



101ST ANNUAL CONVENTION

*the Rhythm
of
Excellence*
THE POWER OF PROMISE,
THE ENERGY OF NOW

101ST ANNUAL *Awards* GALA

Thursday, July 30th, 2026

A close-up portrait of Ashley L. Upkins, a Black woman with her hair styled in a high bun. She is smiling warmly at the camera, wearing a dark blue or black blazer over a light-colored top, and a multi-strand pearl necklace. The background is dark and out of focus.

Ashley L. Upkins

Dear Honored Guests, Members, and Friends,

It is with deep pride and gratitude that I welcome you to the National Bar Association's Awards Gala, the crowning celebration of our 101st Annual Convention. Tonight, we gather not only to celebrate excellence, but to affirm the spirit of A New Dawn: Freedom and Justice Can't Wait – the vision that has guided our work this year.

This evening, we present the NBA's highest honors upon individuals whose leadership, service, and sacrifice have advanced our mission and elevated our profession. Their achievements remind us that the pursuit of equality demands action, not patience. Each honoree stands as a beacon lighting the path toward a more just and equitable future.

Our Gala would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors, the dedication of our officers, board members, committee chairs and members, NBA staff, and the countless volunteers whose time and talent made this convention a success. To each of you, thank you for helping us step into this new dawn with purpose and distinction.

As the evening's host, Sheryl Underwood, brings her wit and warmth to our stage, let us take this moment to celebrate how far we have come and to recommit ourselves to how far we still must go.

Thank you for joining us in celebration and for your continued support.

In Your Service,
Ashley L. Upkins, Esq.
83rd President



A century of connection, a future of possibility

American's centennial reflects a commitment to elevating the customer experience. It signifies connecting people safely and with care, recognizing that every flight is more than a journey – it's a story, a reunion, a new beginning.

Forever Forward™ means never standing still. It's a mindset driven by our passion for our customers.





Empowering the Next Generation of Lawyers

At AccessLex Institute, we support students through every step of the legal education experience – from choosing the right law school to planning a secure financial future. Since 1983, we have helped students turn their dream of becoming a lawyer into a reality.

Because we're here for law students. From admission to admission.

AccessLex.org

History

Twelve African-American pioneers with a mutual interest in and dedication to justice and civil rights for all, helped structure the struggle of the African-American race in America. George H. Woodson, S. Joe Brown, Gertrude E. Rush, James B. Morris, Charles P. Howard, Sr., Wendell E. Green, C. Francis Stradford, Jesse N. Baker, William H. Haynes, George C. Adams, Charles H. Calloway and L. Amasa Knox conceived the National Bar Association (NBA) on August 1, 1925. At that time, there were fewer than 1,000 African-American lawyers in the nation and fewer than 120 belonged to the Association.

The purpose was "to advance the science of jurisprudence, uphold the honor of the legal profession, promote social intercourse among members of the bar, and protect the civil and political rights of all citizens of the several states of the United States."

By 1945, there were nearly 250 members representing 25% of the African-American members of the bar. Over the past decade, the National Bar Association has grown enormously in size and influence.

Today, our organization is the oldest and largest national organization of attorneys and judges of color in the world, representing the interests of more than 67,000 lawyers, judges, legal scholars and law students internationally.

Today, the National Bar Association Board of Governors formulates the Association's policies. The NBA is organized around 27 substantive law sections, 10 divisions, 12 regions and 80 affiliate chapters throughout the United States and around the world.

Black National Anthem

Lift every voice and sing
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught
us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought
us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been
watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of
the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we
met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we
forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.

Agenda

WELCOME & REMARKS

Sheryl Underwood, Mistress of Ceremonies

INVOCATION

Rev. Dr. Annette Clark

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

REMARKS & SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Ashley L. Upkins, President

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DRUM MAJOR FOR JUSTICE COMPETITION

