

NATASHA M. DARTIGUE

Maryland State Public Defender

Natasha M. Dartigue is the current Maryland State Public Defender whose six-year appointment term began on July 1, 2022. Ms. Dartigue is a 1995 graduate of the Howard University School of Law. Upon law school graduation she clerked in the Baltimore City Circuit Court for the late Judge Roger W. Brown. Subsequently, she began working at the Office of the Public Defender in Baltimore City. Ms. Dartigue has worked as a trial attorney in the juvenile, district and circuit court divisions. She has also served as felony trial supervisor, Deputy District Public Defender for Baltimore City, and Acting District Public Defender before accepting the position of Maryland State Public Defender in May 2022. Ms. Dartigue is the first person of color to lead the Maryland Office of the Public Defender. Ms. Dartigue, who is the daughter of Haitian immigrants, has highlighted the importance of her historic appointment, noting that it “redefines what leadership looks like and expands the possibilities for Black and brown children.” She adds that it “especially provides hope to children of immigrants, who are often overlooked and undervalued, that opportunities do exist.”

As State Public Defender, Ms. Dartigue has broadened the office’s reach and impact in numerous ways. She established a second MOPD Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law to strengthen the investigation and litigation of wrongful conviction claims. In 2023, she co-founded and co-chaired the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative (MEJC) alongside Attorney General Anthony Brown, an unprecedented alliance between prosecution and defense that produced 18 landmark recommendations to dismantle mass incarceration and reduce racial disparities in Maryland’s criminal justice system. Upon the Collaborative’s sunset, she established its successor, the Maryland Justice Partnership (MJP), which works to turn MEJC’s recommendations into enacted law and measurable reform.

Ms. Dartigue is an alumna both Leadership Maryland (2025) and the Greater Baltimore Committee’s Leadership Program (2018). At work and in the community, much of Ms. Dartigue’s energy is devoted to providing individuals with the tools to be successful. She is a community advocate, active member leader of various professional organizations including the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA), Bar Association for Baltimore City, Monumental City Bar Association, Alliance of Black Women Attorneys, the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys Association and the Women’s Bar Association. She is the current President of the Maryland State Bar Association, a member of the MSBA Criminal Law & Practice Section Council, an MSBA Fellow and Past President of the Baltimore City Bar Foundation. She serves on the board of several organizations including Associated Black Charities, Innovation Works, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL), Maryland Youth and the Law (MYLAW), and Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital Foundation. Ms. Dartigue also serves as an Executive Mentor for Innovation Works (IW). As an IW mentor Ms. Dartigue plays a critical role in providing support to aspiring and established social enterprise leaders seeking to strengthen their social impact strategies and maintain financial sustainability. Additionally, she is a social equity strategist who creates workshops to promote shared understanding and greater awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion issues. She provides implicit bias training and leadership development instruction at local, state and national conferences, including the MSBA, Maryland Legal Aid, Federal Public Defender Service, National Association for Public Defense, and private firm training.

Ms. Dartigue's exceptional career earned her an unprecedented array of prestigious honors that cement her status as a legal powerhouse. Recognized as 2018 Government Lawyer of the Year by the Bar Association of Baltimore City and honored with the Maryland Daily Record's 2018 Leadership in Law Award she has consistently distinguished herself among Maryland's legal elite.

Her influence transcends traditional boundaries—named one of the Daily Record's Top 100 Women multiple times (2018, 2024, 2026) and inducted into the 2026 Circle of Excellence, identified as a 2022 Influential Marylander, and recognized by the Baltimore Sun as one of “25 Black Marylanders to Watch in 2023.” The Women's Law Center

honored her as a 2023 Access to Justice Awardee, while esteemed organizations including the Maryland Office of the Public Defender and National Association of Public Defenders have celebrated her outstanding contributions.

Ms. Dartigue stands as a beacon of legal excellence, transforming communities through her unwavering dedication to justice. Her remarkable achievements have earned her coveted spots on Maryland's 2024 Criminal Law Power List and Power 100 List, recognizing her profound impact on the community and her ability to inspire the next generation of legal professionals. In 2025, her extraordinary commitment to justice was honored with the prestigious Who's Who in Black – Baltimore listing, the 2025 Leadership in Law – Justice Champion Award and The Monumental City Bar Association's distinguished Leadership Award at their milestone 90th Anniversary celebration. These accolades reflect not just superior legal acumen, but Ms. Dartigue's transformative influence on the legal profession and the lives she touches every day.