

# CORTLAN J. WICKLIFF, PH.D., J.D.

Corporate & Transactional Attorney / Engineer / Project Manager / Motivational Speaker / Author

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Cortlan J. Wickliff, Ph.D., J.D. is a licensed attorney with a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Engineering and extensive experience leading public and private organizations to grow in size, profitability, and efficacy. With over a decade of transactional law experience as both an in-house and law firm attorney representing individuals and entities ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies, Dr. Wickliff has an extensive understanding of an attorney's role in making projects, programs, and businesses thrive. This work has included developing governance & policy, fostering inter-institutional partnerships, leading public-private partnerships (P3s), and commercialization technical research. In addition to his work as an attorney and compliance professional, Dr. Wickliff has worked as an engineer, consultant, researcher, and project manager in both the public and private sectors.

He has over fifteen years of experience developing impactful outreach programs that promote diversity and inclusion in STEM (both education and careers) and mentoring young people who eventually attended some of the world's most prestigious universities and start highly prestigious careers. Dr. Wickliff has an extensive understanding of a mentor/administrator's role in promoting academic and career success among young professionals. In addition to his years of education, he has also served as a consultant, volunteer, and employee of some of the most prestigious academic programs, aiding them in establishing and expanding nationally recognized programs. This work has included developing governance & policy, fostering inter-institutional partnerships, and expanding commercialization and entrepreneurship efforts among universities.

## **EDUCATION**

**HARVARD LAW SCHOOL**, Cambridge, MA  
Juris Doctor, May 2013

**TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY**, College Station, TX  
Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Engineering, Aug. 2016  
Business Certificate from Mays School of Business, May 2014

**RICE UNIVERSITY**, Houston, TX  
B.S. in Bioengineering, May 2010

## **LICENSES**

**LICENSED TEXAS ATTORNEY**  
Nov. 2013

**CERTIFIED COMPLIANCE & ETHICS PROFESSIONAL**  
Sept. 2022

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

<b>RICE UNIVERSITY</b> – <u>Associate Vice Provost of Academic Affairs &amp; Strategic Initiatives</u>	07/18 – Present
<u>Principal Designated School Official and Responsible Officer</u>	07/23 – 05/24
<u>Independent Engineering Researcher &amp; Elect. Eng. Teaching Assistant</u>	08/08 – 05/10
<b>UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER</b> – <u>Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurial Law</u>	07/24 – Present
<b>CORTLAN J. WICKLIFF HOLDINGS, LLC</b> – <u>Owner, Lead Consultant, &amp; Lead Counsel</u>	11/13 – Present
<b>LORI GRAY AND ASSOCIATES</b> – <u>Corporate Counsel</u>	03/17 – 10/18
<b>FUJIFILM HOLDINGS AMERICA CORPORATION</b> – <u>Legal Counsel</u>	01/15 – 09/15
<b>KALON BIOTHERAPEUTICS, LLC</b> (Acquired by Fujifilm) – <u>Assistant General Counsel</u>	09/13 – 01/15
<b>TEXAS A &amp; M UNIVERSITY</b> – <u>Teaching Assistant / Guest Lecturer</u>	08/13 – 05/16
<b>MCKOOL SMITH L.L.P.</b> – <u>Summer Associate</u>	07/12 – 08/12
<b>PIRKEY BARBER L.L.P.</b> – <u>Summer Associate</u>	05/12 – 06/12
<b>HARVARD LAW SCHOOL CLINIC</b> – <u>Legal Counsel</u>	08/11 – 12/12
<b>BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.</b> – <u>Summer Associate</u>	05/11 – 06/11
<b>R.E.A.C.H. PROGRAM</b> – <u>Founder, Presenter &amp; Program Coordinator</u>	07/09 – 05/13
<b>BOSTON SCIENTIFIC</b> – <u>Summer Engineer</u>	05/09 – 08/10
<b>NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION</b> (Univ. of South Florida) – <u>Researcher</u>	06/08 – 08/08
<b>AUSTIN PRE-ENG. PROGRAM</b> (Huston-Tillotson Univ.) – <u>Lead Summer Program Assistant</u>	06/06 – 08/07

