



Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities

Summer 2005



JOYCE Y. HARTSFIELD, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Message from the Executive Director

IN THE SPRING OF THIS YEAR, THE FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MINORITIES was quite busy planning the biennial Diversity Awards Program and attending the annual four-day conference sponsored by the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts held in Atlanta, Georgia. In April, the host state, Georgia, sponsored what has been described as one of the best conferences on racial and ethnic fairness. The seminars were informative and the challenges were many.

The seminars included such diverse topics as *Differential Sentencing Among Minorities*, *Recognizing Cultural Difference in the Justice System*, *Immigrants: Human Trafficking and Judicial Obstacles*, and *Removing Language and Access Barriers in the Courts*. The seminar on the differential sentencing among minorities explored the factors and reasons that courts often rely on and which many times result in minorities receiving higher jail sentences.

In the seminar *Employment and Hiring Practices in the Workplace*, it was determined that in 1975 women accounted for 14.0 percent of the legal workforce, African American 2.3 percent, Hispanics .07 percent, and Asian Americans .05 percent. In 2002, the percentage

had grown to 40.3 percent for women, 4.2 percent for African Americans, 2.9 percent for Hispanics, and 7.2 percent for Asian Americans. This seminar also presented data indicating that in 1982 women received 33.0 percent of the law degrees, while African Americans received 4.2 percent, Hispanics received 3.3 percent, and Asian Americans received 1.3 percent. By 2002, women received 48.0 percent of the law degrees conferred, both African Americans and Hispanics received 5.7 percent respectively and Asian Americans received 6.5 percent.

Kim Gandy, the President of the National Organization for Women, conducted a seminar that addressed the issues regarding Domestic Abuse among women of color. In that workshop, the reasons for the reluctance to report abuse was explored. The reasons ranged from loss of employment (especially if one had to take off from work), undocumented aliens afraid of separation from family and being deported, belief by the women that minority men receive harsher treatment once arrested and processed through the system, and ostracism by family members—especially among the Native American and East Asian women. The recommendations included early intervention by the schools, the offering of classes that help men and women to understand the cycle of violence, and the establishment of more resource programs that teach prevention in the high schools. The next conference will be held in April 2006 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Finally on May 11, 2005, the Commission honored five recipients—including Captain Luz Bryan, Alan B. Friedberg, Honorable E. Jeannette Ogden, Sandra K. Scruggs, and Ross Upshaw. Special Recognition Awards were presented to Honorable Ann Pfau, Honorable Joan B. Carey, and Honorable Juanita Bing Newton. The Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye congratulated the honorees and underscored the courts commitment to Workforce Diversity. ■

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Meetings with Administrative Judges

The Commission periodically meets with the administrative judges and their staff in the various judicial districts of the State of New York. The purpose of these meetings is to obtain information and statistics regarding workforce diversity within the respective judicial district. The Commission has a special interest in the status of minorities in a given judicial district and to ascertain if there are any issues that the Commission might provide assistance.

Queens County (11th Judicial District) Meeting

The Commission met with the new administrative judge for Queens (11th Judicial District), Honorable Leslie G. Leach. In dialogue with Honorable Leach and his staff, the Commission learned that in the Supreme Court, Queens County, seven out of fourteen managerial positions (including that of the Administrative Judge) were filled by minorities.



Honorable Lewis L. Douglass (left) conferred with Queens Administrative Judge, Honorable Leslie G. Leach.



The Executive Assistant, Toko Serita, Esquire, and First Deputy Chief Clerk-Criminal Term, Felix Fernandez (right) joined Honorable Leach to discuss the activities of Queens County.



Commission members and Queens personnel discussed some of the achievements of the 11th Judicial District.



Commission members Honorable Douglas S. Wong (left) and William Etheridge asked questions of the Administrative Judge and his staff.

Bronx County (12th Judicial District) Meeting

The Commission met with the Bronx County Administrative Judges, Honorable Gerald V. Esposito-Civil Term and John P. Collins-Criminal Term. The Commission learned from the Administrative Judges and their staff about some of the new programs, especially the merger project, being installed in Bronx County. They specifically discussed how the merger would impact on the growth of minorities in the courts.



