

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF
BLACK LAWYERS

PROFILES OF ATTORNEYS
IN THE STRUGGLE

(NCBL Educational Project, 2009)

INTRODUCTION

The NCBL Educational Project is a preliminary effort to capture some of the rich history and background of the lawyers who stepped forward to be part of the National Conference of Black Lawyers from the beginning. They recognized the importance of collective work to address the many challenges confronting their communities. One of the things I found most fascinating while editing the profiles is the rich diversity of experiences that made up NCBL's membership and leadership. Sometimes as we get caught up in the day-to-day struggles, we often overlook the tremendous pool of skills and talents amongst us. We hope to expand this project to include other profiles of NCBL members and to have the information available on the website.

NCBL has been in existence for over 40 years and has had incredible successes in a number of arenas, yet there is still much work to be done. Our challenge now is to make sure that we continue to reach back and reach out to the African American law students and lawyers. There is value in diversity of opinions since we each have our own experiences and understandings. It is in the sharing of those opinions and experiences that good strategies are developed.

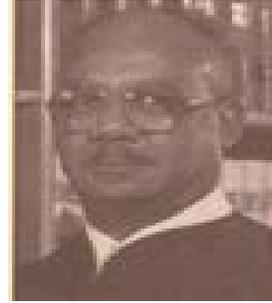
Special thanks and appreciation to Ande Durojaiye, J.D., a 2009 Georgetown Law School graduate from Lithonia, Georgia, who provided the research for this project.

Deborah A. Jackson, J.D., Ph.D.
Project Editor

Ande Durojaiye, J.D
Project Research

FRITZ ALEXANDER (April 24, 1926 - April 22, 2000)

Fritz Alexander was born Carl Bernard Zanders Jr. in Apopka, Florida. His uncle, Fritz Winfred Alexander, a lawyer in Gary, Indiana, gave him his name. He received his bachelor degree from Dartmouth University and his law degree from New York University Law School. In 1957, Alexander, along with David Dinkins (who became the first African American Mayor of New York City) and Thomas Benjamin Dyett, formed a law firm which became one of the leading black law firms in New York City at the time. Their clients included United Mutual Life Insurance Company and Allied Federal Savings & Loan in Queens. In 1970, Mr. Alexander was appointed a Civil Court judge, and also served in the State Supreme Court's Criminal Branch and in the Appellate Division. In 1985, when Gov. Mario M. Cuomo appointed him to the State Court of Appeals, he became the first black to serve on that court in other than an interim capacity. In 1992 he became deputy mayor of New York City.



DID YOU KNOW? While a student at Dartmouth University, Fritz Alexander interviewed Duke Ellington and wrote an article about Ellington's upcoming performance on campus.

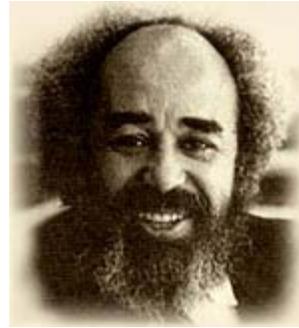
DERRICK A. BELL, JR. (November 6, 1932 - October 5, 2011)

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bell received an A.B. from Duquesne University in 1952 and an LL.B. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 1957. After graduating from law school, Bell took a position in the Civil Rights Division of the United States Justice Department. Bell later became assistant counsel for the NAACP, working alongside Thurgood Marshall. Bell became a law professor at Harvard University in 1969 and in 1980 he became Dean of Oregon University School of Law becoming the first African American to head a non-historically black law school. Bell is currently a professor at New York University Law School.



DID YOU KNOW? Derrick A. Bell, Jr. staged a five-day sit-in in his office at Harvard University to protest the school's failure to grant tenure to two legal scholars on staff, both of whom adhered to a movement in legal philosophy that claims legal institutions play a role in the maintenance of the ruling class' position.

HAYWOOD BURNS (1940 - April 2, 1996)



Haywood Burns was born in Peekskill, New York. He attended Harvard College and received his law degree from Yale University Law School. After graduating from Yale, Mr. Burns joined the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, but left shortly afterwards to become law clerk to Judge Constance Baker Motley of the United States District Court for the Southern District. From there, he became assistant counsel to the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc. In 1970, Burns was selected to serve as the first National Director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL). His work as National Director included testifying against the nominations of Judges Haynsworth and Carswell to the U.S. Supreme Court; representing Black students at Cornell University facing criminal charges from student demonstrations; serving as part of the legal team that successfully defended Angela Davis, who was acquitted of kidnapping and murder charges in connection with the invasion of a San Rafael, California courthouse to free black prisoners. After stepping down as NCBL's National Director in 1973, Burns was instrumental in coordinating the defense in Buffalo, New York of the Attica prisoners charged in 1971 uprising where State Troopers opened fire with machine guns and other weapons resulting in the deaths of 43 persons. In 1987, he was named Dean of the Law School at Queens College, becoming the first black dean of a law school in New York.

DID YOU KNOW? Haywood Burns served as general counsel to Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign in 1968.

