

THE CHARLES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

2005 Golden Anniversary Issue

www.charleshoustonbar.org

CHBA's Future

Law Club Founders

Early Black Lawyers

Judicial Luncheon

Association News

1955

LAW CLUB

Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence



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Left to right: John D. Drake, Esq., Hon. Benjamin Travis, George R. Vaughns, Esq., Hon. John Wesley Bussey and Justice Allen Broussard.

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What we've been up to

Are you up to the Challenge?

Greetings and welcome to the Charles Houston Bar Association. We have much to celebrate! I look forward to seeing all of you at our various events this year which will commemorate 50 years of excellence! Fifty years ago this year, a group of lawyers founded the Charles Houston Law Club in Oakland. Today, we are a growing organization of prominent judges, civil rights advocates, law firm leaders and eager young law students. The one thing that binds us is our association with an organization that stands for community activism, civic leadership and, most importantly, the preservation of justice in the African American community on all levels.

As I look forward to celebrating this special anniversary with the membership and community at large, I cannot help but think about how far we have come in the past five decades — and how far we have to go. Our work, even if it is at the local level, has an effect on our community statewide and nationally. Whether it involves participation in a clothing drive, a political campaign, or mentoring law students, our impact will be felt.

Charles Hamilton Houston was a man who was not afraid to stand alone and fight for what he believed was right and just. He didn't shy away from controversy or hard work. These are all attributes that we should embody and seek to duplicate on a daily basis. Fighting the hard fight is never an easy achievement, however, as a people, we cannot be afraid to do the necessary work. Volunteer to be a mentor, give generously to the annual Scholarship Fund and participate actively and fully in our organization.

Are you up to the challenge?

Jennifer S. Madden



Jennifer S. Madden
CHBA President



CHBA at 50
Applauding the Past,
Predicting the Future
by Robert L. Harris

Twenty five years ago, as President of the National Bar Association, I published an article in the Sacramento Observer entitled, "The Role of Black Lawyers." In explaining the role of black Lawyers in the 1980s, the article referenced a conversation I had with one of the founders of the Charles Houston Law Club (now the Charles Houston Bar Association). I noted in said article that: "Recently, I received a telephone call from Attorney Thomas L. Berkley, editor, and publisher of the Post newspapers in Northern California; he voiced his concern about the current failure of the black bar to direct the legal strategy for the black community." Berkley was not complaining necessarily about the Charles Houston Law Club, but rather about Black lawyers in general nationally.

Now deceased, Berkley who attended Boalt Hall and graduated from Hastings Law School in 1942 was not only a pioneer lawyer in the Bay Area, but also a brilliant soldier in the fight for justice. I cherished the many lunches and conversations we had over a period of more than 25 years. A considerable amount of our time was

spent dialoging about the role of black lawyers as advocates. Berkley believed firmly that the Black lawyer has a moral obligation to advocate in behalf of Black people. While the founders of the Charles Houston Law Club shared Berkley's passion for advocacy, it was Berkley, through his newspaper (the Post) and his political skills, who constantly challenged the young lawyers of the 1970s and 1980s to disrupt the status quo and fight for justice.

Much can and should be said about the brave pioneers who, in May of 1955, some seven months before Rosa Parks refused to take a seat in the back of a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, came together to form an association which they named the Charles Houston Law Club (Law Club). In so doing, they laid a solid foundation for today's Charles Houston Bar Association (Association).

For over a decade and a half, our founders blazed a path for the "new" Black lawyers in the Bay Area who would follow them. They hoped these "new" lawyers would set an aggressive agenda for meeting the challenges of the 70s and 80s. As they hoped, an awakening was, indeed, slowly occurring among the ranks of the "new" lawyers as the number of Black lawyers admitted to the California bar continued to increase, thanks primarily to affirmative action programs which were beginning to open the segregated doors of many law schools. Consistent with the civil rights revolution of the 60s and 70s, breaking down the walls of injustice was considered the duty of these mostly young lawyers who were reaping the benefits of the hard work of their predecessors and ancestors. This awakening provided the catalyst for transforming the Law Club into a powerful vehicle capable of navigating the turbulent winds of the 70s and 80s as a respected bar association unafraid to stand up and fight injustices.

The transformation actually began in 1973 shortly after the Law Club hosted

the 48th annual convention of the National Bar Association (NBA). Held at the newly opened Hyatt Regency in the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, this NBA convention was the impetus for shifting the 18 year old Law Club, which had only twenty (20) dues paying members, from a primarily socially oriented club into a fearless bar association willing to confront head-on issues that were eroding the foundation of the Black Community, sinking it further into a sea of injustice.

Elected President of the Law Club in 1973, Benjamin Travis, the legendary and visionary leader who saw absolutely no limits on Black lawyers' duty to be advocates, set out to completely reengineer the Law Club into a bar association of action and visibility. Noting the historic importance of Charles Hamilton Houston, after whom the Law Club was named, Travis brought life to Houston's famous quote: "A lawyer is either a social engineer or a parasite on society." Engineers, not parasites, were Travis' vision of Black lawyers. Passionate in his beliefs, he expected lawyers to share that passion. Travis assembled an officer team of John Stewart (Vice President), Joseph Simmons (Treasurer) and me (Secretary) to begin mapping a strategy for membership growth and strategic actions specifically designed to propel Black lawyers into their rightful place. The team was expected to rapidly transform the Law Club.

One year out of law school, I was thrilled beyond comprehension to be elected a member of this outstanding team of seasoned lawyers whose task was to revamp the Law Club. Travis viewed increasing membership and tackling "hot" issues as the key drivers for igniting the Law Club into an advocacy group. Immediately doubling the membership, which the Association easily accomplished (50 members) by the end of 1973, would illustrate, we believed, that Black lawyers were ready, willing and able to

be advocates. Communicating the new strategy not only to lawyers, but also to the community required the Law Club to speak out on controversial issues via the media. Accordingly, the Law Club looked for key opportunities to take on key issues of controversy including police brutality and other contemporary issues of the day. A number of new lawyers became members of the Law Club and joined in the transformation. They included, George Holland Thomas Broome, Ruth Blackwell, Gordon Baranco, Annette Green, Dale Rubin, Geoffrey Carter and many others. More mature lawyers such as Don McCullum, Hiathawa T. Roberts, Carl Metoyer, Clinton W. White, Horace Wheatley, Henry Ramsey, to name a few, were all a part of the transformation. As the Law Club became more visible and vocal, the membership ranks began to escalate and by the end of 1976, the Association had as dues paying members almost every identified Black lawyer in the Bay Area. This was unbelievable, but a powerful tribute to the effectiveness of the Law Club's strategy of bold advocacy!

