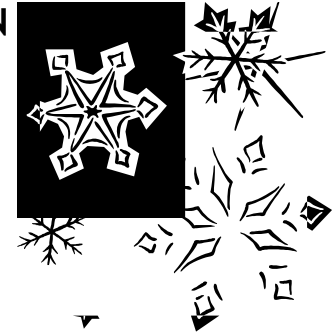
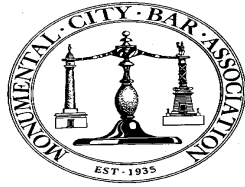


MONUMENTAL CITY BAR ASSOCIATION



MONUMENTAL MINUTES - FEB. "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" EDITION

MONUMENTAL QUOTES

Most history is a record of the triumphs, disasters and follies of top people. The black hole in it is the way of life of mute, inglorious men and women who made no nuisance of themselves in the world.

- Philip Howard

History is the record of an encounter between character and circumstance

- Donald Creighton

A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the sound of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

- Jawaharial Nehru (Indian Prime Minister)

Throughout history it has been the inaction of those who could have acted the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it

possible for evil to triumph.

- Haile Selassie

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Neil E. Duke

History is truly our most important instructor. Knowing (and learning), from our past is the key to our future success. During this Black History Month please be mindful of the sacrifices of the many brave men and women of the civil rights movement. The legacy paved by our elders is remarkable and their sacrifices must never be forgotten. The Monumental City Bar Association is indeed one of the many chains that has served to pull and tug the concept of equal justice under the law across this nation's legal landscape and each of our Members is a link on that chain. This month, let us celebrate together a noble history and reaffirm our commitment to pull the full weight of justice to the top of the mountain.

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A MONUMENTAL FEBRUARY

February 3, 2005 General Membership Meeting

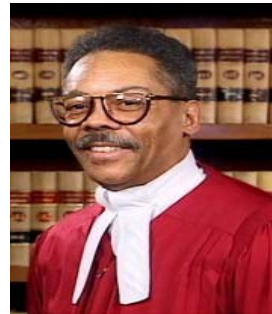
The Honorable Vicki Ballou-Watts,
Circuit Court for Baltimore County



Our featured guest for this month's General Membership Meeting on February 3rd was the **Honorable Vicki Ballou-Watts** who offered her own inspiring account of triumph over adversity. On behalf of the Board, our thanks to Judge Ballou-Watts. Her life's story of personal and professional accomplishments demonstrates that all things are possible through faith and dedication.

February 17, 2005 Joint Black History Month Dinner: The Civil Rights Road to Annapolis

Chief Judge Robert M. Bell,
Maryland Court of Appeals



Professor Larry S. Gibson

The February 17th Joint Black History Month Dinner was co-sponsored by the Maryland State Bar Association, the Bar Association of Baltimore City and the Monumental City Bar Association. The focus of the evening was Maryland's unique experience during the civil rights era. The featured honoree for the event was none other than **Chief Judge Robert M. Bell**. It was an evening of fellowship (about 500 attendees), brilliant oratory (with special thanks to **Professor Larry S. Gibson**), and high humor (the video tribute to Chief Judge Bell deserves an Oscar). Kudos to **Event Chair, the Honorable Marcella A. Holland**

and the entire Dinner Committee for their hard work. The Committee consisted of the following persons:

Brian Bishop, Esquire;

Beverly B. Carter, Esquire,
Monumental Member;

Wanda A. Claiborne;

Beverly Hughes, Esquire,
Monumental Member-At-Large;

Nicole Love-Kelly, Esquire,
Monumental NBA Delegate;

Eric Myers, Esquire;

Ron Richardson, Esquire,
Monumental Member;

Carrie Riley, Esquire;

Katherine T. Sanzone; and

Michelle Wilson, Esquire,
Monumental Member.

(**Editor's Note:** Michelle Wilson, Judge Holland's law clerk, is to be commended for exceptional job in creating the video presentation).