ROBERT L. CARTER (March 11, 1917 - January 3, 2012)



Robert L. Carter was born in Careyville, Florida and was raised in Newark, New Jersey. Carter obtained his bachelor degree from Lincoln University, a law degree from Howard University, and his LLM degree from Columbia University. In 1944, Carter worked as a legal assistant to Thurgood Marshall who was general counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. In 1956, Carter became the general counsel for the Legal Defense Fund. During his tenure at the Legal Defense Fund, he won twenty-one of twenty-two cases that he argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. Richard Nixon appointed Carter to the federal court for the Southern District of New York.

DID YOU KNOW? Robert L. Carter was a lead attorney on *Sweatt v. Painter* and presented part of the oral argument to the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

FRED D. GRAY (December 14, 1930 -)

Fred D. Gray was born in Montgomery, Alabama to Nancy and Abraham Gray. Gray graduated from Alabama State University in 1951 and received his law degree from Case Western Reserve in 1954. When Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 for refusing to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, Gray at the age of 24 became her attorney. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Gray also represented Dr.



Martin Luther King, Jr. and other participants of the year-long protests. In 1956, Gray was an attorney in the boycott's civil suit, *Browder v. Gayle* that integrated the buses in Montgomery. In 1970, Gray became only one of two African Americans elected to the Alabama state legislature since Reconstruction.

DID YOU KNOW? In 1972, Gray brought a class-action lawsuit against the federal government on behalf of those involved in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, a government sponsored program that left black men untreated for syphilis. In 1997, the government settled the lawsuit, but failed to admit any wrongdoing. However, his legal actions influenced President William Jefferson Clinton to issue a formal apology to the study's participants in 1997.

TIMOTHY L. JENKINS

Timothy L. Jenkins is currently chairman of the board of Unlimited Vision Multimedia, Inc. and the former publisher of the Smithsonian's America's Visions magazine. He served as the interim president of the University of the District of Columbia and was the founder of the international management firms, The MATCH Institution and the Near East Division of the Development Assistance Corporation, devoted to Third World economic and management solutions. Jenkins served as a trustee, Professor of Administrative Law and Outstanding Professor of Law at Howard University. He was instrumental in creating the first all-black on-line forum on the Internet and sits on the board of directors of National Instructional Television, with an interstate network of FCC licenses. For five years he was the chief lobbyist for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Jenkins earned his Juris Doctor Degree from Yale University Law School and his Bachelor of Arts degree from Howard University.



DID YOU KNOW? : Timothy Jenkins was appointed by President Carter and confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service. In the 1980s, he helped to define the national concepts of electronic mail.

CHESTER I. LEWIS (1929 - 1990)

Chester Lewis was born in Hutchinson, Kansas. His father was editor of the African American newspaper *The Hutchinson Blade*, which attacked local practices of racial segregation. His mother was a teacher and founder of the Delta chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at the University of Kansas in 1916. Lewis received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Kansas. Lewis served as the president of the Wichita Chapter of the NAACP. In 1962, he was among the leaders of the "Young Turks," a national movement within the NAACP that sought to shift the organization's traditional focus of seeking change through court action and legislation to include strategies of non-violent protest and direct action.



DID YOU KNOW? Chester Lewis initiated the first public sit-in demonstration in Wichita and once obtained the acquittals of 110 civil rights demonstrators at the University of Kansas in 1965.

CHRISTINE DENNIS LEFLORE

Ms. LeFlore received her bachelor and law degrees from Howard University. She later received her LL.M from Yale Law School. After law school, she served as staff attorney with the Law Reform Unit of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program. She later served as an Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Economic Development at the United Planning Organization where she monitored legislation that affected community action agencies. Ms. LeFlore was an attorney in private practice with the firm of Walls & Walls where her practice consisted of personal injury, traffic defense, rent control, landlord-tenant, workers' compensation, employment, and general civil litigation before the local courts of the District of Columbia.

DID YOU KNOW? While at Howard Law School, Christine Dennis LeFlore was an editor of the Howard Law Journal and an associate editor of *The Barrister*, the Howard Law School newspaper.

CONRAD J. LYNN (1908 - November 16, 1995)

Conrad Lynn was born in Newport Rhode Island. He grew up in Rockville Center, Long Island. In 1932 he became the first African American to graduate from Syracuse University Law School. Lynn was a member of the Communist Party in the late 1920's. He was also part of the earliest Freedom Riders that road buses to the south to protest Jim Crow laws in the 1940's. In the early 1940's, Lynn represented his own brother who refused to be drafted because he opposed the Army's segregationist policies. Lynn also represented Puerto Rican "Independentistas" who wanted their island free from the United States. He also represented conscientious objectors to the Vietnam war before the U.S. Supreme Court. Another notable client of Lynn's was H. Rap Brown.