Hon. Henry E. Floyd, Jr. and Kimberley Ann Ward, Co-Chairs

NATION'S BEST ADVOCATES: 40 UNDER 40

Hon. Henry E. Floyd, Jr., Chair

AWARDS RECAP

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS AWARD

WILEY BRANTON AWARD

GERTRUDE AWARD

Dominique D. Calhoun, Awards Chair

HALL OF FAME RECOGNITION

Hon. Shauna Graves-Robertson, Chair

DINNER, ENTERTAINMENT & AWARDS PRESENTATION

Ashley L. Upkins, President

Dominique D. Calhoun, Awards Chair

YEAR IN REVIEW & PRESIDENT'S EPILOGUE

Ashley L. Upkins, President

INTRODUCTION OF 2026-2027 NBA OFFICERS

Sheryl Underwood

SWEARING-IN OF OFFICERS

Hon. David Hodby, Chair of the Judicial Council

INTRODUCTION & SWEARING OF THE 84TH PRESIDENT

Marc Morial

Hon. Kern Reese

REMARKS OF THE 84TH PRESIDENT

James Carter

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Annette Clark

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sheryl Underwood

101st Presidential Awards:

C. Francis Stradford Award
Benjamin F. Wilson

Vince Monroe Townsend, Jr., Legends Award
Pamela J. Meanes

O.T. Wells Leadership Award
Dominique D. Calhoun

Ron Brown Award for International Excellence
Cheryl W. Turner

Joe Hairston Award
Hon. Rachel L. Bell

Clyde E. Bailey, Sr., Leadership Award
John E. Page

Cora T. Walker Corporate Partnership Award
Deneen L. Donnley

Sankofa Award
Ronald C. Machen

Hon. Arnette Hubbard Trailblazer Award
Evangeline Mitchell

Equal Justice
Alphonso David

Board Member of the Year
Jennifer Norton

Region of the Year
Region IX

Outstanding Region of the Year
Region IV

Affiliate of the Year
Metropolitan Black Bar Association

Outstanding Affiliate of the Year
Cook County Bar Association

Section of the Year
Corporate Law Section

Outstanding Section of the Year
Insurance Law Section

Division of the Year
LGBTQ+

Outstanding Division of the Year
Judicial Council



Benjamin F. Wilson

Benjamin F. Wilson is a distinguished American environmental attorney and a trailblazing advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession. Raised in Jackson, Mississippi, Wilson attended Dartmouth College, where he graduated with honors, before earning his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School in 1976. He began his legal career in the Civil Division of the United States Department of Justice, where he honed his litigation skills and developed a deep expertise in federal regulatory matters. This early foundational experience propelled him into private practice, where he would spend decades establishing himself as one of the country's foremost authorities on environmental law and corporate governance.

Wilson achieved national prominence during his long and impactful tenure at Beveridge & Diamond PC, the premier and oldest environmental law firm in the United States. He joined the firm as its very first African American partner and eventually rose to serve as its Chairman from 2017 until his retirement in 2022. Throughout his career, major corporations and government entities routinely sought his counsel to navigate complex environmental compliance, toxic tort litigation, and sustainability challenges. His reputation for integrity and objective oversight led to high-profile appointments as an independent monitor, most notably supervising the massive Duke Energy coal ash remediation project and serving as the deputy monitor in the Volkswagen emissions settlement proceedings.

Beyond his corporate practice, Wilson has dedicated much of his life to education, mentorship, and expanding representation for underrepresented groups in law. For over 20 years, he served as an Adjunct Professor of Environmental Law at Howard University School of Law, where he co-founded the Howard Energy and Environmental Law Society to cultivate the next generation of diverse legal leaders. He also founded the Diverse Partners Network, an initiative aimed at expanding business and networking opportunities for minority partners across the country. In recognition of his leadership, corporate responsibility, and enduring commitment to civil rights, Wilson has been appointed to numerous prestigious boards—including PG&E and Northwestern Mutual—and has received lifetime achievement awards from prominent organizations such as the American Bar Association and the National Bar Association.



Pamela J. Meanes

Pamela J. Meanes is General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer at CareSTL Health, a St. Louis-based community healthcare system serving underserved and uninsured populations. In this role, she oversees legal matters, compliance programs, and risk management for the organization.

A native of East St. Louis, Illinois, Meanes built her career at Thompson Coburn LLP, St. Louis' largest law firm, where she spent more than 25 years and became the first African-American in the firm's history to be elevated from associate to partner. Over her legal career, she has defended financial institutions, negotiated more than 200 complex land acquisitions, tried numerous bench and jury trials to conclusion, and represented clients in matters involving race and sexual harassment. Her litigation clients included major institutions such as Fifth Third Bank, Kroger, and the Metropolitan Sewer District, and she played a role in helping the Bi-State Development Agency expand MetroLink service into Illinois.