UPCOMING MONUMENTAL EVENTS

Thursday, March 3rd, Monumental General Membership Meeting, at 5:45 p.m. (details regarding location and featured guest(s) will be forthcoming).

Wednesday, March 9th - Please mark your calendars because a special evening reception/dinner is being planned, featuring a

prominent **African-American attorney**, who is certainly no stranger to our nation's current civil rights agenda. Further hints would reveal his/her identity. For those who cannot guess the identity of our dinner companion, details will be disclosed in the March newsletter and at the March General Membership Meeting. Stay tuned.

MONUMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, DISTINCTIONS AND HONORS

Honors



Congratulations to Monumental Member, **Anthony I. Butler**, Esquire, on his recent appointment as General Counsel of the National Association of African Americans in Human Resources - Baltimore Chapter. With chapters in numerous cities across the country, the NAAHR is dedicated to providing a national forum where African Americans can share, gain information and provide leadership on issues affecting their individual careers and the quality of work life for other African Americans. Anthony operates a solo practice and specializes in corporate, estate employment and criminal matters. He may be reached at 443.851.9625

or (anthony@abutlerlaw.com and www.abutlerlaw.com).

Honors

Belated congratulations to **Ron Richardson**, Esquire (see below)!



Ron Richardson, Esquire (second from right), Monumental Foundation Chair, accepting an award last Fall for his work on the MSBA's "Living History Video." Ron is flanked by (from l-r), **Paul V. Carlin**, MSBA Executive Director, **Neil Helfrich**, MSBA President, **Gregg Landry**, Blue Rock Productions, and **Harry S. Johnson**, MSBA Immediate Past President.

Moving On Up!

Congratulations to Monumental Member, **Debra Thomas**, on the opening of her recently formed solo practice (6600 York Road, Suite 104, Baltimore, Maryland). Debra, who formerly served as staff counsel with Allstate Insurance Company, can be reached at 410.377.8261.

MONUMENTAL NEWS!!

I. Monumental Membership: We Did It!!!

Monumental has officially reached the **100** ("on the books") **Membership** mark for the 2004-

2005 term. This is the first time that this goal has been met in a number of years and we are only four months into the present term! Monumental is now setting its sights higher. If you haven't already completed and submitted your membership application and fee (if applicable), please consider joining the effort to make this a "Monumental Membership Year." In celebration of our accomplishment, in the coming weeks, Members will receive a personal thank you letter, a 2004-2005 Membership Card and, as a special gift, a commemorative Monumental lapel pin to proudly wear, which marks our 70th anniversary.

(Editor's Note: Words cannot express our deepest appreciation to everyone for the continued support. In fact, we expect the membership roster to balloon to nearly 120 members in short order due to pending applications which have not been processed!! This is nothing short of incredible. Thank you, thank you, thank you).

II. Monumental Finances: We Did It!!

With respect to our finances, long-standing Monumental Members recall the not too distant past wherein all of our financial reports were punctuated with the following disclaimer: *"Based on the revenues we have received and the debt we have and are incurring, Monumental Bar is still in a negative financial position. However, our financial situation would improve if we could*

get more members to pay their dues.”

One of the most important goals of this present administration was to bolster the Association’s financial health through fiscal responsibility and effective fundraising. Please know that we have now met and exceeded our financial goal for the entire term. Accordingly, we are now setting the bar even higher. For the specifics, including the tally, please attend the March General Membership Meeting.

(Editor’s Notes: Sound financial practices will afford our Association the opportunity to devise bigger and better public service and membership-driven projects. Again, your continued support is deeply appreciated).

III. **Congratulations!! Monumental City Bar Foundation Elections**

Congratulations to the **Monumental City Bar Foundation** regarding its recently held elections. The Foundation is often described as the philanthropic companion of the Association.

