



GATE CITY BAR ASSOCIATION

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July 2019

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Cinque M. Axam, Esq.

Let the Celebration be our Motivation

The day started like most others for me. I sat down to my morning coffee and my email. Among the fifty or so that I needed to get through before I headed off to court, there was one in particular that caught my eye and caused me to take a moment for reflection – the swearing in of our own Shondeana Crews Morris as Superior Court Judge of the Stone Mountain Circuit. Just the day before, the Governor had announced the appointment of Judge Joyette Holmes, Cobb Judicial Circuit's chief magistrate judge, as the first woman and African American to serve as Cobb County's District Attorney. We can be proud of both appointments.

I smiled and wondered if the Gate City founders were hosting a heavenly celebration. After all, the hope for this kind of progress was a significant part of the motivation for creating the Gate City Bar Association in 1948 -- to assure that African Americans were included in every aspect of the legal profession.

But as proud as our founders would be and as proud as we most certainly are, we must also remind ourselves that there are still miles to go. These appointments most assuredly are markers of progress, but even as we celebrate how far we have come in including women and minorities in meaningful positions and roles in the judicial system, we must use the celebratory moments to remain motivated to move beyond being "the first", "the only" or one of "the few."

In 2017, the American Bar Association reported that only five percent of active attorneys identified as African American. (Laffey, Allison. "Diversity and Inclusion in the Law: Challenges and Initiatives." ABA Journal, May 2018). The American Lawyers 2019 Diversity Scorecard reveals that while there has been incremental growth, the representation of African American attorneys in larger law firms as associates and partners has remained stagnant for nearly a decade. (Jackson, Dylan. "Diversity Scorecard: African American Lawyers are Being Left Out." The American Lawyer, May 2019.)

Diversity in the legal profession contributes to the perception and the reality of an equal and fair judicial system, one of the foundational pillars of American

democracy. It serves as a natural check and balance on discrimination. It shapes perspectives, and supports the creation of innovative approaches in resolving client issues and conflicts. On a pure business level, it helps firms attract and retain the best and brightest to healthy work environments, and contributes to the expansion of the client base.

So how do we get there? Each of us must give voice about the benefits of diversity and inclusion -- from wherever we are positioned in the legal profession. When did you last visit your law school and ask about their scorecard for admissions and programs to promote inclusiveness of women and minorities? When did you last challenge your law firm to do more -- to look beyond the same schools when recruiting for new attorneys or to create strategies to promote retention, or to consider partnering with smaller minority firms to provide legal services, for example? When did you last volunteer your time to serve as a mentor? We can all become mentors -- encouraging African American high school and college students to consider careers in the legal profession and providing resources that will prepare them for admission to law school, or offering African American law students opportunities for networking that can open career pathways, or exposure through internships.

And yes, we can and we should celebrate the "wins" -- the progress along the way. And so, today, personally and on behalf of Gate City Bar Association, I offer my congratulations to Judge Morris and DA Holmes. Let's take a moment and celebrate the well-earned achievements. But in the moment of celebration, let's find the motivation to continue the journey. I challenge each of us to recommit ourselves to moving the needle of inclusion -- to create a legal profession that is reflective of who we are and serves us all.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE (20-26TH) NEW YORK, NEW YORK	JUDICIAL RECEPTION (20TH) KING & SPALDING @ 6PM EXCELLENCE SERIES (22ND) STATE BAR OF GEORGIA @6PM	GCBA TRIP-COSTA RICA BLSA RETREAT (27TH-28TH)	FALL GARDEN PARTY ANNUAL MEETING AND GCBA ELECTIONS

"Foundation. Future. Fellowship."

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

“THE APPOINTMENT”

The Honorable Shondeana Crews Morris, Judicial Chair

Monday, June 17, 2019, I stood before a crowd of several hundred people, with my right hand proudly raised and my left hand on the Bible that my husband, also a member of our profession, held as Governor Brian Kemp administered the oath of office. I am extremely honored to serve you and the citizens of DeKalb County, Georgia in this ancient profession, as I endeavor to bring justice to all who appear before me in the Superior Court of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit.

As the late United States Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall stated, “None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody – a parent, a teacher, a coach – bent down and helped us pick up our boots.” I humbly stand on the shoulders of countless extraordinary attorneys and judges of the Gate City Bar Association, yet there is one extraordinary person who I will highlight, Judge Thelma Cummings Moore. In 1985, Judge Moore was the first African-American female appointed by Governor Joe Frank Harris to a state-level court in Georgia. She served on the bench for more than 30 years. Today, I am the first African-American female appointed to the Superior Court of Georgia by Governor Brian Kemp.

As a Superior Court judge, I will administer justice without respect to person, and do equal rights to the poor and rich; I will ensure that judicial proceedings are

fair, efficient, and conducive to the ascertainment of the truth. I will comply with the letter and spirit of the Code of Judicial Conduct. I will be courteous, respectful and civil to parties, lawyers, jurors and witnesses; I will decide cases promptly and give all cases deliberate, impartial and studied analysis and consideration.

I promise to not only administer justice but to continue serving the community. Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American female elected to the U.S. Congress said, “Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth.” The Gate City Bar Association upholds the legacy and tradition of service with the Justice Benham Law Camp, the Summer Associate Program, and the Community Law Clinic, to name a few. I am honored to serve each and every one of you as your Superior Court Judge of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR: GCBA COMMUNITY LAW CLINIC

By: Candis R. Jones, Esq.