Meanes is perhaps best known nationally for her tenure as President of the National Bar Association, the country's oldest and largest predominantly African-American bar association. She took office in July 2014, just weeks before the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri – an event that hit close to home given she was raising a son the same age. Under her leadership, the NBA launched its "Fight Against Police Brutality" initiative, filing open-records requests across 25 states to track police-related deaths and injuries, while also developing youth education programs on constitutional rights and advocating for federal police reform.

Meanes earned a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Monmouth College, an M.A. in African-American/Black Studies from Clark Atlanta University, and her J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law. She has also received an honorary Doctorate in Divinity from New Freedom Bible College. She remains active in civic life, serving on boards including the NAACP St. Louis County Branch and Mothers Against Police Brutality.



Dominique D. Calhoun

Dominique D. Calhoun is a shareholder and founding member of Calhoun Meredith, PLLC, where he has built a reputation as a trusted advocate for those harmed by others' negligence.

Calhoun represents hundreds of clients injured due to negligence, bringing both skill and compassion to each case he handles. His work has recovered millions of dollars for his clients, reflecting his commitment to securing meaningful outcomes for those he serves. In recognition of his sustained excellence, Calhoun has been named by Super Lawyers as one of Texas's Rising Stars in the practice area of personal injury for the last five consecutive years—an honor bestowed on only the top 2.5% of lawyers in the State of Texas.

Beyond his legal practice, Calhoun is deeply committed to improving the lives of Texans and citizens across the country. He has lent his legal and business expertise to numerous non-profit organizations, including serving as the 81st President of the National Bar Association, the oldest and largest Bar association of Black lawyers and judges in the United States. His additional leadership roles include membership on the National Council of Bar Presidents; service as Commissioner for the American Bar Association's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity; status as a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation; National Chairman of A Kappa's Promise and Learn 2 Live, programs sponsored by Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; board membership with Undies for Everyone; and Chairman of the Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce's Foundation.

Calhoun's academic foundation reflects the same drive that defines his career. He is an alumnus of Thurgood Marshall School of Law, where he graduated in the top ten percent of his class and was appointed by the Governor of Texas to serve as student regent for Texas Southern University, the institution's highest-ranking student leadership position. Calhoun is also a two-time graduate of Midwestern State University, earning both a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science while serving as President of the Student Government Association.



Cheryl W. Turner

Cheryl W. Turner, the International President and Chair of the Board of Directors of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., was elected to the highest position within the sorority in Washington, D.C., on July 12, 2025. Before the election to her current position, the Jackson, Mississippi, native represented the organization as the National First Vice President (2023 - 2025). In this position, she provided oversight for the establishment and enforcement of policies and procedures as Chair of the Sorority's National Scholarship and Standards Committee.

Cheryl served two terms as the Southern Regional Director of the sorority (2011 to 2016). The first and only Mississippian to be elected to this position since the inception of the Regional Conferences in 1926, she was responsible for overseeing and managing 215 established chapters and 25,000+ active members in the sorority's largest Region. Other positions held include Co Chair of the 2021-2023 National Program Planning and Development Committee (PP&D), and 2018 Chair of the Reclamation Project, a subcommittee of the National Membership Services Committee. She has served in various local, state, and regional positions.

Turner, a Diamond Life Member of the sorority, was initiated through the Lambda Sigma Chapter at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss). She later maintained active membership through the Tupelo Alumnae, Oxford Alumnae and now Jackson (MS) Alumnae Chapters. Cheryl retired from her career as a State of MS employee with over 30 years of state government/healthcare senior-level administrative and managerial experience that included 200+ direct and indirect reports and the oversight of an annual budget of \$5,000,000. She returned to the workforce in 2017 as Vice President of Client Acquisition and Development with Jefferson Stevens, LLC. Turner holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forensic Chemistry and a Master of Public Administration Degree from the University of MS. She is a certified Public Manager and holds a Continuous Readiness Certification from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

A member of Farish Street Baptist Church in Jackson, Cheryl actively participates with the Missionary Society, the Usher Board, and Outreach Ministry. She is the mother of one son, Jared. He and his wife, Sharonda, have two children, daughter, Kaylen; and son, Ian.



Hon. Rachel L. Bell

Hon. Rachel L. Bell is a nationally recognized judicial leader, human rights advocate, educator, and champion for transformative justice whose more than 21-year career has been dedicated to advancing equity, dignity, and access to justice. As Presiding Judge of the General Sessions Court, Division VIII, in Nashville, Tennessee, she has redefined the role of the judiciary by creating innovative, community-centered solutions that address the root causes of legal involvement and strengthen individuals, families, and communities.