The current slate of officers for the Foundation are as follows:

Ron Richardson, Esquire - Chair
Beverly Carter, Esquire - Vice-Chair
Sandra Holmes, Esquire - Secretary
Robert Gordon, Esquire - Treasurer

The current slate of Board Members are as follows:

3-year terms

Ron Richardson, Esquire
Beverly B. Carter, Esquire
Sandra Holmes, Esquire
Honorable Pamila Brown
Honorable Bonita Dancy
Honorable Marcella A. Holland

2-year terms

Robert Gordon, Esquire
Charles Byrd, Jr., Esquire
Honorable Arrie W. Davis
Wilhelm Joseph, Esquire
Alice Pinderhughes, Esquire

1-year terms

James B. Butler, Esquire
Reuben Lawson, Esquire
Hassan Murphy, Esquire
Anthony Robinson, Esquire

IV. **Monumental Date With The United States Supreme Court**

Thanks to the effort of Monumental Community Outreach Chair, **Valda Ricks, Esquire**, Monumental has secured a date with the **United States Supreme Court** on November 14, 2005 for a group admission. In order to be admitted, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) you must be a member in good standing in your state bar;
- (b) admitted to practice for three years;
- (c) pay a \$100 application fee; and
- (d) you must be sponsored by two members of the Supreme Court bar.

It is our intent to secure transportation so that everyone can travel together. The outing will most probably also include a tour of the Supreme Court and a group dinner that evening after everyone is admitted.

If you are interested in being admitted to practice before the Supreme Court and would like to join your Monumental friends and colleagues on November 14th, please contact Valda, at (410) 333-4900, x 249.

Applications for admittance can be downloaded through the Supreme Court's website, www.supremecourts.com.

Request your certificate of good standing from the Maryland Court of Appeals around September 15th (certificates are only good for 60 days and costs \$7), and ensure that your complete package (certificate of good standing and \$100 money order made payable to the Supreme Court), is forwarded to Valda no later than October 1st.

V. Monumental Technology Offering - Free Computer Equipment!

For those who missed the recent email announcement, here is a reprint of the offering. Many thanks to those who have already responded.

“An acknowledged dilemma is the plight of small and solo African American legal practices that do not have access to state of the art

technology. Unfortunately, sometimes up-to-date computer equipment is a luxury. In honor of our 70th-year anniversary, Monumental hopes to bridge the gap for those in this predicament. On this note, we have secured a number of gently-used modern **computer monitors** (a fair amount of 19-inch screens), courtesy of Ober Kaler, to distribute to Monumental Members, for your solo or small firm practice, **free of charge**. One caveat is that preference will be given to Members who are "on the books" for the 2004-2005 term. Please reply with your positive **responses no later than March 1st**, indicating the composition of your practice. A date and time for pick up will take place in early March, after the expiration of the deadline.”

MONUMENTAL COMMITTEES

History Committee

The History Committee, under the direction of **Sheila Tahir-Brooks**, Esquire, is diligently pursuing a Monumental project which involves creating a video archive of interviews of all of the African American judges in the State of Maryland. Thanks to Sheila, the endeavor is proceeding exceptionally well. Moreover, Monumental has secured an active and collaborative working relationship with the **Reginald F. Lewis Museum** in furthering this effort. Monumental is truly making history (pun intended)!

Young Lawyers' Committee

Please check out Monumental's web page through the MSBA for a membership survey related to our spring/summer Law Firm Survival Symposium for young African American attorneys. Your responses to the survey are greatly appreciated. Our collective thanks to **Ken June**, Esquire, Monumental Young Lawyers Chair for his efforts.

Judicial Selections Committee

Next up for the Committee are interviews for vacancies on the District Court for Wicomico County, Maryland. Anyone with an interest in participating on the Committee, please contact Committee Chair and President Elect, **Kendra Ausby**, Esquire at (410) 230-3135.

Legislative Committee

The 2005 General Assembly is now in gear and things are really heating up. Service on the Committee affords interested practitioners the opportunity to chart legislation, offer testimony on behalf of our Association and gain useful insight into the legislative process. For those with an interest in this Committee, please contact **Charles "C.J." Balint**, Esquire at (410) 922-0900.