An early and essential part of the Law Club's strategy was changing the face of the judiciary in the Bay Area and throughout California. With fewer than five (5) Black judges in Northern California, the opportunity to change the face of the judiciary presented itself in 1974 when Jerry Brown ran for Governor. Many members of the Association actively participated in raising money for his candidacy with a promise from him that he would appoint Blacks to the bench. And, when Brown won, the Law Club immediately held him accountable for his campaign promises. As a result of the Law Club's persistence, within a few months, seven (7) members of the Law Club were appointed to the bench. This marked the beginning of a change

of the faces of California's judiciary. Black lawyers throughout the state (both North and South) collectively put tremendous pressure on Governor Brown to appoint Blacks to the Bench. Brown, unable to escape these demands, ultimately appointed over 100 Black lawyers to the bench, a record that remains unmatched, proving the words of Frederick Douglass to be true that: "Power concedes nothing without a demand."

Having successfully led the transformation for three years, Travis in 1976 relinquished the reigns of the Association (and I took over as president) to accept an appointment to the bench. The Travis momentum, however, continued; and by the end of 1976, the Association which had achieved its status as an officially recognized bar association by the state bar in 1975, was ready to exert its power as a respected Association unafraid to challenge injustice wherever it raised its ugly head. That opportunity quickly presented itself when Alameda County in cooperation with the Alameda County Bar Association decided to unfairly administer the County's indigent criminal defense program by devising irrational seniority rules that essentially excluded almost all black lawyers from representing indigent defendants regardless of the competency of the lawyer.

The Association, to the surprise of the County and the Alameda County Bar Association, immediately sought an injunction in the Alameda County Superior Court challenging the constitutionality of the rules. Henry Ramsey (at that time a law professor at Boalt Hall), Hiawatha Roberts and I represented the Association at the Superior Court hearing on the injunction. We were joined by NBA President Carl Character of Cleveland, Ohio who flew in for the occasion. To be sure, it was a "colorful" day in the Superior Court which was overflowing with Black lawyers giving visible support to the Association as it challenged the power structure of the

County! Ultimately, the County relinquished, changed its rules and made the process fair for Black lawyer participation. A new day had begun!

Not long thereafter, other major opportunities for advocacy presented themselves. Perhaps, the most challenging was when the Oakland and San Francisco Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were sued by both the San Francisco and Oakland Police Officers Associations for defamation merely because the NAACP complained about police brutality in the Black community. The Association saw this as an attack not just on the NAACP, but also a test of whether Black lawyers would sit idly by and allow the NAACP to be assaulted. The answer was firm and unprecedented!

A cadre of Black lawyers immediately took on the defense of the NAACP, winning both in the Superior Courts (Alameda and San Francisco) and in the California Courts of Appeal. The courts, to the dismay of the Police Officers Associations, agreed with the NAACP lawyers that the First Amendment protected the NAACP's right to vigorously and freely complain about police brutality. The purpose of the police suits was to intimidate the NAACP into silence. They incorrectly thought the NAACP would not be able to afford the cost of defending these suits and would, therefore, cease to complain about police brutality. But, thanks to this dedicated cadre of Black lawyers, today the NAACP continues to speak freely without fear of having to defend frivolous lawsuits designed to silence it. The cases set a precedent and were used by the NAACP's national office as a model for defending against similar suits that had been brought by police officers associations across the nation to intimidate the NAACP. The

Association was applauded nationally for its successful defense of the NAACP, and its lead attorney was awarded the NAACP's highest national legal honor, the William Robert Ming Award.

Many other challenges were undertaken by the Association including challenges of the employment practices of various governmental agencies. Before the Association embarked upon its journey into the world of advocacy, very few Black lawyers were hired as prosecutors, public defenders or in the City Attorney's Office. Part of the Association's strategy to remedy this situation was to confront the next person seeking to be elected District Attorney of Alameda County. Lowell Jensen (now a U.S. District Court Judge) became the target because he was the candidate for District Attorney of Alameda County. Jensen, however, proved to be an astute politician who readily agreed to work with the Association to ensure that Blacks were hired into the District Attorney's Office which paved the way for a radical change in the hiring practices of that office. And, shortly thereafter the public defender's office followed suit. A short time later, San Francisco's District Attorney and Public Defender began hiring more Blacks. Today, those offices, as well as other governmental legal staffs (including City Attorney Offices), thanks to the courageous work of the Association, are fully integrated.

As an established bar association, the Association's footprint continued to expand through the 80s, 90s and to this year, the celebration of its fiftieth birthday. Past Presidents such as George Holland, Tom Broome, John Burris, Judy Johnson (the first female President), Emma Pendergrass, Jim Cole, Gail Bereola and others carried the torch for almost two decades. Though the times changed, the Association's resolve to maintain its commitment

to the principles embedded in its origins and early beginnings remained steadfast. Its first fifty years should, indeed, be applauded!

Today, as the Charles Houston Bar Association begins its second fifty years, it continues to advocate for affirmative action and other noble causes. It has joined, for example, with others in opposing certain nominees to the federal judiciary whose views do not support the best interest of the Black community. Young lawyers, such as Demetrius Shelton, Rozenia Cummings, Darryl Stallworth, Terry Wiley, Vernon Goins and our new president, Jennifer Madden, to name a few, are continuing the legacy of the Association. Yet, at age fifty, and with this new generation of talented legal scholars at its helm, the time is ripe for the Association to contemplate and reflect on what should be its legacy during the next Fifty years. A glorious history, yes; but the challenges of the 21st Century will likely present some of the issues of the 20th Century as well as new and perhaps more challenging ones. Yet, the solutions of yesterday, no matter how effective then, may not be appropriate to address the problems of the 21st Century. Thus, we anticipate the future and look intently at our Association and ask whether we really want to be social engineers for another fifty years?

Some of you are probably wondering is this history relevant to our next fifty years. I submit that it is quite relevant. Let me explain. Our future is imbedded in our history. And history is the barometer by which we predict the future. Thus, by understanding the activities of our first fifty years we may glean there from whether the next fifty years will likely chart a new

course for our Association. Therefore, the question for us as lawyers of the 21st Century is what is it we must do today, and tomorrow, to continue the legacy of the Charles Houston Bar Association. Yes, we have been vigilant thus far and should be applauded, but we cannot rest on the accomplishments of our first fifty years. Those accomplishments are now history, and we must move forward anticipating the challenges and opportunities of the future. Prognosticating what the next fifty years may hold requires us to ask a series of questions, and the answers to these questions will likely predict the Association's 100th birthday celebration. So, let's begin our journey into this series of questions some of which will make some of us uncomfortable and may well antagonize others.

