



# GATE CITY BAR ASSOCIATION

www.gatecitybar.org

March 2018

## GATE CITY BAR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD

### PRESIDENT

Clyde E Mize Jr.

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

Cinque M. Axam

### VICE PRESIDENT

Damon E. Elmore

### TREASURER

Andre' Dennis

### SECRETARY

Dana Stith-Gray

### ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Miguel A. Dominguez

### HISTORIAN

Caren Cloud

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Shawntel R. Hebert

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Bisa F. Ajanaku  
Kevin Coleman Jr.  
Mawuli M. Davis  
Jatrean M. Sanders  
R. Gary Spencer

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Honorable Ronald B. Ramsey Sr.  
Christopher Baker

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shyrl E. Beck

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Clyde E. Mize Jr., Esq.

### *Let's Keep Moving Forward To BETTER*

I am excited to say that we hit the ground running in 2018 with great programs, participation, and energy! Here are some quick highlights:

**January:** Saturday Lawyer Day sponsorship for the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation; Induction ceremony and reception for new officers and section leaders; Winter Mock Interview/Resume Review at King & Spalding.

**February:** A.T. Walden Civil Rights Project Kick-off event at the Georgia State University College of Law; Black History Month Program and Past Presidents' Reception; "Dinner and Conversation" at my home with nearly 50 young attorneys and special guests Monica Howard Douglas (Coca Cola), Meka B. Ward (The Home Depot), Christina Hadley Tanner (AmericasMart Atlanta), and Justin Tanner (Verizon).

As I look forward to our spring activities, my determination for us to realize *BETTER*, is stronger than ever. *BETTER* in our commitment to the mission of the Gate City Bar Association ("GCBA"); *BETTER* in our community engagement; *BETTER* in honoring our past. Many of you, through your conversation and actions thus far, have demonstrated your desire to realize *BETTER* in your personal and professional lives and *BETTER* for GCBA. Others of you have asked how you may get involved with this drive towards *BETTER*, while others are still questioning why you should get involved. To those of you who are still questioning, I say "JUMP UP AND LET'S GO"; we need all hands on deck.

We are a body of diverse legal professionals with varied talents, abilities and gifts. Individually, each of us zealously advocates for our clients' interests and take no prisoners. However, in focusing on our own individual advancement, some of us isolate ourselves and miss out on opportunities to allow others to help us to achieve our *BETTER*. This self-imposed isolation also keeps us

from helping our broader community and our legal profession to realize *BETTER* as well.

The truth is very simple: we need each other. In failing to seek the advice of other attorneys, I made mistakes, felt defeated and lost at times. I am grateful to those attorneys who have allowed me to

be transparent and to show that I don't always have it together. I am grateful to those who have encouraged me when I do well. These people have been there for me in the past and are now pushing me to achieve my *BETTER*, and I found them in the community of the Gate City Bar Association.

In addition to helping me to achieve my individual *BETTER*, GCBA has provided opportunities for engagement with volunteerism so that I could help others achieve their *BETTER*. Through programs such as our **Brother to Brother** mentoring program, our Black Law Student retreats, and our **Community Law Clinic**, I have been able to contribute in ways that I could not have if I stayed on the sidelines. Guess what? These opportunities still exist for you.

March is another great month of programming that will give you avenues to connect: Our annual Brother to Brother March Madness event on March 17 at the Mbar; Women's History Month Dinner at Maggiano's in Buckhead on March 20; and Excellence Through Education with Keenan R. Nix on March 22.