MONUMENTAL LAW SCHOOLS

University of Baltimore School of Law BLSA

BLSA Banquet

Please mark your calendar for the **University of Baltimore School of Law BLSA banquet** on Saturday, April 30, 2005.

University of Baltimore School of Law

Sponsors needed for the **6th Annual Alumni & Student Golf Tournament**
When: Friday, May 20, 2005 (8:30 a.m. shotgun start)

Where: Waverly Woods Golf Course
Marriottsville, Md

Sponsorship Deadline: February 28, 2005. For more information regarding sponsorship opportunities or participation in this event, contact **Nicole Jones** in the Office of External & Alumni Relations at 410-837-4479 or najones@ubalt.edu

University of Maryland School of Law

BLSA Awards Banquet

Please mark your calendar for the University of Maryland School of Law BLSA Awards Banquet on Saturday, March 12, 2005. For further information please electronically contact **Tiffany Harvey** at tharv001@umaryland.edu.

A TRIP AROUND THE BAR

Alliance of Black Women Attorneys of Maryland

In honor of Women's History Month, the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys of Maryland will be collecting women's new and used clothing to be donated to "Suited to Succeed," a non-profit organization that helps women making the transition from underemployment or welfare to work. Please contact

Teresa Epps, Esquire, at 410.625.7961 for further details or to schedule a pick up.

Clothing can be dropped off at the following locations until March 4, 2005:

Erica LeMon, Esquire
Randall & Sonnier
10 N. Calvert St., Suite 903
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410.783.0500

Cheryl Haskins, Esquire
Baltimore City Law Department
City Hall - Room 31
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
443.984.2301

**Bar Association of Baltimore City -
Young Lawyers' Division**

What: Breakfast With The Bench:
The Notes & Bolts of Opening
Statements and Closing Arguments.

When: Thursday, February 24, 2005

Where: Ober, Kaler, Grimes &
Shriver, Suite 800, 120 E. Baltimore
St., Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Who: The Honorable Clifton J.
Gordy, Associate Judge Circuit
Court for Baltimore City

Space is limited so advanced
registration is required. Fax your
RSVP to 410.685.3420 or by email to
info@baltimorebar.org.

**Maryland State Bar Association -
Young Lawyers Section**

What: "How to Draft a Will"

When: Tuesday, March 1, 2005,
6:30 p.m.

Where: Franklins
5123 Baltimore Avenue
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781

Who: Karren Pope-Onwukwe,
Esquire

Hors d'oeuvres will be provided and
there will be a cash bar. Call Judy
at 410.685.7878 x3016 for further
information.

Maryland State Bar Association

Applications are being accepted for
the 2005-2006 Leadership Academy.
The deadline is March 31, 2005.
Please contact the MSBA for further
information (410.685.7878).

**Pro Bono Resource Center of
Maryland**

What: Family Law - Child Custody

When: Tuesday, March 8, 2005, 2 -
5 p.m.

For information regarding the
location for the training, cost or
other details, please contact the
PBRC at 410.837.9379

MICPEL

What: Institute on Nonprofit
Organizations

When: February 23, 2005

Where: Columbia, Maryland

What: Mechanic's Liens

When: February 25, 2005

Where: Columbia, Maryland

What: 40-hour Civil Mediation Seminar

When: March 7, 8, 10, 11, 2005

Where: Baltimore, Maryland

For further details regarding these events, please contact MICPEL at 800.787.0068, or visit their website www.micpel.edu.

Howard University School of Law

The Howard University Mock Trial Team is hosting the American Mock Trial Association's Eastern Regional Tournament February 26-27, 2005. Undergraduate students will compete as attorneys and witnesses in a trial-like setting. In order to make this competition a success, the University needs those in the legal profession to serve as judges for the mock trials.

This year, the first day of competition will be held in the Moultrie Courthouse and the second day of competition will take place on the campus of Howard University.