Our journey begins by asking, has our Association really achieved its goals? Are its members entitled to a rest break? Or, in other words, have we achieved equal justice under law, and we can now take a nap or does the war for equal justice under law continue to ferment even after fifty years of fierce fighting? The answers to these questions will, to a significant extent, determine the fate of the Association in the 21st Century and for our next fifty years. Fortunately, some of today's lawyers never experienced the naked segregation and outrageous discrimination of the 20th Century that was initially grounded not only in the U.S. Constitution, but also in the pernicious U. S. Supreme Court decision in **Plessey v. Ferguson** which was issued on the eve of the 20th Century. Today, for the most part, some of us enjoy privileges only dreamed

**“Would Charles Hamilton Houston
be proud of us?”**

of by our ancestors and predecessors. Yet, the lawyers of the 21st Century, having reaped the benefits of the legal struggles of the 20th Century, must be prepared for unique challenges and frustrations, as well as some unknown rude awakenings, which at some point may, indeed, visit us at a moment when least expected.

Defining who we are, and who we should be as lawyers, will likely shape the Association's legacy during the next fifty years. Today, many of us are enjoying opulence our ancestors never imagined. We trod halls that once could only be polished by our ancestors and we smile congratulating ourselves at our marvelous achievements.

And, some of us give absolutely no credit to those who died making our prominence possible. We fervently attribute our "success" solely to individual initiative believing foolishly we are no longer at the bottom of the well and have achieved our quest for social prominence. As a result, we fail to recognize that regardless of our current temporary status of prominence, we cannot rise, no matter how hard we may try, above the condition of our brothers and sisters who have yet to drink from the fountain of opportunity and opulence.

Martin Luther King, Jr. had it right when he stated: "We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or by the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of service and relationship to humanity." Continued King, "As long as there is poverty...I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars....I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be" Powerful words, but words entirely consistent with Houston's philosophy that a lawyer is either "a social engineer or a

parasite on society." Are we helping others be what they ought to be? Are we focused primarily on our own individual success? Do we care about our brothers and sisters who are at the bottom of the well? Are we advocates for justice? Each of us must reflect on what we do to enhance the lives of others and then respond to King and Houston accordingly. Did



they not sacrifice their lives for us to be "prominent" lawyers? Does that matter to us?

Today, many African Americans are drowning in a sea of poverty and injustice with little, if any, hopes for a better tomorrow. They will never experience the American dream or enjoy the fruits of democracy or freedom. In the words of King, they are "at the bottom despite the few who have penetrated to slightly higher levels." Do we ignore them and say they must pull themselves up by their "bootstraps?" Have we eradicated discrimination and are now enjoying the fruits of equality or are we drunk with our own delusions? Are we giving away our political power? Let's be frank, as a community, we are witnessing a substantial decrease in political and economic power. For example, both San Francisco and Oakland have experienced a tremendous decline in Black political representation. Does it matter today that we have Blacks involved in the political process? Why should we care whether Blacks are elected to political office? Why do we often tolerate several Black candidates running for

the same office only to ensure that no Black wins? Do we astutely defend their constitutional right to run or do we bluntly say quit being taken advantaged of by those who do not have our best interest at heart? Do we let our desire for "fame" override the best interest of our community? Have we not learned from history or are we bound to repeat it?

The late William Byron Rumford desegregated Northern California's legislative delegation in 1948 when he was elected as an Assemblyman from Berkeley. For a half century, we had a Black from Northern California in that delegation, but we voluntarily gave up the seat. Today, primarily because of Black apathy, the Black community is

taken for granted by politicians who view us as divided and impotent. Oakland has had two outstanding Black mayors and San Francisco has had one, all of whom were active members of our Association. Ironically, many Blacks did not really appreciate them until their successors took office and closed the doors in our faces. Are we content with the loss of political power in the Bay Area?

While we are certainly proud of the fact Kamala Harris is the District Attorney in San Francisco, it is sad that many of us did not contribute one dime to her successful campaign. Yet we boast that we have a Black District Attorney! Tragically, far too few of us contribute financially to political campaigns in a meaningful manner. Do we have a duty to help ensure a political structure for the black community? Do we put our own self interest and egos above the interest of the Black community? Do we understand that freedom ain't free?

Our public education system is rapidly declining. It is under funded,

and often does not respond to the educational needs of many of our African American children, especially the young Black males. Should we be disturbed by the fact that, according to a 2004 study (Public Education and Black Male Students) by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, only 31% of Black males in the Oakland Public Schools graduate from high school? What does that say about the future of our Black males? Little, if any, external pressure for educational excellence is directed at the educational system by Black professionals. Why is this so? Who is going to speak to this issue?

Do we appear before school boards advocating for Black students who have no voice or do we say let others do it while we relax and enjoy our opulence? Are our own children in private schools, and are we, therefore, not concerned about the fate of Black children in the public schools? Are we advocates against the voucher system whose success depends on the demise of the public schools which most Black children must attend? Do we contribute to the United Negro College Fund which supports Black Colleges? Does it bother us that California spends far more money incarcerating Black youth than it does educating them? Are we concerned that of the 42,000 imprisoned under California's three strikes system, 45% are Black? Do we dare speak out against this devastating tragedy that is enslaving many



young, bright minds dooming them to a life of poverty and forever placing them at the bottom of the well? Will our children and grandchildren be proud of what we did to secure the future of Black children?

George Holland, a "veteran" and tireless warrior of our Association is the new President of the Oakland NAACP Branch. He carries on the tradition of other great lawyers who have headed the Oakland Branch such as the late Judge Donald P. McCullum and the late Justice Clinton Wayne White. George, unwilling to leave the civil rights struggle to others, has been practicing law for well over thirty years, is now desperately searching for young, bright legal minds to join with him in continuing the NAACP's struggle to provide civil rights insurance to people of color. Will he get that help? Will he get more volunteers than he can use? Will he have to stand with a small army fighting a battle that should be fought by a huge army of young warriors? Does it matter to us that only a small fraction of the NAACP membership includes lawyers. Do lawyers know that Charles Hamilton Houston, who literally worked himself to death and died prematurely in 1950, laid the groundwork for **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**? Do we realize that but for **Brown** we would not be where we think we are today?