What *BETTER* do you need to realize in 2018? What are you supposed to do that you just don't know how to? Where are you supposed to go, but are unclear as to your path forward. Who are we going to impact as a body of legal professionals? Whatever it is, let's get there together as a community. Let's make this *BETTER* happen.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 13, 2018**  
MLK 50th Anniversary Symposium & Reception at the High Museum

**May 19, 2018**  
Community Law Clinic at Greenbriar Mall  
Noon-4:00 p.m.

**June 1-25, 2018**  
Justice Robert Benham Law Camp

**June 24, 2018**  
Law Day at Cascade UMC  
8:00 a.m.

**April 28, 2018**  
Youth and Law Summit

**May 29-July 5, 2018**  
Summer Associate Program

**June 13, 2018**  
Excellence Series: Civil Discovery  
State Bar of Georgia at 6:00 p.m.

*"Recommitting to our Mission, Engaging in our Community, Honoring Our Past"*

The views expressed in the Gate City Bar Association Newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the *Daily Report* or ALM MEDIA, LLC.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Thomas G. Sampson Sr., Esquire

Managing Partner, Thomas Kennedy Sampson & Tompkins LLP  
'82 President, Gate City Bar Association  
'02 Member, Hall of Fame



**Q. When did you first join Gate City Bar Association and why?**

I joined the Gate City in 1971. I joined because I recognized the importance of the work that had been done by it on behalf of black lawyers, and the work yet needed to be done. Besides, I knew there was strength in numbers. As the adage goes, “the strength of the wolf is in the pack”.

**Q. Do you recall your first meeting? What was it like?**

Yes. My first Gate City meeting was at Donn Clendenon’s restaurant on Hunter Street (now MLK, Jr. Drive). It was both exciting and memorable.

Remarkably, we could accommodate the entire membership around one large dining room table.

**Q. How did being a member of the Gate City Bar Association impact your career?**

In ways too numerous to count. The contacts, opportunities and benefits that being a Gate City member has afforded me, are immeasurable.

**Q. Why do you continue to be a member?**

Because I recognize the importance of the work that the organization had done and continues to do.

**Q. Did you know any of the Founders, if so, who do you remember and please describe them?**

Yes, my late cousin and law partner, R.E. Thomas Jr., was a Founder. He was a pioneer and trailblazer in the law and one of my mentors.

**Q. Favorite book?**

I have enjoyed many books of the John Grisham series.

**Q. Favorite sport?**

Hunting and deep-sea fishing.

**Q. Personal hero?**

My father, Daniel G. Sampson, who was a former law professor and Dean at North Central University law school, has always been my personal hero.

**Q. What advice would you give to a new lawyer?**

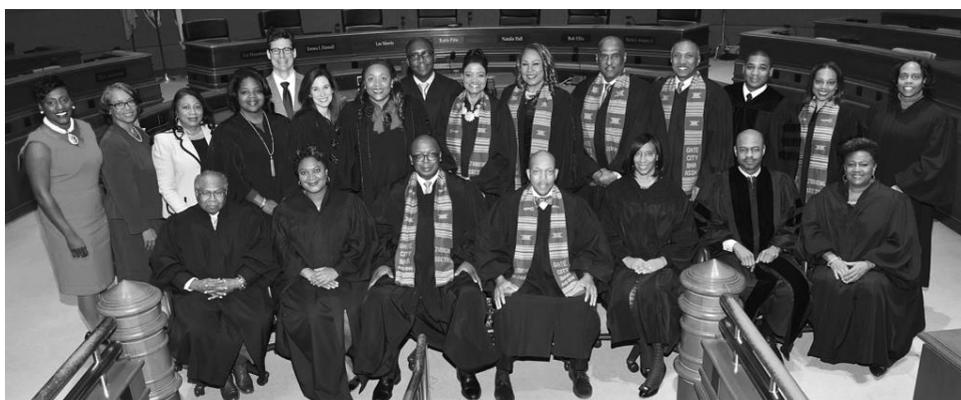
Work extremely hard and always maintain your professionalism.

**Q. Proudest accomplishment? Or memorable experience**

My proudest accomplishment is founding, maintaining and growing what is now the oldest African American law firm in the state. We celebrate our 50th anniversary in July 2021.