On May 18, 2019, the Gate City Bar Association hosted its annual Community Law Clinic at Greenbriar Mall in Atlanta, GA. What began ten years ago as a passion and critical area of interest for Fulton County Superior Court Judge and Gate City Bar Past President, Judge Shukura Ingram Millender, has turned into the organization’s key community service project. Over the past decade, the clinic has been able to respond to the interests of the Atlanta Community by offering legal advice in those key areas disproportionately impacting the local community.

This year was no different!

Partnering with the Fulton County Solicitor’s Office, the Law Clinic was able to provide legal advice to over 100 clinic attendees in the areas of foreclosure (and home defense), criminal law (including expungements of misdemeanor crimes in Fulton County), family law and consumer rights. While the event is geared towards assisting the citizens of Atlanta, it is without a doubt just as rewarding to the clinic’s volunteers. What is most often heard from the clinic’s attendees and volunteers is that everyone looks forward to the next law clinic. It goes without saying that the clinic’s committee looks forward to hosting the annual event. That said, see you next year!



YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISIONS

By: Kevin Coleman, Esq.

On June 8, 2019, the Gate City Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division (“YLD”) hosted “In House Career Paths: Brunch and Discussion” at the home of Joy White, Vice President of Legal Affairs, General Counsel, and College Secretary at Morehouse College. This event was the first in our series of dinners and lunches for YLD members. The 20 guests in attendance enjoyed brunch while discussing the path from law school to in-house counsel with our speakers. Speakers included Ms. White, Rahn Gatewood, Associate Vice President of Legal Affairs, Associate General Counsel and Deputy Compliance Officer at Morehouse College, and Christopher Cottrell, Division Lead Counsel and Lead

Real Estate Counsel at Aaron’s Inc.

On June 15, 2019, the YLD partnered with Project Open Hand Atlanta for the first of two 2019 YLD community service events. The fifteen volunteers spent three hours portioning and packing nutritious meals for seniors and the critically ill.

The YLD’s general purpose is to serve the needs of young lawyers (lawyers that are thirty-five or younger or that have practiced for five years or fewer) through CLEs, networking events and other programming. Our four primary areas of focus are professional and personal development, community service, student outreach and networking. We hope to see you at one of our future events!



The Gate City Foundation, Inc.

cordially invites you to attend
the 20th Annual Hall of Fame Gala
Saturday, November 9, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.
Grand Hyatt Buckhead in Atlanta

2019 Hall of Fame Inductees



Tricia (CK) Hoffler
The CK Hoffler Firm



John L. Kennedy
(posthumously)



Vernon S. Pitts Jr.
Atlanta Circuit Public Defenders Office



FEATURED SPEAKER

Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr.
Distinguished Princeton University Professor and Chair
MSNBC Contributor & Panelist

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For tickets and sponsorship opportunities contact info@gatecitybar.org

The Gate City Bar Association

Invites You to

“EXCELLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION: PREPARING FOR GREATNESS”

Please join us as we embark upon the fourth year of offering our continuing legal education series “Excellence Through Education” designed to equip lawyers with practical skills for enduring success.

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Keenan R. S. Nix, Esq.
Justin D. Miller, Esq.

March 6, 2019 ----- Trial Excellence: “Trial By Human: How to Keep it 100 For Juries”
June 25, 2019 ----- Civil Discovery: “Medical Evidence Depositions for Use at Trial”
August 22, 2019 ----- Settlement & Negotiation: “The Final Word on Holt Demands”
November 21, 2019 ----- Bu\$ine\$\$ Development: “Case Study on How To Make It Rain”

State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
6:00 p.m.

**CLE credit pending
RSVP to info@gatecitybar.org
by August 20th for August 22nd program

A catered reception will follow. The series is free.
Questions: Contact Shyril Beck at info@gatecitybar.org

BREAKING NEWS!! NBA affiliate chapters GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK WOMEN ATTORNEYS, GATE CITY BAR ASSOCIATION and THE CHARLES W. ANDERSON, JR. BAR ASSOCIATION, INC. proudly endorse CK, ALL THE WAY, FOR THE NBA!



VOTE CK HOFFLER for President-Elect | 2019-2020
on July 23, 2019 at the National Bar Association 94th Annual Convention & Exhibits
| Sheraton Hotel | New York, NY

Professional Experience

- Dedicated, Trusted and Visionary Servant Leader
- Proven Nationwide Trial Lawyer and Civil Rights Advocate
- Licensed to Practice Law in 5 states
- Fluent in French and Proficient in Spanish and Portuguese
- Nationally and Internationally Sought After Trial Master Faculty
- Recipient, Numerous National Awards for Accomplishments and Achievements
- Extensive Press and Media Experience
- CEO, The CK Hoffler Firm
- Counsel to Rev. Jesse Jackson for over 30 years

NBA Experience

- NBA Life Member
- General Counsel
- Board Member
- Fundraiser
- Consistent NBA Sponsor and Contributor
- Recipient, Numerous Presidential Awards
- CLE Presenter
- Active Member Over Two Decades
- NBA Convention Co-chair

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PHOTO GALLERY