Have we forgotten that the First Appellate District of the California Court of Appeal in San Francisco was desegregated in the 1980s with two Black Justices, Justices Clinton White and John Miller. Do we care that today the court has no Black justices? Are we satisfied with this re-segregation? Are we sure that justice is, indeed, color blind? Is an integrated judiciary important to the administration of justice? Do we demand that the Governor appoint more Blacks to the bench? When have we last met



with a California Governor to discuss judicial appointments?

Bay Area law firms, with a few notable exceptions, continue to be an illusion for Black lawyers both as associates and from a partnership perspective. When the Association embarked upon its new thrust over thirty years ago, there were very few Blacks in major law firms. For a brief moment, there was a climb in the numbers, but today, when the available numbers of Black lawyers are compared to the numbers available twenty five years ago, it is arguable that little, if any, progress has actually been made. Are we demanding accountability? Are we satisfied with the current situation?

Do we dare challenge these powerful law firms on their hiring practices? Are we afraid their litigation skills are too great and, therefore, we ignore their discriminatory hiring practices? Yes, today we do, indeed, have some Black partners in a few of our major law firms and we have achieved minor integration of corporate law departments. Perhaps, one could even argue that's progress. But, the real question is should we be satisfied with this meager "progress" if it can be called such? Should we be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from the table of plenty? Do we have the courage to force these powerful law firms to open wide their doors to Black lawyers? Should we challenge corporations that reap huge profits from the unfortunate

spending habits of African Americans while at the same time refusing to retain Black law firms to represent them? Would Charles Hamilton Houston be proud of us?

These are questions that Charles Hamilton Houston would ask if he were a live today. He would not hesitate to challenge us as he did Thurgood Marshall and that cadre of lawyers he trained to break down the legal walls of segregation in this nation. Yes, we have made a lot of progress thanks to the work of the civil rights lawyers of yesterday, but are we really satisfied with our own level of commitment and achievement now? Each of us must ask ourselves, based on our own commitment to social justice, whether we are "social engineers or parasites on society."

To be sure, our answers, collectively and individually, will steer our Association's course for the next fifty years. - RLH



THE CHARLES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

is greatly indebted to its many selfless past directors. Volunteering their time and energy, these men and women have created CHBA successes over the past 50 years . . .

Adrionne (Kitty) Beasley, Alfred Brown, Alonzo Johnson, Angela Houlemard, Annette Green, April Madison Ramsey, Artricia Moore, Aubry LaBrie, Audrey D. Shields, Bernadette Hartfield, Beryl Crumpton, Beverly J. Davis, Brendon Woods, Brigitte Lowe, Past President Bruce A. Soublet, Charlene L. Usher, Charles Smiley, Charlette Green, Chuck Andrews, Clifton Cooper Jr., Cole Powell, Colin Bowen, Craig Sterling, Dale Rubin, Past President Darryl Stallworth, Debrenia F. Madison, Past President Demetrius Shelton, Don M. Wade, Donald Ray Hopkins, Donelda Smith, Donna Zeigler, Donna P. Clay, Dorothy D. Guillory, Douglas Sykes, Ebony Azizi Sylla, Past President Emma H. Pendergrass, Emmet G. Hardy, Jr., Erica L. Markum, Estella Dooley, Eva J. Paterson, Evelyn Lewis, Past President Felix Stuckey, Frederick Smith, Gary T. Lafayette, Commissioner Geoffrey N. Carter, Past President George Holland, Geraldine Chavis, Gillian G.M. Small, Greg Hodge, H. Jesse Arnelle, Past President Hon. Donald P. McCullum, Hon. Gloria Rhynes, Past President Hon. Clinton W. White, Hon. Gordon Baranco, Hon. Carl Morris, Hon. C. Don Clay, Hon. Henry E. Needham, Jr., Past President Hon. Horace Wheatley, Hon. Joan S. Cartwright, Past President Hon. Gail B. Bereola, Past President Hon. James Stafford White, Past President Hon. Wiley W. Manuel, Hon. Brenda Harbin-Forte, Hon. Perker Meeks, Past President Hon. Benjamin Travis, Past President Hiawatha Roberts, J. Dominique Pinkney, Past President James O. Cole, Jayne Williams, Jaynelle Bell, Jean Hagins Alexander, President Jennifer Madden, John D. George, John Cooke, John Cooper, Past President John L. Burris, John Bell, John. J. Miller, Past President Jonathan Mayes, Joseph Simmons, Joy E. Johnson, Joyce M. Hicks, Judge Akers, Past President Judy Johnson, Julia Blackwell, Kamili Williams, Kandis Westmore, Past President Kaye Washington, Kevin Reese, Kimberlei D. Evans, Kristen B. McCannon, Kwixuan Maloof, Lenora Taylor, Linda Pierce Evans, Linnea N. Willis, Lisa-Anne Wong, Past President Lloyd Johnson Jr., Marcheta Allen, Maribeth R. Harper, Mark Jackson, Mark McCannon, Mary M. Creer, Melissa K. Brown, Michael S. Lawson, Michele Dawson, Monica Wiley, Nedra A. Shawler, Otis McGee, Paris Coleman, Patricia Ecter, Patricia A. Bennett, Paul Garrison, Pauline C. Terrelonge, Phyllis Marshall, R. Manuel Fortes, Rhonda Burgess Johnson, Rhonda Andrew, Rhonda Hjort, Past President Robert L. Boags, Robert Johnson, Robert Cross, Past President Robert L. Harris, Past President Rozenia Cummings, Ruth Herch, Shari Hollis-Ross, Sharron W. Gelobter, Shelly Wheeler, Sherry A. Walker, Simona Farrise, Tamiza Hockenhull, Tammi Lindsey, Past President Terri Robinson, Past President Terry O. Wiley, Theodore Johnson, Past President Thomas J. Broome, Tiffany Gibson, Vangeria Harvey, Past President Vernon C. Goins, Vernon E. McGhee, Victoria Thomas McGhee, William Bell, William "Billy" Hunter, Yolanda Smith, William Taylor, Yolanda Jackson, and many, many others.