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

<b>MILLENNIAL ADVISORY BOARD OF HOUSTON</b>	05/21 – 05/23
<b>INDEPENDENT POLICE OVERSIGHT BOARD OF HOUSTON</b>	07/21 – 07/23

**TEXAS STATE SCIENCE FAIR ADVISORY BOARD**  
**HOUSTON LAWYERS ASSOCIATION**

02/22 – Present  
11/24 – Present

## **EXPERIENCE & CORE SKILLS**

### **LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

- Served as legal counsel for organizations with a multibillion-dollar-aggregate capex in a variety of industries, including the agricultural, biologics/pharmaceutical, biotech, construction, education, energy, engineering, entertainment, liquid-natural-gas, medical, manufacturing, professional services, and retail industries
- Assisted small business owners, early-stage companies, and startups with the successful establishment and expansion of their businesses, which included establishing new entities & new divisions of existing entities, drafting corporate governance, drafting entity formation documents, and drafting initial corporate contracts
- Led successful public-private partnerships (P3s), and managed compliance with public grants
- Provided legal support and acted as the Secretary for Boards of Directors/Trustees in public & private sectors
- Represented and negotiated with investment groups purchasing IP, property, companies, and other assets
- Prepared material and conducted pitches for companies to raise as much as \$30M in grant, angel investor, series A and B funding from individuals, government agencies, corporate, and venture capital investors
- Managed compliance for a multinational corporation with no incidents of fines, failed audits, or sanctions
- Simultaneously managed legal matters & filings for 20+ subsidiaries located in North & South America with no incidences of non-compliance or failed internal/external audits
- Led a team of lawyers (including external counsel) and legal assistants to negotiate and close several multimillion-dollar contracts successfully, and complete projects under budget
- Represented organizations to community groups, public action committees, local, state, & federal officials & agencies, including mayor's offices, county judges, county commissioners, the Governor's Office, state legislators, state education agencies, tourism, & workforce agencies (including the Texas Workforce Commission), members of Congress, the U.S. State Department, Homeland Security, and OSHA
- Assumed leadership of a legal dept. & used limited resources to resolve an 8-month backlog, then created & implemented a contract management system that reduced document review times to less than 72-hr
- Negotiated, drafted, and implemented standard operating procedures, subcontracts, corporate governance, and policies to comply with federal and state requirements associated with government contracts and grants for both private and public entities (including Federal Acquisition Regulations [FAR] provisions)
- Negotiated provisions of community-benefits agreements and represented clients to public stakeholders
- Negotiated & drafted publishing (including artist publishing), recording, licensing, and leasing agreements
- Established international supply chains for entities and negotiated & drafted the necessary agreements
- Negotiated, drafted, and executed property agreements, including public economic incentive / tax-abatement contracts and agreements related to IP rights, real estate, fixtures, and equipment purchases & sales
- Worked to successfully close the sale of the company that netted multimillion-dollar-profits for shareholders
- Filed and managed copyrights and trademarks for clients and represented clients to the USPTO and USCO
- Provided consulting to improve recruitment, retention, commercialization, IP management, and joint programs
- Attained grants, negotiated tax abatement agreements, and secured public contributions in excess of \$3MM.
- Investigated and adjudicated allegations against employees, management, students, faculty, and staff
- Evaluated intellectual property infringement claims and represented clients in IP disputes
- Represented clients in legal disputes: Negotiated settlement agreements saving clients as much as \$2.9M in damages, Argued & won summary judgment motions, Successfully engaged in alternative dispute resolution, Performed legal research, Drafted official correspondences, motions, & court documents, Drafted legal briefs & memos, and Adjudicated & settled sensitive HR matters to prevent litigation

### **COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE**

- Established, restructured, and updated compliance programs to ensure compliance with relevant agency standards, corporate standards, and federal, state, and local laws/regulations
- Managed J-1 & F-1 visa programs and led the organization to a 0% non-compliance rating
- Performed compliance assessments to identify shortcomings in policies and systemic non-compliance