Honorable Rose H. Sconiers, Honorable Gerald V. Esposito, Honorable Lewis L. Douglass, and Honorable John P. Collins (from left to right) listened as Commission member Honorable Richard B. Lowe (right foreground) posed a question to the staff from the 12th Judicial District about some of their programs.



Commission members and 12th Judicial District managerial staff discussed current projects in Bronx County.



Tracy Pardo (right), first Hispanic chief clerk in New York City, responded to the discussion as Commission member Lenore Kramer (seated on her left at the table) took notes.

2005 Diversity Awards

FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS
JUDICIAL COMMISSION
ON MINORITIES

2005
Diversity Awards

HONORS

Captain Luz Bryan

Alan B. Friedberg

Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden

Sandra K. Scruggs

Ross Upshaw

May 11, 2005

ON MAY 11, 2005, THE FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MINORITIES hosted its biennial Diversity Awards Program. The 2005 Diversity Awards Program honored five individuals for their outstanding contributions to diversity within the New York court system. The honorees were nominated by their co-workers and selected by the Awards Committee of the Commission, chaired by Honorable Ariel E. Belen—Associate Justice, Appellate Term.

Joyce Y. Hartsfield, Executive Director, welcomed over two hundred and fifty guests to the Rotunda of the New York State Supreme Court at 60 Centre Street in New York City. The guest list was comprised of various levels of court employees—including federal judges, administrative judges, Supreme Court justices, city judges, administrators, court clerk, and administrative support services personnel. Honorable Lewis L. Douglass, Chair of the Commission, introduced Chief Judge, Honorable Judith S. Kaye, who offered “Congratulations to all the honorees, and to the Commission...for your extraordinary commitment and outstanding contributions in furthering our fundamental goals of equal justice and fairness throughout our courts.” The guests stated that they found the program uplifting, especially being inspired by the honorees' speeches.

Below: Honorable Douglass, Honorable Kaye, Honorable Belen



Above: Chief Judge Judith Kaye congratulated the honorees.



Right: Judge Kaye welcomed the Eighth Judicial District, including Honorable Sharon S. Townsend, Administrative Judge (second from left) and her personnel (including honorees Ogden and Scruggs).

And the award goes to...



LUZ BRYAN has been a New York State Court Officer since 1986, ascending to the rank of Captain in 1997. She is a member of the Anti-Bias, Gender Fairness and “Bring Your Child to Work” Committees. She is a co-founder, past president, and current vice-president of the Cervantes Society. Captain Luz Bryan was honored with the 2005 Diversity Award “for her sustained efforts towards excellence in promoting cultural diversity and understanding toward all people.”



E. JEANNETTE OGDEN has throughout her legal career served as a prosecutor, trial attorney, city court judge, and Acting County Court Judge. Hard work and community service have always been important values to Judge Ogden. In addition to her many professional affiliations, she serves in several community organizations—including the Women’s Group, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), League of Women Voters, Metropolitan Alliance of Black School Educators, Links, Inc., to name a few. Her message and motto are to “lift as you climb.” Honorable Ogden was honored with the 2005 Diversity Award “for recognizing the need to mentor the young and for setting an example of what is achievable through sustained efforts.”



“I thank Honorable Richard B. Lowe for nominating me and the Commission for accepting my nomination. In accepting this honor, I will do my best to continue to do my part to insure that the courts reflect the citizenry of New York.”



ALAN B. FRIEDBERG has been a practicing attorney for the past twenty-eight years, as a prosecutor and defense attorney. He has served on the Bronx County Bar Association Board of Directors for the past nine years and is currently President Elect of the association. He also serves as a financial advisor and fundraiser for the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Program. Throughout his initiatives, Friedberg has

shown that he recognizes the need and importance of a diversified legal profession. Counselor Friedberg was honored with the 2005 Diversity Award “for promoting diversity and opportunities throughout the legal profession.”