To sign up as a judge, or for more information, visit the web site, www.uscmocktrial.org/howard or contact me **Felicia R. Walker**, at 202-806-4909 or frw122@aol.com.

COMMUNITY CORNER

Community Business Development Workshop

What: Seeds of Successful Economic Development

When: March 1, 2005, 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Baltimore Marriott Waterfront

Workshops will feature innovative strategies regarding creative capital for business development, new market trends, etc.

The Maryland State Boys Choir African American Celebration Concert

What: Free Concert

When: Sunday, February 27, 2005, 5 p.m.

Where: Douglas Memorial Community Church, 1325 Madison Ave., Baltimore, Maryland

Enjoy a free concert with the family. The Choir is composed of more than 100 boys (ranging in age from 10 to 18), from all backgrounds. The performance will be a mix of classical, gospel, spiritual and jazz music. Free parking is available at the 1100 Madison Avenue State Office Parking Lot. For further details, please call 410.523.1700.

Walters Art Museum - Baltimore

What: Film Series: “Exploring African American Women Through Film.”

When: February 25, 2005, 7:30 p.m.

CenterStage - Baltimore

What: “Los Vendidos”: A Community Programs Department reading of a one-act play by Luis Valdez. Food provided by Little Havana.

When: February 25 & 26th, 2005

MONUMENTAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Nixon Peabody, Washington, D.C.

Affordable Housing Associate - with 3 - 6 years’ affordable housing regulatory or transactional experience, including knowledge of tax-exempt bonds and low income housing tax credits.

Insurance Litigation Associate - with 2 - 4 years’ experience in insurance coverage litigation and counseling.

For either position, contact **Karen E. Marr**, Attorney Recruitment Manager, Nixon Peabody LLP, 585.263.1465.

2005 Baltimore Community Fellowships Program

Deadline: Monday, April 4, 2005

The Baltimore Community Fellowships Program is pleased to announce the eighth round of its Community Fellowships, which will

provide up to ten awards to individuals who wish to work in Baltimore City in public or community service. The Community Fellowships Program was established to assist individuals wishing to apply their educational and professional attainments in service to disadvantaged communities. The goals of these fellowships are to encourage public and community service careers, to expand the number of mentors and role models available to youth in inner-city neighborhoods, and to promote initiatives and entrepreneurship that will empower those communities to increase opportunities and improve the quality of life for their residents.

Funding Criteria: In 2005, Community Fellowships will be awarded for work in Baltimore City. Applicants may either: 1) apply for a fellowship to work at a Nonprofit organization; or 2) apply for a fellowship to start a project. In cases where the fellowship takes place at an organization, applicants must secure sponsorship from that host organization. Up to 10 Community Fellowships are awarded.

Fellowship awards are in the amount of \$48,750 for a term of 18 months. Other entities, including the host organization, may augment the stipend. The Fellowship Program may provide limited relief for graduate school debt payments on a case-by-case basis. The host organization is expected to provide medical benefits, space, and overhead costs as necessary. In

cases of extreme hardship, the Program will reimburse the host organization or individual for the cost of medical insurance.

For more information about Community Fellowships or to receive an application, please visit the website at

www.soros.org/initiatives/baltimore, or contact the Open Society Institute-Baltimore (410) 234-1091.

For BLSA Members

Job Position: 0905 General Attorney

Job Description: Department of Transportation (DOT), Student Summer Employment Program, General Attorney, 0905.

Application open date: February 15, 2005

Application closing date: March 15, 2005

Salary Range: \$13.71 to \$32.38/hr

Location: 3 vacancies in Washington, D.C. For further information, please contact the (federal) DOT.

Office of the Attorney General

Deadline: February 28, 2005

The Office of the Attorney General has Assistant Attorney General, Paralegal and Legal Secretary Vacancies. Please visit their website, at www.oag.state.md.us/job.htm.