Elected in 2012 as the youngest General Sessions Court Judge in Davidson County history and re-elected to three additional terms, Judge Bell has established a legacy of restorative justice and judicial innovation. She founded Tennessee's first community court, the Music City Community Court, and developed nationally recognized initiatives, including the R.E.S.T.O.R.E. Re-Entry Court, the C.A.R.E. Diversionary Court for emerging adults, the L.E.G.A.C.Y. Housing Resource Diversionary Court, and the A.S.P.I.R.E. individualized support program. Collectively, these initiatives have served more than 35,900 participants, waived over \$18 million in court costs and fees for qualifying individuals, and helped distribute more than \$19 million in emergency rental assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing countless evictions and episodes of homelessness.

Judge Bell also made history as Tennessee's first openly LGBTQ+ elected judge, demonstrating that authentic, compassionate leadership strengthens public confidence in the judiciary. Nationally, she serves as Chair of the National Bar Association's LGBTQ+ Division and Co-Chair of its Pro Bono Committee, where she has expanded access to justice, promoted mentorship, and advanced nationwide expungement initiatives.

Her work has been recognized through presentations at the White House Eviction Prevention Summit and numerous national media features. A graduate of Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program, David Bohnett Fellow with the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute, and Adjunct Professor at Fisk University, Judge Bell continues to educate and inspire future leaders committed to justice and public service. Bell continues to transform lives by expanding opportunity, promoting restorative justice, and ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.



John E. Page

John E. Page serves as the Senior Vice President, Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer, and Chief Legal Officer for Golden State Foods (GSF). In this multifaceted role, John leads the company's Legal Department and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives while providing executive oversight for several critical operational areas. His corporate governance responsibilities extend across Risk Management; Food Safety, Quality, and Regulatory (FSQR); Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS); and Sustainability.

With more than two decades of dedicated service as a GSF associate, John has been a driving force behind the company's culture and corporate citizenship. His leadership was instrumental in GSF earning prestigious customer recognition in 2022 when the company received McDonald's first-ever Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Award. He achieved this milestone by systematically guiding the advancement of the organization's environmental initiatives, inclusion and fair treatment programs, and deep community involvement.

In addition to his corporate duties, John is deeply committed to philanthropic leadership as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer of the GSF Foundation. Through this position, he directs the foundation's charitable missions and community-focused investments. His enduring tenure and comprehensive oversight continue to shape GSF's strategic commitment to sustainable, ethical, and inclusive business practices globally.

Outside of his executive commitments at GSF, John actively contributes to the broader legal and business communities through his involvement in professional associations and board service. His extensive expertise in corporate governance and regulatory compliance makes him a sought-after voice on industry panels and executive forums. By balancing rigorous corporate oversight with a passion for mentorship, he continues to inspire the next generation of legal and operational leaders.



Deneen L. Donnley

Deneen L. Donnley is senior vice president and general counsel of Consolidated Edison, Inc., the energy company that powers and serves the 10 million people of New York City, Westchester, Orange, and Rockland counties. In this role, she oversees the company's legal affairs, providing strategic counsel on the wide range of regulatory, corporate, and operational matters that come with running one of the nation's largest energy providers.

Ms. Donnley brings decades of legal and executive leadership experience across the financial services and corporate sectors to her current position. She previously served as chief legal officer, general counsel, and corporate secretary to USAA, a diversified financial services organization serving military members and their families, where she was responsible for guiding the legal function of a large, member-focused enterprise. She also served as general counsel for USAA Bank, deepening her expertise in banking law and regulatory compliance.

Before joining USAA, Ms. Donnley held the position of senior vice president, general counsel, and corporate secretary at ING DIRECT, where she navigated the legal complexities of the financial technology and banking landscape. Her legal career began with formative roles at Pepper Hamilton LLP, where she practiced as an attorney, and at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, where she served as a staff attorney – experience that gave her a strong foundation in both private practice and federal regulatory work.

Beyond her corporate leadership, Ms. Donnley is deeply committed to mentorship, diversity, and community engagement. She serves on the Boards of Directors of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, Girls Inc. of New York City, the Fordham Law Alumni Association, and M1 Finance. She is also a member of the Executive Leadership Council, Athena Alliance, and the Direct Women Board Institute – organizations dedicated to advancing leadership, board diversity, and professional development.

A graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Ms. Donnley earned her Bachelor of Science in economics before going on to receive her Juris Doctor degree from Fordham University School of Law in New York. Her career reflects a rare combination of legal acumen, business strategy, and dedication to fostering opportunity for others in the legal profession.



Ronald C. Machen

Ronald C. Machen is one of the nation's leading trial and white-collar defense attorneys, serving as a member of his firm's Global Management Committee and Chair of its Litigation and Controversy Department. With decades of experience handling high-profile litigation, government enforcement actions, and complex investigations, he is widely recognized for his strategic leadership and exceptional courtroom advocacy. Having tried more than 35 cases to verdict, Mr. Machen represents clients in complex criminal and civil matters while advising corporations through high-stakes crises involving government regulators, Congress, and private litigants.

Mr. Machen's practice focuses on government enforcement, corporate compliance, congressional investigations, and business litigation. He regularly counsels public companies on strengthening compliance programs, fostering ethical corporate cultures, and navigating sensitive legal and regulatory challenges. His current work includes matters involving the federal and state False Claims Acts, breach of contract claims, employment discrimination and retaliation, patent infringement, consumer fraud, and corporate civil rights audits. He has also served as an independent compliance monitor appointed by the U.S. Department of Justice to evaluate and strengthen corporate compliance programs. Before returning to private practice in 2015, Mr. Machen served for more than five years as the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, leading the nation's largest U.S. Attorney's Office with more than 600 attorneys and professional staff. During his tenure, he directed nationally significant investigations involving healthcare fraud, securities fraud, public corruption, government contracting, national security, cybersecurity, international corruption, money laundering, and economic sanctions. He successfully prosecuted the largest domestic bribery and bid-rigging scheme in the history of federal contracting, secured more than 160 public corruption convictions, and led numerous landmark False Claims Act settlements involving government contractors, healthcare providers, and pharmaceutical companies.

As U.S. Attorney, Mr. Machen established the office's first Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section and launched its inaugural Cyber Unit to combat emerging cyber threats. Under his leadership, the office recovered nearly \$2.5 billion for U.S. taxpayers through civil enforcement actions and major settlements with domestic and international corporations and financial institutions.



Evangeline M. Mitchell

Evangeline M. Mitchell was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and raised in Houston, Texas. She attended the DeBakey High School for Health Professions and graduated magna cum laude from Prairie View A&M University, a historically Black university near Houston. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law, where she served on the Iowa Law Review and chaired Phi Alpha Delta's Law Related Education Program, and studied abroad in France and England. She also holds a master of education in administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University.

Her career spans international education, higher education, and law. She taught in Japanese high schools through the JET Programme, studied Spanish and Mexican culture throughout Mexico, and taught English in Hidalgo, Mexico. As a first-generation college and law school graduate, Evangeline made a personal commitment to help other aspiring Black lawyers navigate a path she once walked without guidance. This led her to become a mission-driven "social entrepreneur" building the Black Pre Law brand of products, events, and services.

She founded Hope's Promise Publishing, a niche publisher for aspiring Black lawyers, and has authored or edited four books, including *The African American Pre Law School Advice Guide* and *Conquering the Bar Exam*, with several more in progress. She also founded the National Black Pre Law Conference and Law Fair, *Black Pre Law Magazine*, the National Black Pre Law Network, and the National HBCU Pre Law Project, and is developing film projects including *The Black Lawyers Legacy Project*.

Evangeline is a licensed attorney, certified mediator, speaker/trainer, and strategic planning coach. She is a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, a two-time Houston Bar Association Equal Access Champion, and a Harvard alumna interviewer. She serves on the boards of the National Association of Black Female Entrepreneurs, the Manhood Achievement Network, and Civic Frame.

Evangeline is married to Michael Means, and they have two children, Nyla and Michael II. She loves to travel and hopes her legacy will be one of mentorship, service, and dedication to empowering others to achieve their goals.



Alphonso David

Alphonso David, one of the foremost civil rights attorneys and a life-long advocate for social and economic justice, serves as the President & CEO of the Global Black Economic Forum. Mr. David brings more than two decades of experience in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors, where he has worked to advance the rights of marginalized communities through policy, legislation, litigation, and advocacy.