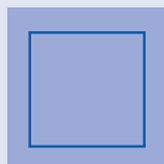
“When I was notified that I was a recipient of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities 2005 Diversity Award, I frankly was unfamiliar with whom he



SANDRA K. SCRUGGS graduated from court reporting school and worked as a freelance reporter. One of her first assignments was to take a verbatim record and produce transcripts of the first three public hearings conducted by the New York State Judicial Commission on Minorities, chaired by Franklin H. Williams. Scruggs was so inspired by this experience that it was the impetus for her vigorous

recruiting and mentoring of minority court reporting students. In addition, she has been instrumental in the education of minority persons regarding the use of the court system and the importance of participation in the jury service process. Scruggs was honored with the 2005 Diversity Award “for her commitment to achieving diversity within the court system by recruiting and mentoring minority court reporters.”

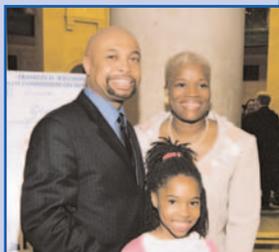
“Coming from a little coal-mining town in West Virginia, this award is the result of someone reaching back and pulling me forward. I would like to stress to everyone that is the responsibility we each have—to reach back and pull someone else along the way. I don’t need you to pay me back, I need you to pay it forward by helping someone else.”



ROSS UPSHAW was a Perry Mason fan and at the encouragement of his mother, he studied court reporting at Essex College. Over thirty years later and through hard work, Upshaw became Chief Court Reporter. He is known throughout the state for building a regime at 60 Centre Street renowned for its fairness and open-door policy. Upshaw was honored with the 2005

Diversity Award “because of his commitment to his community and for enriching the court system by working to keep it diverse and bias free.”

“The seeds of diversity were planted in me as a child by my mother. As a minister, my faith directs me to desire justice, peace, and healing for all people. Being the co-chair of the Anti-bias Committee at 60 Centre Street...has allowed me the opportunity to promote diversity on a grander scale. It is in great part due to the diligent efforts of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities that I even stand here as the Chief Court Reporter. I’m humbled to receive this distinguished award.”



was. I...determined that Mr. Williams was...someone whom I could relate to personally...Mr. Williams was an attorney...who put into practice the philosophy that education was the great equalizer...promoting human development by education. Mr. Franklin is someone we could all emulate. Through the Bronx Bar Association, we have been able to raise over \$125,000 in endowments for scholarships for students in the Bronx. I would like to thank the Commission for this honor.”



Special Recognition Awards

The Commission also honored three administrative judges for “recognizing that a diverse workforce makes a better workplace, for understanding that this vision starts at the top, and for having the strength to make it a reality.” Honorable Douglass, Chair of the Commission, presented Special Recognition Awards to Honorable Ann Pfau—First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Honorable Joan B. Carey—Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for New York City Courts, and Honorable Juanita Bing Newton—Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives and Administrative Judge of the Criminal Court for the City of New York.

After receiving their awards, Gloria Begett—Secretary to Judge—presented a special poetry tribute to the “Supremes” of the court. The judges and guests were touched by the sentiments expressed.



Chief Judge Kaye, along with Commission Chair—Honorable Douglass, congratulated Honorable Bing Newton, Honorable Carey, and Honorable Pfau. (left to right)



Honorable Carey attended with her husband, Thomas B. Dana.

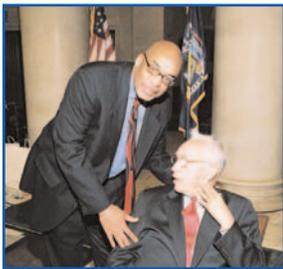
Federal Judge, Honorable Dora L. Irizarry, with awardees Honorable Pfau and Honorable Bing Newton.



Gloria Begett smiled as Honorable Bing Newton thanked her for the poetry tribute to the “Supremes.”

A-Guest List

Family and friends came from near and far to support their respective honoree. Some came from upstate New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Florida. The evening also provided an opportunity for colleagues to socialize in a less formal milieu. All in attendance expressed how much they enjoyed the evening and was inspired by the presentations.

