

## **Molly Munger, Founding Co-Director**



Molly Munger is a co-founder and director of the Advancement Project, a public policy change organization rooted in the civil rights movement. Founded in 1999, Advancement Project engineers large-scale systems change to remedy inequality, expand opportunity and open paths to upward mobility. Molly brings an extensive background of legal expertise to the Advancement Project, including twenty years as a federal prosecutor and business litigator. Between 1994 and 1998, Molly served with her current law partner, Connie Rice, as Western Regional Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Molly also served as an Assistant U.S.

Attorney, a partner in the all-women litigation firm Baird, Munger & Meyers, and a partner in the Los Angeles office of New York-based Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson.

Together with Advancement Project Co-Directors Connie Rice and Steve English, Molly launched a coalition lawsuit, *Godinez v. Davis*, which won approximately \$1 billion for new school construction in Los Angeles and other urban areas – representing the reclaiming of funds previously slated for less crowded, more affluent suburban school districts. Advancement Project was then instrumental in crafting and shepherding three school construction bond initiatives, raising \$25 billion for new and renovated facilities throughout the state. As a result of these efforts, over 66 new schools were built in Los Angeles to relieve chronic overcrowding and over 1 million school spaces were created or renovated throughout California.

In recent years, Molly has become deeply involved in efforts to improve and expand early childhood education in California. Her work was critical to the development of thousands of preschool spaces that serve low income children in Los Angeles County, and California's Preschool Challenge, her report on statewide preschool space shortfalls, spurred the creation of the Speaker's Task Force on School Facilities.

Molly also spearheaded the founding of the Water Cooler network of advocates, bringing together diverse stakeholders from across the state to build consensus for policy solutions that support the needs of children from birth to five. Through quarterly meetings and an annual conference that draws more than 500 education advocates, the Water Cooler elevates the needs of California's youngest children to the forefront of policy decisions and unites a diverse coalition of unlikely allies to champion their cause.

Molly took a greater stance in supporting the needs of California's students by supporting the Our Children, Our Future tax initiative in 2012. Our Children, Our Future would have provided dedicated funding to an entire generation of children to restore the public education programs and services they need to succeed in the workforce and double the existing funding to expand and improve the early learning opportunities for children across the state. Though the measure failed to pass, the effort has opened many opportunities and conversations which Molly continues to pursue further.

Molly is a graduate of Radcliffe College and Harvard Law School. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the James Irvine Foundation and UNITE-LA. She is a former commissioner on the First 5 California Commission and former board member at Children Now, Occidental College and the Westridge School for Girls.