*Thomas G. Sampson Sr. and Thomas G. “Woody” Sampson are the only father and son to have served as Presidents of The Gate City Bar Association.*

## OUR EVENTS: AT A GLANCE



Installation Ceremony



Black History and Past Presidents' Reception



Young Lawyers' Dinner

*You can enjoy more pictures from Gate City Bar events in the Gallery on our website at [www.gatecitybar.org](http://www.gatecitybar.org).*

## DID YOU KNOW...

By: *Shawntel R. Hebert, Esq., Foundation Chair*

- Did you know... The Gate City Foundation, Inc. (“the Foundation”) was formed in 1982 as the non-profit arm of the Gate City Bar Association.
- Did you know... the Foundation raises money annually to support our community-based programs, including:
  - *Youth & the Law Program* (April) – one-day event presenting exciting legal topics geared toward middle and/or high school students;
  - *Community Law Clinic* (May) – free legal consultations to members of the community in various areas of the law at Greenbriar Mall;
  - *Summer Associate Program* (May) – enthusiastic minority law students are paired with minority firms, legal departments, or judges for a 6 week clerkship program and summer lunch series;
  - *Justice Benham Law Camp* (June) – approximately 20 high school students from across metro Atlanta participate in a 3 week law camp experience, including a mock trial competition and internship; and
  - *Law Student Scholarships* (November) – outstanding minority law students are awarded scholarships, which may be used for law school or bar-related expenses.
- Did you know... the annual *Hall of Fame Gala* in November is the Foundation’s signature fundraiser. At the Gala, we induct legal giants into our Hall of Fame and award scholarships to deserving law students. This year we are celebrating **the 70th Anniversary of the Gate City Bar Association.**
- Did you know... the Foundation also hosts the annual *Founders’ Cup Golf Tournament* to commemorate the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark desegregation decision in *Holmes v. City of Atlanta*, which also raises scholarship dollars.
- Did you know... that YOU can support the Foundation every year by becoming a *Gate Keeper* and making a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation. Thank you again to our 2017 Gate Keepers. We look forward to another year of giving and service!

Perhaps you already knew all of this, but did you also know that Gate City’s Immediate Past President automatically chairs the Foundation for one year? That means as the 2018 Chair I will be seeking donations all year long! Thanks for reading and know that every dollar you contribute truly goes to worthy programs!

---

## VOLUNTEERING WITH AVLF

By: *Rahn L. Gatewood, Esq.*

As a Gate City volunteer with Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Program, I had the pleasure of representing Mr. Wilbert Thomas (a senior citizen and resident of Riverdale, Georgia) against his apartment management company. I filed a claim against the management company and its insurer for constructive eviction. After lengthy negotiation, I successfully settled his claim for \$5,000.00. The claim arose in early February of 2017, after Mr. Thomas advised his apartment management company of a very pungent odor emanating throughout his unit. Management eventually came to his home and concluded that an animal had died in his ceiling. Maintenance then attempted to remove the animal from the ceiling by cutting a hole in the ceiling. This attempt was unsuccessful. About three days later, maintenance returned only to put moth balls in the ceiling and made no further attempts at removing the dead animal. Mr. Thomas even slept with the air conditioner on during winter because blowing heat only exacerbated the odor. He eventually sought emergency care due to severe illness and stomach pains from the toxic smell. The smell was so bad that it ruined his personal property and items in his refrigerator. Mr. Thomas is very pleased with the settlement and believes he can start over with a fresh start.

---

## LAW STUDENT MOCK INTERVIEW AND RESUME REVIEW PROGRAM

By: *Christopher Bruce, Esq.*



On January 27, 2018 the Gate City Bar Association and Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys hosted another successful Black Law Student Mock Interview/Resume Review program. For years, minority attorneys give up their busy schedules to help the next generation of law students. Attorneys gave critical feedback on resumes and mock interviews to very receptive law students. The two organizations will team up again in the fall to host another successful program.

## MEET THE BOARD

### Clyde E. Mize, Jr. President

Clyde E. Mize, Jr. is a Partner in the Real Estate Practice in the Atlanta, Georgia office of Morris, Manning & Martin, LLP. He is the chair of MMM's Diversity Committee. Clyde earned his B.A. from the University of Illinois and his J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law. He is married to Ida Rose-Mize, DDS, and they have two children.



