



WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

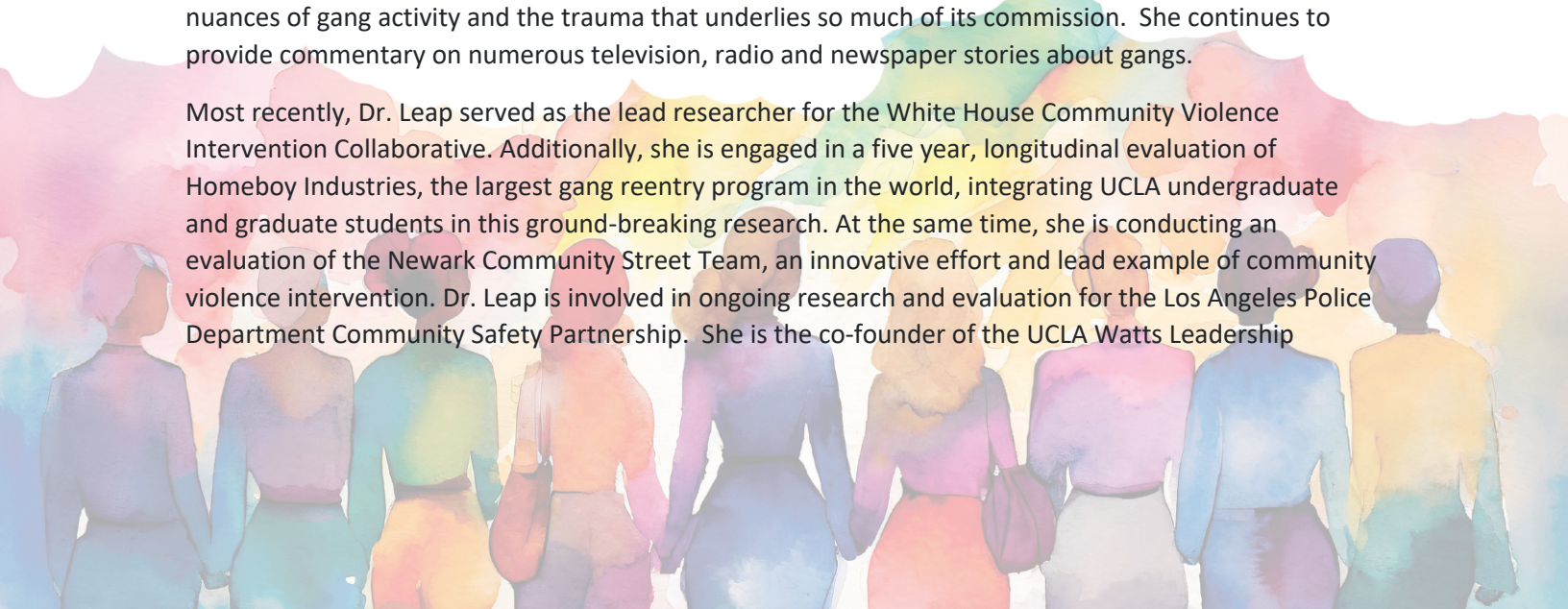
Jorja Leap, Dr. Board Member

Jorja Leap has been a member of the Social Welfare Department faculty at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs since 1992 and serves as the Executive Director of the UCLA Social Justice Research Partnership. As an anthropologist and recognized expert in gangs, violence, and systems change, she develops, coordinates and directs scholarly efforts that involve research, evaluation and policy recommendations at the local, state, national and global level. Dr. Leap has worked globally in post-war environments and settings beset by violence throughout her career, applying a multi-disciplinary, community-based approach to her research and capacity building efforts. Her current work focuses on gangs and community violence intervention in multi-cultural settings, criminal justice and prison reform, and the dilemmas faced by individuals reentering society after incarceration, including women, a group often overlooked.

Dr. Leap has served as policy advisor on Gangs and Youth Violence for Los Angeles County, as an expert reviewer on gangs for the National Institute of Justice, and as the Clinical Director of the Watts Regional Strategy for the Los Angeles Mayor's Office. In addition, she has worked as the qualitative research director for the Los Angeles Mayor's Office Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) Program. She has also been appointed to the State of California, Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), Standing Committee on Gang Issues. Through work she has engaged at the national level, she is now the Evaluation and Research Director for the Community Based Public Safety Collective.

Alongside these efforts, she has served as an expert witness in local, state, and federal judicial proceedings, focusing on gangs, community violence, and the relationships between trauma and criminalized behaviors. Additionally, Dr. Leap has authored a series of reports on gang membership, dynamics, and desistance in death penalty sentencing and plea mitigation procedures, appeals, habeas corpus hearings, and clemency proceedings. Dr. Leap works to educate the court in understanding the nuances of gang activity and the trauma that underlies so much of its commission. She continues to provide commentary on numerous television, radio and newspaper stories about gangs.

Most recently, Dr. Leap served as the lead researcher for the White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative. Additionally, she is engaged in a five year, longitudinal evaluation of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang reentry program in the world, integrating UCLA undergraduate and graduate students in this ground-breaking research. At the same time, she is conducting an evaluation of the Newark Community Street Team, an innovative effort and lead example of community violence intervention. Dr. Leap is involved in ongoing research and evaluation for the Los Angeles Police Department Community Safety Partnership. She is the co-founder of the UCLA Watts Leadership





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Institute, working closely with the community-based leaders of Watts as well as its nonprofit network to build capacity and ensure equity in the vibrant community she is honored to be part of, serving there as a board member for the Watts Gang Task Force. Dr. Leap has authored numerous reports, chapters, and books, including *Jumped In: What Gangs taught me about Violence, Drugs, Love and Redemption* with all proceeds going to Homeboy Industries and *Project Fatherhood: A Story of Courage and Healing in one of America's Toughest Communities* with all the proceeds going to Project Fatherhood. Her latest book *Entry Lessons: The Stories of Women Fighting for their Place, their Children and their Futures after Incarceration* was published in 2022, with all proceeds going to the *A New Way of Life* Reentry Program.

Dr. Leap has been recipient of numerous awards and honors, including being named one of the 50 Most Influential Women in Los Angeles (2012) and being given the Hero Award for Commitment to Families of Murder Victims (2017). In 2019, she was deeply honored to receive the UCLA Distinguished Teaching Award and has been inducted into the California Social Work Hall of Distinction.