MONUMENTAL FEATURED ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

***American Bar Association
Commission on Racial and Ethnic
Equality in the Profession***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession (formerly the Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession) was created in 1986 to promote the "full and equal participation" of minorities in the legal profession. As part of this effort, the Commission serves as a clearinghouse for data regarding the status of minorities in the profession (see Miles To Go: The Progress of Minorities in the Legal Profession, 1998). Such data are critical for assessing the profession's progress toward "full and equal" racial integration.

In this Report, the Commission takes stock of the profession's progress as of 2000. Its goal is to provide a current, comprehensive picture of the status of minorities in the profession and to use this information to help the profession set an agenda for effective future action.

The Report is based on a comprehensive review of academic, government, professional, and popular data sources, and covers information released as recently as May, 2000. Its main substantive findings are as follows:

1. Minority representation in the legal profession is significantly

lower than in most other professions.

- Total minority representation in the profession currently is about 10 percent.

- Combined African American and Hispanic representation among lawyers was 7 percent in 1998, compared to 14.3 percent among accountants, 9.7 percent among physicians, 9.4 percent among college and university teachers, and 7.9 percent among engineers. The only professions with lower levels of minority representation were dentists (4.8 percent) and natural scientists (6.9 percent). The United States population is projected to be almost 60 percent "minority" by 2050.

2. Minority entry into the profession has slowed considerably since 1995.

- Nationally, minority representation among law students is holding at about 20 percent, despite the effects of voter initiatives and lawsuits banning affirmative action in law school admissions. However, the growth in minority law school enrollment, which had been steady since 1985, ended in 1995. Over the past five years minority law school enrollment has increased only 0.4 percent, the smallest five-year increase in 20 years.

- Minority enrollment has dropped significantly in top public law schools in states banning affirmative action. Last year, there were only two African Americans in the UCLA first year class; and only two African Americans and four Hispanics in the University of Washington Law School first year class.

- In 1999, the total number of minority law graduates in the United States dropped for the first time since 1985.

3. The distribution of minority lawyers still differs significantly from that of whites.

- Minorities are more likely than whites to enter government, public interest, and business, and less likely to enter private practice. In 1998, only 49.5 percent of minority law graduates entered private practice, compared to 57.1 percent of whites. African Americans, in particular, are less likely than other groups to enter private practice.

- Minority women are especially likely to take government and public interest jobs. In 1998, 23.6 percent of minority females graduate entered government or public interest, compared to 18.9 percent of minority men and 15.2 percent of whites. Only 46.5 percent of minority female graduates entered private practice, compared to 52.8 percent of minority men and 57.1 percent of whites.

- The percentage of minority law graduates entering business has increased substantially, from 6.3 percent in 1987 to 15.2 percent in 1998. As a result, the percentage of minority graduates entering the for-profit sector (private practice and business) has increased. In 1987, 60.9 percent of minority graduates entered the for-profit sector, compared to 72.6 percent of whites (a difference of 11.7 percent). In 1998, 64.7 percent of minority graduates entered the for-profit sector, compared to 70 percent of

whites (a difference of 5.3 percent). At the "sector" level, therefore, minority and white career paths are converging.

4. Minority representation in upper-level jobs remains minuscule, especially in the for-profit sector.

- Minority representation among law partners remains less than 3 percent in most cities.

- Minority partners tend to be "partners without power," clustered at the bottom of firm management and compensation structures.

- Minority representation among general counsel in the Fortune 500 is 2.8 percent.

5. Progress has been especially slow for minority women in the profession.

- Minority men significantly outnumber minority women in most upper-level jobs. Minority women make up less than 1 percent of capital partners in Chicago, and only 1.2 percent of income partners. There is only one minority female general counsel in the Fortune 500, only six minority female federal appellate judges, and two minority female law school deans.

- Law firm attrition rates for minority women are higher than for any other group. Fully 12.1 percent of minority women leave their firms within the first year of practice, and over 85 percent leave by the seventh year.