DID YOU KNOW? In what became known as the "Kissing Case," Conrad Lynn represented two young black boys from North Carolina, ages 7 and 9, who were charged with rape because they had kissed a young white girl while they were playing house. The boys, who were held for months without bail, were eventually released after supporters, including Eleanor Roosevelt, led an international campaign on their behalf.

RUBY MARTIN (February 18, 1933 - May 8, 2003)

Martin was born in Lake Village, Arkansas. She received her undergraduate degree from Fisk University in 1956 and her law degree from Howard University in 1959. Martin graduated with the highest average from law school and was class president. Martin became a staff attorney for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1960. The commission was charged with gathering information on minority groups nationwide. In 1967, she became the first director of the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. She was appointed Virginia's secretary of administration in 1990 by Gov. Douglass Wilder, her former classmate in law school.

DID YOU KNOW? Ruby Martin was recognized throughout her career for her contributions to civil and human rights. She received two honorary doctorates, Howard University's Distinguished Alumni Award, and two awards from the NAACP - the Freedom Fund Award and the Public Service Award.

FLOYD B. MCKISSICK (March 9, 1922 - April 28, 1991)



Floyd McKissick was born in Ashville, North Carolina. McKissick attended college at Morehouse College and North Carolina Colleges and later become the first African American to graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law School. In 1966 he became the leader of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Later he would found Soul City, a model city project located in Warren County, North Carolina funded by the Urban Growth and New Community Act as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. McKissick became a state district court judge in 1990.

DID YOU KNOW? Floyd B. McKissick successfully represented his daughter in her attempt to gain admission to a previously all-white public school. Despite the victory, McKissick later decided that integration only magnified the perils faced by many African American children

ERNEST N. MORIAL (October 9, 1929 - December 24, 1989)



Ernest N. Morial was born to Walter and Leone Morial in New Orleans, Louisiana. Morial graduated from Xavier University in 1951 and in 1954 became the first African American to receive a law degree from Louisiana State University. Morial was known for fighting many civil rights battles in the courtroom. He was the president of the New Orleans NAACP from 1962-1965. Morial became the first African American elected to the Louisiana State Legislature since Reconstruction in 1967. Morial later became the first African American Mayor of New Orleans in 1977. He served two terms as Mayor.

DID YOU KNOW? Ernest N. Morial married Sybil Haydel who was the Dean of Xavier University.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (June 13, 1937 -)

Eleanor Holmes was born in Washington, D.C. to Coleman Holmes and Vela Holmes née Lynch. She received her Bachelor degree from Antioch College in 1960, a Master degree from Yale University in 1963 and her LL.B from Yale Law School. After graduating from law school, she became a law clerk to Federal District Court Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. At the end of her clerkship, she served as an assistant legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.



Mayor John Lindsay appointed her to head the New York City Human Rights Commission and she held the first hearings in the country on discrimination against women. Later she was appointed by President Jimmy Carter as the first female chair of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Norton was elected in 1990 as a Democratic delegate to the House of Representatives where she continues to serve.

DID YOU KNOW? While in college Eleanor Holmes Norton was arrested for organizing and participating in sit-ins in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Ohio. While in law school, she traveled to Mississippi for the Mississippi Freedom Summer and worked with Medgar Evers.

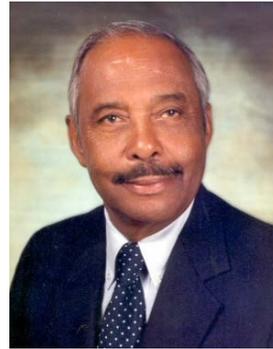
INEZ SMITH REID (1937 -)

Inez Smith Reid was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tufts University, a law degree from Yale Law School, and a Master of Arts from UCLA. Reid obtained a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a Master of Laws in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia, School of Law. Reid served as general counsel for the New York State Division for Youth and deputy general counsel for Regulation Review for the former Department of Health, Education and Welfare. She has served as Inspector General for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and also engaged in private practice with three law firms, including Graham & James and Lewis, White & Clay. She was appointed to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals by President Clinton in 1995.

DID YOU KNOW? Inez S. Reid has a twin brother George Bundy Smith who was a judge on the New York Court of Appeals.

JACK E. TANNER (1919 - 2006)

Born to Ernest and Emma Tanner, Jack E. Tanner was a life-long resident of Tacoma, Washington. Tanner joined the Army in 1943 and served in one of its segregated “Jim Crow” units. After returning from the war, Tanner attended the University of Puget Sound and the University of Washington Law School, receiving his J.D. in 1955. During his legal career, Tanner acted as the Tacoma president and regional vice president to the NAACP. After practicing over 20 years as an attorney in the Tacoma area, Tanner was nominated by President Jimmy Carter as a federal court judge in 1978. His appointment made him the first African American from Washington State to become a member of the federal judiciary.



DID YOU KNOW? In 1983, the Honorable Jack E. Tanner ruled that the State of Washington had knowingly and deliberately discriminated against women by underpaying those jobs that were at least 70 percent female and ordered that back pay be computed from September 1979 (the maximum possible under Title VII). The total amount was approximately a half billion dollars.