### Cinque M. Axam President-Elect

Cinque Mark Axam is the managing partner and founder of Axam~Roberts Legal Group, a criminal and civil litigation law firm. Cinque devotes much of his time to education and civic organizations. He served on the School Leadership Team in the City of Decatur.



### Damon E. Elmore Vice-President

Damon is General Counsel and Sr. Executive Director with Muncie Power Products. His work and practice areas focus on matters involving HR and Employment Law. He is a fan of pro bono, bar and community-related activities.



### Dana Stith-Gray Secretary

Dana Stith-Gray earned both a B.B.A. and J.D. from Howard University. A Detroit native, she has resided in Atlanta for nine years. She worked at the Fulton County Solicitor General's Office and is a partner at Garner Stith Gray LLC.



### Miguel A. Dominguez Assistant Secretary

Miguel A. Dominguez is currently a personal injury trial attorney at Morgan & Morgan. He began his legal career as a law clerk at the Georgia Court of Appeals. Miguel has been recognized by the National Bar Association's 40 under 40. He is also a past president of the DeKalb Lawyers Association.



### André Dennis Treasurer

André Dennis is the founder of The Dennis Law Firm, LLC, which is a boutique personal injury firm that advocates for injury victims across Atlanta and throughout Georgia. He received his undergraduate degree from Jackson State University and his J.D. from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.



### Caren Cloud Historian

Caren Cloud is the Legal Director for the Truancy Intervention Project Georgia (TIP Georgia), a dropout prevention program serving the state of Georgia. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University and the University of Georgia School of Law, Caren has worked in child advocacy for the past seventeen years.



### Shawntel R. Hebert Immediate Past President

Shawntel Hebert is a Partner at Taylor English Duma LLP in the Employment and Labor Relations practice group. A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Shawntel graduated summa cum laude from Howard University, in 2004 and received her juris doctorate degree from Emory University School of Law in 2007.



### Bisa F. Ajanaku Member-At-Large

Bisa F. Ajanaku is Senior Associate General Counsel at Grady Health System. Bisa is a graduate of the University of Georgia School of Law. She graduated from Agnes Scott College in 1995 and then obtained a M.A. in History at the historic Clark Atlanta University. Bisa is currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Georgia.



### Kevin Coleman Jr. Member-At-Large

Kevin is a native Atlantan and an associate at Troutman Sanders LLP. He completed his undergraduate studies at Morehouse College and attended law school at Georgia State University College of Law. He lives in Southwest Atlanta with his wife, Rae, and his son, Kevin III.



### Mawuli M. Davis Member-At-Large

Mawuli Mel Davis is a founding partner of the Davis Bozeman Law Firm where he leads the firm's Civil Rights Division. Attorney Davis attended the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. He earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Bowie State University and is a graduate of GSU Law.



### Jatrean M. Sanders Member-At-Large

Jatrean M. Sanders is a Staff Attorney to the Honorable Kimberly M. Esmond Adams, Fulton County Superior Court Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit. She attended law school at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and graduated magna cum laude from Spelman College. She is licensed to practice law in Tennessee and Georgia and currently chairs Gate City's Judicial Reception.



### R. Gary Spencer Member-At-Large

Gary Spencer opened his practice in 1997. He received his undergraduate and law degrees from Howard University. Currently he serves on the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors and was recently appointed to the Disciplinary Rules Committee. He and his wife enjoy an empty nest, along with Biggs, the bloodhound. They are active members in First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.



### Honorable Ronald B. Ramsey Sr. Chair, Judicial Section

Judge Ronald B. Ramsey Sr. graduated with honors from North Carolina Central University in 1981 and from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School. Judge Ramsey was appointed by Governor Nathan Deal as an Associate Judge of the inaugural DeKalb County State Court-Traffic Division. He has been married to his wife, Doris, for over 31 years and they have two children.



### Christopher Baker Chair, Paralegal Section

Christopher "Chris" Baker is a senior paralegal at The Firm of Dawn M. Jones, LLC. A native of Athens, Georgia, Chris received his undergraduate degree from Clark Atlanta University and his paralegal studies certificate from Emory University in 2007.