6. Minorities in general continue to face significant obstacles to "full and equal" participation in the profession.

- The attack on affirmative action in law school admissions threatens to have a devastating effect on minority applications and admissions to law school. An analysis of law school admissions decisions for the 1990-91 applicant pool (n=90,335) found that under a "numbers only" admissions policy (where admissions are based solely on applicants LSAT scores and undergraduate GPAs), African American admissions would drop 80 percent, Hispanic admissions would drop 51 percent, Asian American admissions would drop 37 percent, and Native American admissions would drop 55 percent.

- A numbers only admissions policy also would deny admission to many graduates who could perform well in law school if admitted, pass the bar, and enjoy successful legal careers. A just-published study of over 1,000 University of Michigan Law School graduates found that minority graduates were admitted to the bar at about the same rate as whites, and enjoyed equally successful careers, as measured by income, career satisfaction and public service.

- Minorities in law firms continue to have difficulty building business among white clients, and gaining access to mentors and training within the firm. Minority women, in particular feel isolated in white male dominated firms.

The Report concludes with recommendations to bar associations, law schools, and legal employers for promoting the "full and equal" participation of minorities in the profession.

MONUMENTAL FEBRUARY HISTORY

This month, courtesy of The African American Registry, the newsletter focuses on the accomplishments of four (4) historic African American attorneys.

First Black attorney practices before High Court

February 1

On this date in 1865, John Rock became the first African-American attorney to practice before the Supreme Court.

Rock was formerly a dentist and justice of the peace in Boston.

Jonathan Wright, lawyer and politician

February 11

On this date in 1809, Jonathan Jasper Wright was born. He was an African-American lawyer and politician.

Wright attended Lancaster University. Upon completing his legal studies, he attempted to stand the Pennsylvania bar, but it wasn't allowed, presumably because of his race. Wright accepted a position in Beaufort to open a school and teach the newly freed slaves. In addition to teaching school, he taught the Black citizens of the community. He lectured every Thursday evening on legal and political matters. He gave legal advice, particularly on labor relations.

After Congress passed the Civil

Rights Bill, Wright again petitioned the authorities in Pennsylvania to allow him to take the bar. His request was granted and he was admitted to the Bar on August 13, 1866. Upon taking the oath, Wright became the first Black man licensed to practice law in Pennsylvania. Wright returned to South Carolina as a legal advisor to General Oliver O. Howard. As such, he was the first Black man to practice law in South Carolina. Wright continued in this position until his election as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Wright played a major role in shaping the 1868 constitutional provisions relating to the judiciary. Wright was elected as senator from Beaufort County. He was also sworn in as a member of the South Carolina Bar on September 1, 1868. When Solomon Hoge was elected to Congress, an opening was created on the three member South Carolina Supreme Court. This set up a race between William Whipper, a House member, and Wright, a Senate member. Wright defeated Whipper 72-57.

He resigned his senate seat and was immediately sworn in as associate justice of the Supreme Court to complete Hoge's current term. Justice Wright served a seven-year tenure on the Supreme Court. After receiving criticism regarding his opinion in Ex Parte Norris, Justice Wright's conduct was investigated. This was obviously a pretext for removing him from the high Court. Justice Wright submitted his resignation in 1877. After leaving the Court, Wright moved to Charleston and set up a law

practice. He established Claflin College's law department and conducted classes at his office in Charleston. He served a number of years as a Claflin College trustee and was active in the Republican Party. Jonathan Jasper Wright died on February 19, 1885 of tuberculosis.

Louis Stokes, passionate about legal rights!

February 23

Louis Stokes was born on this date in 1925. He is an African-American politician and administrator.

From Cleveland, Ohio, he was one of two sons born to Charles and Louise Stokes. His father died when he was a young boy and Louis and his younger brother Carl, were brought up by their young widowed mother. Stokes was educated in the Cleveland Public Schools, graduating from his hometowns Central High School. Following three years in the United States Army from 1943 to 1946, he returned to Cleveland and attended Western Reserve University. He received his Doctor of Laws Degree from Cleveland Marshall Law School in 1953.