- Conducted peer review analysis to establish best practices for individuals, departments, and organizations
- Managed quality control and quality assurance personnel to meet & exceed quality metrics successfully
- Investigated and assessed issues of non-compliance and developed and implemented corrective action plans
- Developed and conducted training, including training related to Title IX, diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI), sexual harassment, cyber security, conflict of commitment/interest, and intellectual property protection

**MANAGEMENT & PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE**

- Led research projects & teams to successfully deliver products, publications, reports, and recommendations in the research areas of bioengineering, compliance, law, leadership, medicine, and systems engineering
- Developed and managed faculty retention program that decreased employee turnover by up to 40%
- Organized and led collaborative, interdepartmental teams to produce interdisciplinary corporate solutions
- Planned, managed, executed, and headlined a 25-city, 4-week, speaking tour and led a team of 10+ people to meet aggressive deadlines to deliver 50+ presentations and travel over 5,000 miles
- Trained and managed multiple direct reports, which included setting career development plans for employees
- Drafted and published textbooks, manuals, other training materials and publications
- Developed and managed an internship program for high school and college students
- Developed and taught business, engineering/STEM, leadership, and legal (IP, contracts, etc.) curriculum
- Provided technical expertise in the areas of leadership development, engineering, education/training, design, transactional/corporate law, and governance to entities in the public and private sectors
- Proposed, determined the scope of, initiated, and led special projects to successfully increase organizations' size, profitability, compliance, and efficacy
- Established and managed relationships with institutional partners from both the private and public sectors
- Created and led DEI initiatives that increased employee and student satisfaction as measured by climate surveys
- Drafted mass communications on behalf of executive leadership (including President & Provost)
- Represented organizations in meetings with stakeholders and other organizations, which has included the organization's board of directors, the university's board of regents, elected local, state & federal officials, strategic partners, vendors, customers, sub-contractors, faculty-researchers, employees, and competitors
- Worked with faculty and students to conduct research in various fields, including business management, biomedical engineering, chemical engineering, electrical engineering, energy, law, and oil & gas

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH EXPERIENCE**

- Designed, hosted, and implemented STEM, art, academic success, DEI, and outreach programs
- Planned and implemented community-building initiatives & community outreach programs for 18+ years
- Delivered impactful motivational speeches to professional, academic, and lay audiences for 15+ years
- Mentored youth and young professionals to succeed in top-ranked academic and corporate environments
- Developed, planned, and implemented programs that achieved organizational objectives associated with recruitment, retention, DEI, and institutional responsibility in both the public and private sectors
- Represented community-based organizations in discussions/negotiations with public and private stakeholders
- Served on academic and community advisory boards, including the Texas State Science Fair, the Houston Millennial Board, the Independent Police Oversight Board, and multiple conference planning committees

**SOFTWARE PROFICIENCIES**

- Expert in Microsoft Office (Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.), Adobe Suite (Acrobat, Premier, etc.), LabVIEW, Blackmagic, OBS Studio, Chrome, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and CyberLink PowerDirector
- Competent in MATLAB, Python, Adobe Photoshop, project management software, and QuickBooks

**PRESENTATIONS / SPEECHES**

Dr. Wickliff has a 15+ year track record of impactful presentations, consulting, educating, and mentorship. He has inspired youth and young professionals across the country to excel academically in some of the most prestigious universities in the world and has given them the tools to jump-start their careers. Additionally, Dr. Wickliff's business clients consistently see improvements in their efficiency, teamwork, and compliance.

**COMMUNITY-BASED EVENTS**

Dr. Wickliff has a history of community service and community engagement that dates back more than two decades. As part of his outreach efforts, he regularly engages with and speaks to community/educational organizations in an effort to improve the world around him. Some of these presentations have included:

- Presented at numerous universities, including Harvard Law School, Huston-Tillotson University, Lamar University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Prairie View A & M University, Rice University, St. Philip's College, Texas A & M University, Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, University of Houston, University of Houston Law Center, University of North Texas, University of Texas, and West Texas A & M
  - Presentations included – Commencement Ceremonies, Orientation/First-year-experience, Academic Success, Career planning, Black History, Engineering Forum, Intersection of Law & STEM, Intersection of Law & STEAM, and Ethics (engineering & legal)
- Presented at numerous high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools
- Presented at numerous churches, corporate, and community events
  - Presentations included – Youth Sundays/Saturdays, Laity Sundays, Men & Boys Retreats, Back to School Events, Community Outreach/Fundraiser Events, Voter Awareness Events, Voter Registration Events, Community Health Drives, Pre-College Information Sessions, Academic Success Workshops, Pre-Engineering Conferences, Fashion Shows, Black History Events, and Community Awareness Events.