Jurists At Sea

COME SAIL WITH THE
THE CHARLES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION
3 DAY CRUISE TO ENSENADA, MEXICO
September 30 - October 3, 2005

For more information contact Rozenia Cummings at 925-823-8611 or Demetrius Shelton 510-558-3388

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GRAPHIC DESIGN
by ASD STUDIO
(510) 908-3499

THE CHARLES HOUSTON
BAR ASSOCIATION
proudly congratulates
**THE HONORABLE JUDGE
HORACE WHEATLEY**
of the Alameda County Superior Court
upon his well-deserved induction into the
**NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION
HALL OF FAME**

Judge Wheatley
joins other distinguished inductees from
CHBA including:

Thomas L. Berkeley, Esq.	1986
John Adams Jr., Esq.	1986
Hon. Cecil F. Poole	1986
Hon. R.J. Reynolds,	1986
Hon. Clinton W. White	1989
Hon. Richard Bancroft,	1998
Hon. Willie L. Brown, Jr.	2002
Hon. George D. Carroll	2002
Hon. John Dearman,	2002
Carl B. Metoyer, Esq.	2002
Hiawatha Roberts, Esq.	2002
Hon. Benjamin Travis	2002

Join the NAACP

"Get your civil rights insurance, join the NAACP," states George Holland, President of the Oakland Branch of the NAACP and a CHBA past president.

Lawyers of the CHBA have always been in the forefront of fighting for civil rights, we need to continue this tradition. We need your assistance to protect the civil rights we have gained and to seek equality in all areas of our society.

These are difficult times for many persons in our community. We need your help so please pay your civil rights insurance premium by joining the NAACP.

Those who are interested in becoming members of the Oakland Branch of the NAACP should contact the Oakland Branch by phone at (510) 652-8493 to request a membership application. They may also write to the NAACP Oakland Branch, 663 - 35th Street, Oakland, California 94609.

Respectfully,
George Holland, Esq.
President, Oakland Branch of the NAACP

SAGE SCHOLARS

The University of California Student Achievement Guided by Experience (or "SAGE") Scholars Program is an academically rigorous program that combines workplace experience with professional skills. The SAGE Scholars Program targets highly motivated students from low income and diverse backgrounds that have strong leadership potential and high academic achievement at UC Berkeley. Its mission is to promote quality professional leadership and career development through internships, mentoring, and education.

After completing an intensive application and interview process, all accepted SAGE scholars attend professional development classes, sponsored by the Haas School of Business and taught by experts. In class, students set career goals, gain effective communication, business writing and presentation skills, and learn leadership, ethics, business etiquette and teamwork. The program works closely with various corporations that provide tuition sponsorship, mentors, and internships that mirror the students' career goals.

These SAGE scholars are our future leaders. Many have already gone on to do great things in education, business, research and politics.

Due to education budget cut backs, the program is now totally dependant upon corporate funding. We invite your support. Please consider sponsoring these extraordinary students and/or donating to their annual graduation/fundraiser event.

For further information about the program, please visit the UC Berkeley's SAGE Scholars website at sagescholars.berkeley.edu or by calling director Marjorie Weingrow at 510-642-2325 (weingrow@berkeley.edu).

THE CHARLES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

invites you to

Celebrate 50 Years of Excellence
at its special
Fiftieth Anniversary
Gala Dinner Dance
and Installation of Officers

Saturday, December 3, 2005

The Oakland Airport Hilton
Oakland, CA

The 2005 CHBA Executive Board

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Golden Anniversary Judicial Luncheon

On Friday, March 18, 2005, at the Lake Merritt Hotel in Oakland, the Charles Houston Bar Association celebrated the **Honorable Phyllis L. Hamilton**, United States District Court Judge of the Northern District of California, and the **Honorable Phrasel Shelton** who retired last October after almost thirty years as the lone African-American judge in San Mateo County.

Judge Hamilton became the first African-American Commissioner in Alameda County in 1985 and the first African-American Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of California in 1991.

A native of Jacksonville, Ill., she finished her undergraduate studies at Stanford in only three years and then attended Santa Clara University for law school. After graduation, she worked as a state public defender and later as an Administrative Judge.

Her first move towards the bench arrived with the assistance of Charles Houston Bar members. While accepting her award, the Judge acknowledged support she received from the Hon. Judith Ford, the Hon. Horace Wheatley, and the late Hon. Jim White when she applied to become a commissioner in Alameda County. Six years later, when she was appointed federal magistrate, it was Justice Allen E. Broussard, an acquaintance through the Charles Houston Bar Association, who supported her candidacy.

"I am fortunate to have a job as interesting and challenging as it is to be a federal judge," she told the audience. She still finds a network of support among her colleagues including the Hon. Sandra Brown Armstrong, the Hon. Thelton Henderson, and the Hon. Martin Jenkins, who eloquently intro-

duced Judge Hamilton at the luncheon. "For twenty-one years, the Charles Houston Bar Association has given me nothing but support," she concluded.

Before his retirement, Judge Phrasel Shelton had the distinction of being the first and only African-American Judge in San Mateo County. He was first appointed to the municipal court bench by Governor Jerry Brown and was elevated to Superior Court by Governor George Deukmejian in 1988.

Addressing the crowd, Judge Shelton, who now resides in Southern California, said he wanted to be at the CHBA Judicial Luncheon for two reasons. First, as a CHBA member for 35 years, the bar association has been like family. He thanked members and the organization for its enduring support of him. Secondly, he wanted to remind everyone that his retirement leaves no African-American judges in San Mateo County and that is not good. He clarified that "there is no [such thing as a] black position on the bench, so it's not about having a *replacement*." Instead, he stressed the inherent value of having diversity on any county bench.

Judge Shelton's career began as an attorney with the Antitrust Division of the United States Department of Justice. He next worked as a public defender in Monterey, lending his talent to help start that young office. During his days as a public defender, Shelton worked on the highly publicized Soledad Brothers case which involved three black inmates accused of murdering a white guard. He left the public sector to begin a private practice for the next six years until his judicial appointment. Judge Shelton earned his law degree from Creighton University School of Law.

V. Raymond Swope of the San Mateo County Counsel's office, who introduced Judge Shelton at the luncheon, was



singled out by the judge's remarks. "There are several vacancies on the [San Mateo County] bench and I expect the Charles Houston Bar Association to see to it that the governor puts an African-American on that bench. In fact, Ray [Swope] is extremely qualified for the job." This latter remark was met by encouraging applause for Mr. Swope.