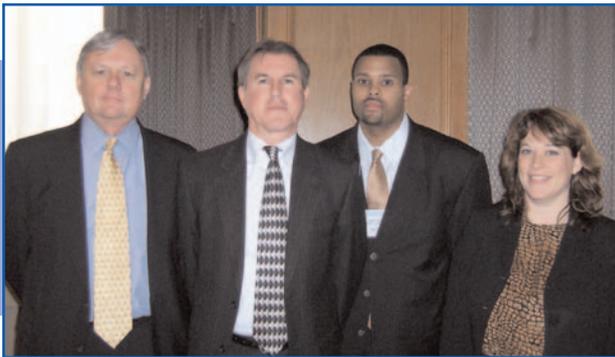


National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts

ATLANTA, GEORGIA WAS THE HOST CITY for the 17th Annual Meeting of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. The conference was held April 13-16, 2005, at the Omni Hotel at the CNN Center. The conference focused on justice, power, and prejudice in the courts with nationally known speakers addressing such topics as Islamic and tribal law, immigrants and human trafficking, cultural differences in the justice system, and the impact of poverty and ethnicity in the courts. The conference also addressed domestic violence and its effect on women of color, national trends affecting minorities in the juvenile justice system, and efforts to remove language and access barriers in the courts. An entourage of Commission members represented the State of New York Unified Court System in dialogue about these issues.



Joyce Hartsfield, Executive Director of the Commission, joined Justice Robert Benham (center) and Justice Carol Hunstein—both on the Georgia Supreme Court—at the luncheon where Benham was the speaker.



William King (second from right) moderated "Employment and Hiring Practices in the Workplace" with speakers (left to right) Dick Gonter, Cyril Brown, and Leslie Dent.



Commission member Pamela Hayes (center) attended a workshop with fellow conference attendees.



Honorable Bernette Johnson, Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, along with Honorable Madeline Jasmine—District Judge of the 40th Judicial District Court, listened to the speaker at the banquet.

right: Commission member William Etheridge engaged in a discussion with Judge Karen Robinson from Fullerton, California.



Right: Attendees closed out the conference on Saturday morning with the National Consortium Business meeting to discuss potential site and theme for the next conference.



QUARTERLY ROUNDTABLE



On April 19, 2005, the Commission joined fraternal organizations in a roundtable with the Office of Court Administration (OCA). Honorable Ann Pfau (First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge), Lawrence Marks (Administrative Director), Lauren DeSole (Director of Human Resources), and Elizabeth Hooks (Special Assistant to the First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge) represented OCA. This quarterly roundtable allows members of the fraternal organization and OCA to discuss topics and/or issues that are of concern within the court system.

WHAT'S NEW

- In January 2005, the Commission published *Findings from the Leadership Development Conference: Courts for the 21st Century—Upstate Conference*, a compilation of the findings and recommendations made at the upstate conference held in May 2004. The report addresses issues identified by participants from the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Judicial Districts. You may request a copy from our office or review the report online at: <http://nycourts.gov/whatsnew> or <http://nycourts.gov/reports/index.shtml>.
- Beginning May 2, 2005, and continuing for approximately eight weeks, UCS will accept applications for the New York State Court Officers Trainee Examination. Qualifying individuals will begin as trainees with a starting salary of \$33,203. After a two-year traineeship, the trainee is promoted to New York State Court Officer with a base salary of \$41,751 with a maximum of \$61,182. Applications are available online at www.nycourts.gov/careers/coexams.shtml or call 1-800-578-5627.

If you know of any promotions, recognitions, or events that the Commission should include in this newsletter, please contact our office at 212 428-2790. To view this newsletter online: <http://nycourts.gov/ip/minorities/>

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities to educate and advise decision makers in the New York Court System on the issues affecting both minority employees and litigants; and to implement recommendations developed to address said issues.



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VICE CHAIR

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HON. CHARLES J. TEJADA
HON. TROY K. WEBBER
HON. DOUGLAS S. WONG
JOYCE Y. HARTSFIELD, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONTACT US: If you have concerns you would like to present to the Commission, please contact us at:

FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MINORITIES
25 Beaver Street Room 861, New York, New York 10004
212 428-2790 Office, 212 428-2792 Fax
website: www.nycourts.gov/ip/minorities/