods had formative experiences with law enforcement, which influenced his views and steered him toward public defense. Now he feels fortunate to have the opportunity to fight for those who are unable to fight for themselves, and to help reshape the discourse and nature of public defense and criminal justice as a whole.