After the awards program, guests were entertained by an auction of items donated by executive board members, 49ers football players, and the Bates House Bed & Breakfast of Oakland. Thanks to a few bidding wars between the state bench (represented by Judge Horace Wheatley) and the federal bench (represented by Judge Martin Jenkins), and many other generous guests, the auction raised \$2500 that will fund law student scholarships to be awarded at this year's 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner and Installation of Officers in December.

CHBA thanks its Gold Sponsor **Kazan, McClain, Edises, Abrams, Fernandez, Lyons & Farris** and Silver Sponsors **Pacific Gas & Electric** and **Thelen Reid & Priest LLP** for their continual support of Charles Houston Bar events. Our gratitude is also extended to CHBA's 2005 Judicial Chairperson, **Monica F. Wiley**, who organized the luncheon.

The Charles Houston Bar Association wishes to
thank

Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe

San Francisco, CA

&

Hanson Bridgett Marcus Vlahos and Rudy, LLP,

San Francisco, CA

for their generous support of CHBA!

Charles Houston Bar Presidents

- 2005 Jennifer Madden
- 2004 Vernon C. Goins, II
- 2003 Vernon C. Goins, II
- 2002 Terry O. Wiley
- 2001 Darryl Stallworth
- 2000 Rozenia Cummings
- 1999 Rozenia Cummings
- 1998 Demetrius Shelton
- 1997 Terrie Robinson
- 1996 Bruce Soublet
- 1995 Johnathan O. Mayes
- 1994 Kaye Washington
- 1993 Kaye Washington
- 1992 Lloyd Johnson, Jr.
- 1991 Felix Stuckey
- 1990 Felix Stuckey
- 1989 Hon. Gail Bereola
- 1988 Emma Pendergrass
- 1987 Emma Pendergrass
- 1986 James O. Cole
- 1985 James O. Cole
- 1984 Judy Johnson
- 1983 Judy Johnson
- 1982 Judy Johnson
- 1981 John L. Burris
- 1980 John L. Burris
- 1979 Thomas J. Broome
- 1978 George Holland
- 1977 Robert L. Harris
- 1976 Robert L. Harris
- 1975 Hon. Benjamin Travis
- 1974 Hon. Benjamin Travis
- 1973 Hon. Benjamin Travis
- 1972 Hon. Horace Wheatley
- 1971 Hon. James S. White
- 1970 Robert L. Boags
- 1969 Hiawatha Roberts
- 1968 Hiawatha Roberts
- 1967 Hon. Clinton W. White
- 1963 Hon. Wiley W. Manuel
- 1961 Hon. Donald P. McCullum



First Annual Walk for Justice A Success! 5K Run/Walk and Legal Fair

Advancing the twin aims of increased visibility in the community and raising money to fund student scholarships, CHBA held its first Walk For Justice and Legal Fair at Lake Merritt on Saturday, June 25, 2005.

The public event was sponsored by over 20 local businesses. Participants arrived at 8:00 am at the lake's band stand where registration tables and free food was available. CHBA baseball caps and tee-shirts were also on sale. Runners and walkers then enjoyed a brisk tour around Lake Merritt and returned for an awards ceremony and the start of the legal fair.

The fair featured several community legal organizations such as Legal Services for Children, Inc., Family Violence Law Center, Centro Legal de la Raza, the AIDS Legal Referral Panel, and the Center for Youth Development Through Law, among others. Each organization manned a table where information about their work was distributed and discussed. Our friends from the Oakland Black Firefighters Association were also on hand at their own table in support of the Charles Houston Bar Association.

CHBA aspires to expand the success of the Walk for Justice next year. We invite you, your family and friends to participate next Spring!

Planning such a large public event was an enormous undertaking. We applaud exemplary work by executive director Nedra Shawler for creating and executing a safe, fun, and well-organized family event.

BEFORE THE LAW CLUB: Early Black Lawyers in Northern California

Long before there was a Charles Houston Law Club, there were courageous African-American men and women in northern California who began to integrate the local legal profession. They often did so against great odds. As one historian recorded long ago:

"During pioneer days the prejudice was so great that a Negro boy could not be admitted [to the bar], notwithstanding he had read law under good instructors who had previously examined and considered him qualified for admittance, as was the case of **James Wilson**, the first Negro boy to apply for admittance to the bar in Alameda County, California. He lived to see afterward others of his race admitted to the bar and he was appointed and served as deputy sheriff of Alameda County, California for years." (Delilah Beasley, *The Negro Trail Blazers of California* (1919).)

Legal historian Professor J. Clay Smith of Howard University reports that **Robert Charles O'Hara Benjamin** may have been admitted to practice law in San Francisco as early as 1887. **Harrison H. Ferrell** followed as the second Black admitted to practice in California. Howard Law School graduate **Charles S. Darden** was the third. Darden obtained his law degree in 1904 and practiced in Southern California. He is said to be the first African-American to run for a judgeship in California. The Prohibition Party endorsed him as a candidate for judge of the police court, but he later withdrew his nomination. Charles Houston Law Club Founder **Lawrence Sledge**, an Oakland lawyer, was admitted in 1908.

Oscar Hudson (1876-1928) was admitted to practice by the First Appellate District Court of Appeals in

1911. Around 1915, he was elected a member of the Bar Association of San Francisco. As reported by the July 24, 1915 *Oakland Sunshine* newspaper, "This is the first Afro-American to be admitted to the San Francisco Bar Association and in so far as we know the first Afro-American to be admitted to any Bar Association in the state of California."

For years, Hudson's office was located in the Monadnock Building at 681 Market Street. He was fluent in both Spanish and Italian. Before becoming a lawyer, the United States government had hired him as a Spanish interpreter during the Spanish-American war. After establishing his San Francisco practice where he specialized in criminal defense, he also began publishing the *New Age*, a newspaper that focused on African-American life. In 1919, he was appointed Foreign Consul for the Republic of Liberia at the Port of Oakland by President Woodrow Wilson.

McCants Stewart (1877-1919) was another early black attorney in San Francisco. He was the son of T. McCants Stewart, a famous orator and lawyer from New York who helped desegregate that state's public school system and later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

At the age of 25, the younger Stewart migrated to Portland, Oregon, where he became the first African-American admitted to the Oregon State Bar in 1904. He apparently began practicing in 1903 under court authority, but was officially admitted in 1904. For the fourteen years he remained in Portland, he was one of only two black lawyers practicing. During that time, he argued before the Oregon Supreme Court in 1905, handled well-publicized cases, and used his celebrity to speak out for the rights of African-Americans and to chastise the government's failure to stop the lynching of Blacks in the South.