**HEADLINED SPEAKING TOURS**

Dr. Wickliff has headlined a statewide academic tour of Texas where he spoke to youth and young adults about the steps necessary to plan your future and execute on your plans. This tour garnered significantly media attention and reached tens of thousands of students around the state. The details were as follows:

- Driven To Succeed - Tour of Texas 2019
  - 25+ Cities/Towns in Texas
  - 15+ Independent School Districts, 45+ High School, 2 Colleges, & Several Community Events
  - 50+ speeches and 5,000+ miles in 28 days

**GOVERNMENT-RELATED KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS**

Government entities regularly ask Dr. Wickliff to speak at events pertaining to economic development, education, and civic engagement; some of these events include:

- California Black Student Union Summit
- Hurlburt Field United States Air Force Base – Special Operations Wing
- National Convention for U.S. Census Bureau
- Purvis School Commencement Ceremony – Ministry of Education Bermuda
- Texas Interns Unite Statewide Conference
- Texas State Science Fair High School Competition (2014 & 2022)
- Texas State Science Fair Junior Competition (2014 & 2022)
- Texas Workforce Commission Annual Event
- YTexas Youth Summit

**KEYNOTE EDUCATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

Dr. Wickliff's extensive experience mentoring and educating youth in school and young adults in the early stages of their career has made him an ideal choice to present at educational and leadership conferences. Some of his prior presentations include:

- 100% College Prep Program
- Association of Independent Schools in New England, Annual Conference
- Austin Pre-Engineering Program
- Boys and Girls Club – College Success Program
- FreshStart Pre-Engineering Conference
- Jack and Jill Civic Engagement Program

- National Society of Black Engineers Leadership Conference
- Phillip Exeter Academy
- San Francisco Steps to College Group
- Southwest Black (College) Student Leadership Conference
- Stanford & Rice University Joint Pre-College Advising Event

**PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES KEYNOTE PRESENTATION & PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

Because of Dr. Wickliff's interdisciplinary background in law, engineering, compliance, and business, he is regularly asked to present at professional conferences; some of those conferences include:

- The Association for Capital Projects Engineering & Construction Community Regional Conference
- Hype Magazine NBA All-Star Weekend Event
- Rice University Global Technology Forum
- Rice University Diversity Summit
- National Black Law Student Association Events
- National Society of Black Engineers Events
- NXP Semiconductors' Black Achievement and Leadership Team's Austin, Texas Event
- Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education Annual Conference

**PRIOR PRESENTATION TOPICS**

Dr. Wickliff has created and hosted numerous workshops/presentations; whenever he presents, his goal is to connect with both the audience and the theme of the event. As such, Dr. Wickliff often times customizes his messaging and presentations to the unique needs of the audience. Because he presents to audiences of all ages and backgrounds, his topics/presentations have to be comparably diverse; a list of Dr. Wickliff's prior presentations/speaking topics includes:

- Academic Success – High School, College, and Grad School
- Add Value – Using Niches to Maintain Relevance and Break Into Corporate Leadership
- Anime Lessons for Success: Applying Lessons from Popular Franchises to Achieve Goals
- Be Young And Driven: How to Make Your Dreams a Reality
- Biblical Lessons for Success: Applying the Bible to Career Advancement
- Breaking Down Knowledge Boundaries: Interdisciplinary Education for Innovative Solutions
- Bridge the Digital Divide – How Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen X & Z Can Thrive Together
- Build on Belief – Applying Biblical Principles for Academic/Professional & Personal Success
- Build Your Team – How to Get and Maintain the Right Team of Mentors and Sponsors
- Career Advancement for Young Professionals
- Commercializing Intellectual Property in a Federally Regulated Environment (including Higher Ed)
- Communicating to Enhance Compliance: Creating an Excellence-Driven Work Culture
- Do Good for Profit's Sake: How Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Done Right Can Improve Profits
- Dr. Wickliff's Declassified Survival Guide: Tips and Tools to Thrive in Your First Year In College
- Dream, Believe, Plan, Execute, Achieve: The Foolproof Guide to Personal & Corporate Success
- Engineering, The Ultimate Undecided Major: The Wide Variety of Career Options for Engineers
- Engineering with Words: Why Technical People Make Great Lawyers
- Get Involved: How Students Can Become Politically Active
- Innovation & Commercialization in Higher Education & Non-profit Institutions
- Introduction to Non-Disclosure & IP Agreements for Engineers
- JumpStart Your Ambition – The First Steps to Starting a Business
- The Intersection of Music, Law & Science: A Survey of IP Law for Musicians
- The Intersection of STEM and Law
- Lawyers For Innovation: Using Your Legal Expertise to Spur Technological Innovation
- The Legal and Tax Pitfalls That Cause Startups to Fail
- Maximizing Your First Year College/Graduate Experience

- Putting the I in DEI: How Individuals Can Make Work Environments More Inclusive
- Re-tooling Skillsets for Emerging Industries
- The Role of Attorneys in Entrepreneurship
- The Role of Companies in Economic Development
- The Role of Government in Economic Development
- The Role of Universities in Economic Development
- Starting and Growing a Business
- STEM Professionals in the Law: How to Make Life-Saving Medical Breakthroughs in Courtrooms, Boardrooms, and Congress.

**PUBLICATIONS****PRIOR INTERVIEWS**

Because of Dr. Wickliff's consistent community outreach and his numerous historic milestones, including being the youngest engineer in the nation (age 19), one of the youngest black people to ever graduate from Harvard Law School in centuries (age 22), and becoming the youngest licensed attorney in the state of Texas (age 23), Dr. Wickliff is regularly interviewed by journalists. Some of those interviews include:

- Featured in numerous publications including Boston Globe, Houston Chronicle, Austin American Statesmen, Austin Villager, the Rice Thresher, News at Harvard Law, Hype Magazine, and Education Magazine
- Interviewed on numerous shows including Fox News, NBC News, ABC News, CW News, ABC Crossroads, Roland Martin Segment, PBS, ESPN Radio Real Deal with Akil, 95.1 with Kelli O'Neil, and Tom Joyner Morning Show

**PRIOR AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS**

- Article: The Constitutional Crisis of Government Officials Ignoring Facts in Policy Creation (2019) [Thurgood Marshall Law Review]
- Book: Young And Driven: Overdrive (Available on Amazon.com & YoungAndDriven.com)
- Book: Young And Driven
- Law School Thesis: Unconstitutionally Drafted Cocaine Related Drug Laws: Proving Legal Injustice with Scientific Analysis
- PhD Dissertation: Study of Feedback Communication in a Technical Organizational Compliance System
- Textbook/Workbook: Problem Solving and Applied Industrial Math

**PREVIOUS RESEARCH EXPERIENCE****LEGAL RESEARCH**

- Efficiently incorporating scientific knowledge & empirical studies into drafting legal policy/laws
- Methods for in-house counsel to maximize compliance with regulations and standard operating procedures
- Processes for and triggers of creating legal policy in organizations and governments
- Developed a contract and document management system to identify contractually required actions

**TECHNICAL/BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH**

- Applying engineering methods to optimize engineering systems and compliance in an organization
- Developed hearing testing mechanisms for premature babies
- Modified pacemaker leads and casing to detect heart movement and diagnose neurological disorders
- Alternative fuel production – Studied cobalt catalysts for the Fischer-Tropsch Reaction
- Designed, built & tested apparatuses for equipment testing and validation in research & development facilities
- Designed, built & tested medical diagnostic devices for use in developing nations

**BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT & SYSTEMS ENGINEERING RESEARCH**

- Factors that improve employees' responsiveness & willingness to communicate with their employer
- Methods for increasing access to employment opportunities in underserved areas
- Hiring, promotion, and training policies that promote communication within organizations