

John William Simon earned a PH.D. in Political Science, with a principal concentration in public law & judicial behavior, from Harvard University in 1978. He taught courses on judicial politics and other subjects at Harvard while a resident graduate student, and later at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. In 1978 he was elected to the Maine Legislature, where he served on the joint standing committee on judiciary. Instead of running for re-election, he applied for law school, which he commenced at the Yale Law School in 1981. In 1982, he also taught the constitutional law course in the political science department at Yale University. He received his J.D. from the Yale Law School in 1984.

On graduation he returned to his original home state, Missouri, where he practiced in both the state attorney general's office and the state public defender system, as well as in private firms, before forming Constitutional Advocacy LLC in 2008. He has represented both petitioners and respondents in federal and state habeas corpus actions. Together with Elizabeth Unger Carlyle, from 2005 to 2015 he edited the chapter of the EIGHTH CIRCUIT APPELLATE PRACTICE MANUAL covering criminal appeals and habeas corpus and section

2255 appeals. He has made previous continuing legal education presentations for The Missouri Bar, the Missouri Attorney General's Office, and the Missouri State Public Defender System – most recently with Mrs. Carlyle at the National Federal Habeas Corpus Seminar sponsored by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

In 2005 he filed the challenge to the three-chemical sequence lethal-injection protocol in Missouri that, together with follow-on litigation in which he participated, stopped executions in Missouri for three and a half years and held them to two for an additional four and a half years. In 2008 the Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers conferred on him the Atticus Finch Award “given to those who serve unflinchingly, while defending unpopular clients or taking up unpopular causes”

(http://www.macdl.net/MACDL_Awards.aspx). He is a member of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the board of MACDL, currently serving as its legislative co-chair.