By 1917, Stewart had become frustrated with Portland. He moved his family to San Francisco where he joined Oscar Hudson's practice. He died two years later at the age of forty-two.

Across the Bay, in the early 1900s, the total population of the city of Oakland numbered around 65,000 but was steadily increasing as a result of Oakland being the west coast terminus for the transcontinental railroad. Black professionals began advertising in local newspapers to compete for business. By 1913, Oakland attorney **Wade H. Carter** advertised his services in the *Oakland Sunshine*. Two years later, announcements by attorneys **Glesner Fowler** (in Oakland) and **Towson S. Grasty** (whose offices were in the Chronicle Building in San Francisco) appeared in the *Western Outlook*, another popular African American newspaper of the times.

In 1916, **H. Leonard Richardson**, a U.C. Hastings graduate, began practicing law from his office on the second floor of the American Trust Bank building in West Oakland. According to journalist Thomas Fleming, Richardson was the most successful lawyer in northern California during the 1930s. His clientele consisted primarily of Portuguese immigrants living in the city of Alameda. Fleming and Richardson grew to become very close friends.

During World War I, Richardson served in France alongside **Charles Hamilton Houston**, another young commissioned officer. The two were also friendly with Earl Dickerson, a black officer who later practiced law in Chicago and founded the black-owned Supreme Life Insurance Company.

As the careers of Richardson and Charles Houston progressed, the

two would meet almost annually when Houston visited Oakland during national tours of the NAACP's regional branches. While in town, Houston would often spend a few days at Richardson's home in Berkeley. While there, Houston enjoyed playing cards and socializing. Race was always the topic of discussion when Houston was in town. By appearances, Houston struck Thomas Fleming as a very disciplined man.

In 1917, **John D. Drake** – a future founder of the Charles Houston Law Club – began practicing law in Oakland. Drake became the outspoken president of the Northern California NAACP. Though he and



Richardson were once at odds over the leadership of the NAACP branch, they must have remained close friends. Drake courted Ms. Willette Martin while she worked for Richardson as his secretary. The two would later marry.

The next black attorneys to emerge in northern California included **Edward Daniel Mabson** of San Francisco, **Leland Stanford Hawkins** of Berkeley (who began practicing in August of 1922), and **Walter A. Gordon, Sr.** of Berkeley. Gordon was admitted to the bar in 1923.

While H. Leonard Richardson was the most financially successful black lawyer of the times, Walter Gordon was perhaps the most influential. Gordon completed his undergraduate studies at U.C. Berkeley in 1918 and went on to become the first African-American to graduate from its law program at Boalt Hall. While in school, he achieved celebrity-status as an athlete (he lettered in three sports and

was the first black football player to win the "Big C" award), and managed to work nights as the city of Berkeley's first black policeman. While studying at Boalt Hall, Gordon was close friends with **Earl Warren**, the future Alameda County D.A., California Governor, and, later, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Gordon supplemented his work in private practice with jobs he performed for the University of California. He also led the NAACP as its president and was one of, if not *the* most highly respected voice in the black community. In fact, Gordon's leadership of the NAACP was so popular and well-supported that he led the organization for years. He lived on Acton Street in Berkeley with his wife, Elizabeth, and his two children.

In 1945, while Warren was still governor, Gordon was appointed Chairman of the California Adult Authority. The appointment was a "first" as no other African American held such high office in the state government. It is said that Gordon's leadership of the Adult Authority garnered him national acclaim and, in 1955, President Eisenhower appointed him Governor to the Virgin Islands. The community celebrated Gordon's appointment by throwing a multitude of events in his honor. These festivities were organized and attended by Attorney George Vaughns, Mr. and Mrs. Aramis Fouche, Carleton Goodlet, Byron Rumford, and Attorney and Mrs. Claude Young among many other well-wishers. On October 20, 1955, he was declared "Berkeley's Most Useful Citizen" and was selected to receive the Benjamin Ide Wheeler gold medal. In 1958, Gordon was appointed Judge of the Federal District Court of the Virgin Islands.

After Gordon, other lawyers soon followed. Attorney **Henry Joseph Meadows Jr.** began practicing in August of 1925. Two years later, **Frank M. Larche** entered practice. **George R. Vaughns**, a Charles

Houston Law Club founder, was admitted to practice in 1929.

Larche and Vaughns shared office space at 1027 Adeline Street in Oakland. While Vaughns managed to build a large enough clientele to sustain a full time legal practice, Larche initially made ends meet by working nights as a railroad dining car server on a train called "The Lark." By 1942, Larche too developed a successful practice and took the position of General Chairman of the Dining Car Cooks and Waiters Union.

In 1929, along with George Vaughns's admission into the bar, California welcomed its first African-American female attorney, **Annie Virginia Stephens Coker** (1903-1986). A native of Oakland, Coker graduated from Boalt Hall in 1929 and found work in Sacramento for the state government where she indexed bills pending before the California legislature and wrote legal memoranda.

Attorney **Tabytha Anderson** is San Francisco's first African American female lawyer. She grew up in San Francisco where she attended Lowell High School and completed her undergraduate work at U.C. Berkeley. When she enrolled at U.C. Hastings College of Law, she may have become the school's first black female student. Anderson transferred from Hastings to Howard University to to continue her legal studies. She obtained her law degree in 1931.

Anderson was admitted to the State Bar of California in May of 1933. That same year, she was asked to address the state convention of the California Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. As a solo practitioner, she maintained a general civil practice.

In the community, she was a member of the Delta Sigma

Before the Law Club, continued

Theta Sorority, an organizer of the Aldridge Dramatic Club, a respected member of the Federated Clubs of California, and a trustee of the Third Baptist Church in San Francisco.

In March of 1935, she bested fellow black lawyer Leland S. Hawkins for the presidency of the San Francisco NAACP branch. Four months into her leadership, however, Anderson succumbed to complications resulting from high blood pressure and passed away. Upon her death, an obituary in the *California Voice* acknowledged her as "one of the most outstanding young Negro women of the Pacific Coast."

Another twenty-plus years would pass before the city of Oakland saw its first female African American practitioner, **Jane Hornsby VanHook**, a Hastings graduate and active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the Kappa Beta Pi Sorority, International Legal Society. VanHook, a native of Texas, was also active in the Charles Houston Law Club.

