

# THE LAWYER AS LEADER: HOW TO PLANT PEOPLE AND GROW JUSTICE

Lawyers are gatekeepers of justice. Throughout history, attorneys have been called upon to serve and lead. Lawyer-leaders have the power to advance social change by promoting equal justice under law and protecting the rule of law in the global community.

RCBA member, Dr. Artika Tyner's new leadership

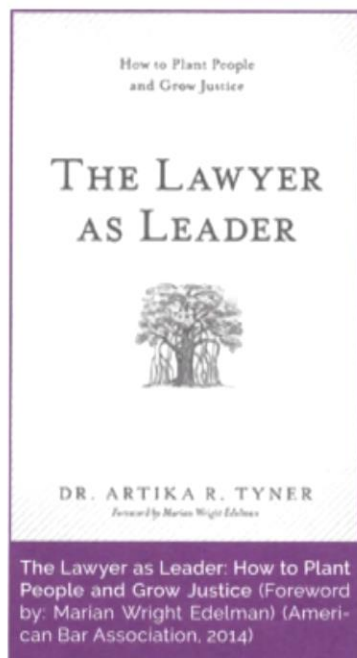
book, *The Lawyer as Leader: How to Plant People and Grow Justice*, explores the tools that lawyers can employ to build and sustain social change. These tools add a new dimension to the role of lawyer as leader by focusing on how lawyers can influence processes of social change, transform systems, and empower others to lead.

Needed now more than ever are lawyers who are willing to pick up the mantle of leadership and address the social justice challenges of our time. They are needed to bridge the gap in serving the needs of impoverished clients and in continuing antipov-erty reform efforts.

## Economic Gap

Currently, 46 million people, or one in seven residents, live in poverty in the United States; this creates a barrier to accessing the legal system and to exercising

political power. This is one of the largest economic gaps since the Great Depression. The poor are often marginalized, feel excluded from the rule-making/public policy process, and lack the allies needed to facilitate change in political agendas and budgetary allocations that affect their social and legal needs.



## Justice Gap

80 percent of the civil needs of poor people are not being met because of “chronically and grossly” underfunded legal services and pro bono programs. In 2009, Legal Services Corporation demonstrated an imminent need for lawyers to assume leadership in protecting justice for all through the development

of programs and initiatives that address this gap in much-needed services.

The legal needs of low-income persons are basic to their survival and ability to thrive in a society. Fundamental legal rights need to be enforced as they relate to such basic necessities as nutrition, health, shelter, income, education, and protection from violent physical abuse, in order to uphold the foundational tenets of social justice.

These particular statistics illustrate only one dimension of the

challenge in pursuit of justice: equal access to legal services. More specifically, the challenge is to dismantle the systems that maintain and uphold discrimination, disparate outcomes, and subordination based upon one's social identity (characterized by race, gender, and socioeconomic class).

Where are the lawyers? Despite this endowment of the mantle of leadership, opportunities for leadership development are conspicuously missing in legal education and professional development.

Dr. Tyner's leadership theory, “Planting People, Growing Justice,” seeks to fill this void by providing guidance for law students and lawyers to develop core leadership skills. Planting people is an organic process, which starts from the ground up. By empowering people within social change collectives so that they can develop into future leaders, growing justice is the materialization of planting people.

Like a banyan tree, which has a unique ability to grow upwards from new roots that are formed in branches, the collective grows when new community members utilize their voices to advocate for social change.

The Lawyer as Leader is a beacon call for lawyers who wish to harness their skills and training to become leaders in the struggle for social and economic justice. Will you answer the call today?

Download a sample chapter at: [www.artikatyner.com/book](http://www.artikatyner.com/book)