Prior to his entering politics, Stokes practiced law for fourteen years in Cleveland. He was chief trial counsel for the firm of Stokes, Character, Terry, Perry, Whitehead, Young and Davidson. Stokes participated in three cases in the United States Supreme Court, including the landmark "stop and frisk" case of Terry v. Ohio. He was elected to Congress in 1968, making

him the first African-American member of Congress from Ohio. He served 15 consecutive terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, ranking 11th overall in House seniority.

Stokes was the senior member of the Ohio congressional delegation, a co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus, and was a member of the House Ethics and Intelligence committees. When he retired from Congress, Stokes became the first African-American in the history of the U.S. Congress to retire having completed 30 years in office. He and his wife Jay are the parents of Shelley, Angela, Louis and Lori, and grandparents to Brett, Eric and Grant Hammond; Kelley and Kimberly Stokes; and Alexandra and Nicolette Thompson. Louis Stokes Esquire is a member of the board of directors of Forest City Enterprises, Inc.

Stokes is the recipient of 26 honorary doctorate degrees from colleges and universities across the nation, and several institutions, including Howard University and the National Institutes of Health, have recognized Stokes by naming certain buildings after him

A. L. Higginbotham, Judge, educator, and activist.

February 25

On this date in 1928, A. L. Higginbotham Jr. was born. He was an African-American federal judge, scholar, and civil rights advocate.

Born and raised in segregated

Trenton, New Jersey, A (loysius) Leon Higginbotham Jr. attended Purdue University in Indiana to study engineering. There, Higginbotham objected to the segregated conditions for African-Americans, particularly the unheated attic space that served as the dormitory for Black students. Convinced by the university president that Purdue intended to remain segregated, Higginbotham transferred to Antioch College in Ohio, from which he graduated with a B.A. degree in 1949. He entered Yale Law School in 1950.

That same year, he witnessed future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall argue the landmark *Sweatt v. Painter* school desegregation case, which inspired Higginbotham to use the courts to advance the rights of minorities. After graduating from Yale in 1952, Higginbotham worked in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in private practice and as an assistant district attorney. He also served as president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

President John F. Kennedy appointed him to the Federal Trade Commission in 1962, making Higginbotham the first African-American—and youngest person—to serve as a commissioner of a federal regulatory commission. Two years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him a federal district court judge. President Jimmy Carter elevated him to the Federal Court of Appeals in Philadelphia in 1977,

and in 1989, Higginbotham became the chief judge of that court. During his time on the bench, Higginbotham earned a reputation as a liberal jurist who believed that the law could be used to institute social justice for minorities.

Often referring to himself as a “survivor of segregation,” Higginbotham grew increasingly opposed to the conservative trend in U.S. politics during the 1980s and 1990s, which he believed reversed many of the gains made during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In response to this trend, he retired from the bench in 1993, stating that he sought to narrowly focus his legal practice and scholarly publishing to a few key social issues, including racism and the plight of the disadvantaged. He began teaching at Harvard University and practicing law in New York and Washington, D.C. In 1995 President Bill Clinton awarded him the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and in 1996 he received the NAACP’s Spingarn Medal.

Higginbotham continued to write, often-criticizing conservative policies that led to scaled-back social services and that sought to eliminate affirmative action programs in education and employment. For Higginbotham, the symbol of this conservative trend was the appointment in 1991 of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court seat that had been vacated by Thurgood Marshall. In response, Higginbotham made public objection, both to Thomas’s appointment to the Supreme Court

and later to his appearance as a speaker at the convention of the National Bar Association.

In addition to publishing more than 100 scholarly legal articles, Higginbotham undertook a four-volume series of books on race and American law. By the time of his death in December 1998, he had completed two volumes of the series, *In the Matter of Color* (1978) and *Shades of Freedom* (1996).

NEXT EDITION: March 2005

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