As a business leader and lawyer, Mr. David successfully defended the Fearless Fund and Fearless Foundation, a venture capital firm, and a charitable organization, in a federal court challenge that sought to shut down their business practice of helping under-resourced entrepreneurs. He was also instrumental in creating one of the most sought-after addiction treatment centers in the United States. In public service, he helped to transform broken systems that impeded the lives of the most vulnerable, including restructuring the workers' compensation and unemployment insurance systems in the State of New York to reduce inefficiencies and deficits that had plagued these vital social safety nets for decades. As a non-profit leader, he created and expanded groundbreaking programs for marginalized communities, including an impact litigation program to advance the rights of LGBTQ+ people and an HIV and Health Equity Program to address the disproportionately high rates of HIV among Black and Brown communities throughout the nation.

As an advocate, Mr. David has worked on a broad range of issues including racial and economic justice, immigrants' rights, and LGBTQ+ equality. Notably, he and his legal team secured more than \$23 million for immigrants who had been defrauded by illegitimate legal service providers, stopped a racially discriminatory rating system in broadcast radio from being implemented in the United States, and compelled all large pharmacy chain stores to provide language access services to customers. Further, during his time in public service for the State of New York, Mr. David was instrumental in drafting and advancing landmark legislation that removed legal barriers allowing same-sex couples to marry, paving the way for the United States Supreme Court to rule in favor of marriage equality nationally. His work helped actualize the Paid Family Leave Act, ensuring individuals receive paid leave to care for sick family members. His record of achievement also includes the Minority and Women Business Program, which tripled contracting opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses throughout New York State.



Jennifer Norton

Jennifer Norton is a dedicated estate planning attorney whose passion for protecting families and preserving legacies has defined her legal career. Guided by her faith, compassion, and unwavering commitment to service, Jennifer believes estate planning is about far more than preparing legal documents—it is about ensuring that families are protected, loved ones are cared for, and future generations have the security and peace of mind they deserve.

Born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, Jennifer grew up in a large, close-knit family with three siblings, twelve aunts, seven uncles, and dozens of cousins. Surrounded by a strong network of love and support, she developed a deep appreciation for the importance of family and the role it plays in every stage of life. Those early experiences continue to shape her approach to practicing law. As a mother, Jennifer's commitment to helping families prepare for the future has only grown stronger, inspiring her to treat every client as an extension of her own family.

Jennifer is a proud 2001 graduate of Cathedral High School, an institution known for its emphasis on academic excellence, faith, and service. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Indiana University Bloomington before obtaining her Juris Doctor from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law. Since graduating in 2008, Jennifer has devoted her practice exclusively to estate planning, developing extensive knowledge in helping individuals and families navigate important life decisions with confidence.

In 2009, Jennifer became a member of the National Network of Estate Planning Attorneys (NNEPA), where she discovered a community of professionals dedicated to transforming the estate planning experience. Through advanced training in estate and tax planning and collaboration with nationally recognized leaders in the field, she has continued to expand her expertise while embracing the organization's mission of "Changing the Way America Plans, For the Better."

Today, Jennifer is known for combining technical legal expertise with genuine care and personalized service. Whether assisting young families, business owners, or retirees, she is committed to creating customized estate plans that reflect each client's values, protect their loved ones, and preserve their legacy for generations to come. Her work is driven by a simple belief: every family deserves a plan that provides confidence, security, and lasting peace of mind.

2026 Presidential Awards

Nequosha Anderson	Justice Freddrenna Lyle	Chicoya Smith
Lamont Bailey	Ngozi Ndulue	Grasford Smith
Brooke West Blake	Kendra Perkins Norwood	Sheldon Smith
Rev. Dr. Michael Blake	Valeria Obi	Randy Springs
Piaja Brooks	Torrence Phillips	Charlyn Stanberry
Paulette Brown	Terrence Quinn	Ashley Stepps
Kim Carter	Valencia Rainey	Marie Sueing
Kennard Davis	Julius Redd	Vickie Turner
Sonica Dixon	Ghillaine Reid	Tiega Varlack
Terrance Evans	Elisha Rhodes	Bernice Walker
Henry Floyd, Jr.	DeWayne Richards	Yuri Walker
Hon. Shauna Graves-Robertson	Princess Rogers	Carolyn McHaney Waller
Simone Marshall Hayes	Hamid Saahir	Kimberley Ann Ward
Chandra Walker Holloway	Courtney Scrubbs	Judge Monte Watkins
Sonya Hoskins	Ray Shoemaker	Ronnivashti Whitehead

**Thank you
for your service to the
National Bar Association.**





102nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

JULY 17-23, 2027

Tampa
Florida

See you there!

POWER. ACTION. LEGACY.