As the years continued, so too did the number of black lawyers in the Bay Area increase. These new lawyers entering practice before 1950 included the men who would one day join together as the Charles Houston Law Club. They included, in chronological order by admission into the state bar: John Charles Henderson (admitted 1934), Thomas Lucius Berkley (admitted 1942), Cecil F. Poole (admitted 1946), John Adams Jr. (admitted 1946), Charles Howard Blagburn (admitted 1946), Raymond Jordan ("R.J.") Reynolds (admitted 1948), Clinton Wayne White (admitted 1949), Garfield Walton Stewart (admitted 1949), and Sherman W. Smith (admitted 1949).

**THE
CHARLES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION
HONORS EXCELLENCE!**

Hon. Benjamin Travis Community Service Awards

David E. Glover (2004)
Faith Fancher (2003)
J. Dominique Pinkney, Esq. (2003)
Hon. Judge Gloria Rhynes (2002)
Coach Ken Carter (2001)
Ms. Oral Lee Brown (2000)
Hon. Judge Gordon Baranco (1999)
Hon. Elihu Harris (1998)
Rev. Cecil Williams (1996)
Fania Davis, Esq.
Ralph Francis (1994)
Charlton Andrews (1992)
Angela Glover Blackwell, Esq.
Hon. Judge Brenda Harbin Forte (1991)
Hon. Lionel J. Wilson (1986)
Robert L. Harris, Esq. (1983)
Hon. Judge Benjamin Travis (1979)

Clinton W. White Advocacy Awards (est. 1979)

Kamala Harris, Esq. (2004)
John Burriss, Esq. (2003)
Gary T. Lafayette, Esq. (2002)
Pamela Price, Esq. (1993, 2001)
Michelle Alexander, Esq. (2000)
Jayne Williams, Esq. (1999)
Anthony K "Van" Jones, Esq. (1998)
Eva Patterson (1996)
James R. Bell, Esq. (1994)
Patricia Ector (1992)
Otis McGee Jr. (1988)
John L. Burriss (1986)
Judy Johnson (1985)
John L. Burriss (1979)

Special Recognition Awards

Attorney Billy Hunter (2002)
Founders of CHBA (1999)
Hon. Wilmont Sweeney (1994)
Jayne Ware Williams (1992)
Harriet Clark (1992)
Dorothy Guillory (1986)

Special "Lifetime Achievement Award"

Congressman Ronald V. Dellums (1997)

Shelton installed as CABL President

California lawyers and judges assembled in Los Angeles at the end of April for the 28th Annual Conference of the California Association of Black Lawyers (CABL). This year, the weekend conference culminated in a moving tribute to the life of Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. (1937 – 2005), recipient of the organization's Benjamin F. Travis Lifetime Achievement Award. Cochran's friends, colleagues, and family saluted the legendary lawyer through testimonials about his life and mourned the legal community's great loss.

The conference opened with a judicial luncheon honoring recently retired judges Dean Farrar, Veronica McBeth, Phrasel Shelton, Rosemary Shumsky, Marcus O. Tucker, and Commissioner H. Kirkland Jones on Friday, April 29th.

Demetrius D. Shelton was installed as the 2005-2006 CABL President at the Saturday evening black-tie Dinner Gala. Many northern California lawyers traveled south to support Mr. Shelton and CABL. Among them were eleven CHBA Presidents (Hon. Benjamin Travis, Hon. Horace Wheatley, R. Harris, G. Holland, J. Burris, E. Pendergrass, T. Robinson, R. Cummings, D. Stallworth, V. Goins and J. Madden). Ray Marshall (Past President of the State Bar of California), Gillian G.M. Small (Past President of CABL), Beryl Crumpton (Past President of CABL), and Kimberlei Evans (CHBA Vice President) also attended the Installation Dinner.

Just as he had done seven years earlier (when Shelton was installed as 1998 CHBA President), Judge Wheatley again swore Shelton into office as the new CABL president. In his remarks, Shelton vowed to continue CABL's legacy of excellence. He pledged to make a difference.

"My message to you," Shelton said, looking out from the podium, "is to dream big, plan effectively, and make it happen. Ladies and gentlemen, that is exactly what we will do this bar year. We will tackle the tough issues and will do so in an orchestrated and well-executed fashion . . . When I say tackle I mean just that. We will not be lulled into a false sense of belief that by merely talking about the issues that we have done something. The Legislature, the Governor's Office and the Ward Connerlys of this world will feel our presence."

Joining Shelton on CABL's 2005-2006 executive board are CHBA members Judge Horace Wheatley, Stephanie Bolden, Rozenia Cummings, Linnea Willis, Vernon Goins, Charles Smiley, and Darryl Stallworth.

The conference weekend also featured intriguing MCLE seminars on journalism and justice, religion and the practice of law, and a panel discussing the ins and outs of handling a "celebrity trial." On this latter topic, our own John Burris shared his expertise as a panelist.

Next year's CABL conference will be in Oakland, California. CABL welcomes your membership and invites you to attend the many entertaining and informative events that will mark the CABL convention in April 2006! To join CABL, download a membership form from calblacklawyers.org.

Visit CABL (calblacklawyers.org) and Region IX of the National Bar Association (nbaregionix.org) to learn about the legal news affecting our community.

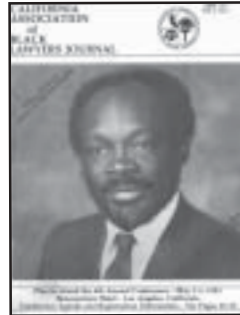


Demetrius Shelton
CABL President

50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE!



College Awareness Advisory Program volunteers



Stanley Herbert



BWL Northern California



Justice Clinton W. White and Past President Thomas J. Broome



1980



Judge C. Don Clay



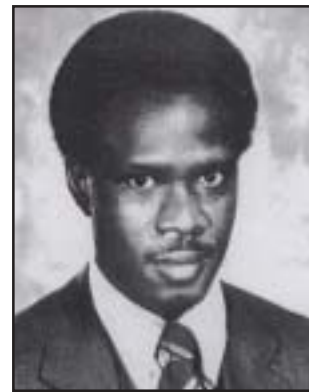
Judge Benjamin Travis



Harriett and Ernest Clark



Emma Pendergrass and friends



Judge Henry Ramsey



Eva Paterson



Hon. Judith Ford



Eleanor Manuel and Patricia Howze



Michael Lawson



NorCal African American Judges

Introducing our Founders

by Charles Smiley

The thirty-two founders of the Charles Houston Law Club are smart, interesting, and courageous. They litigated civil rights battles on behalf of the NAACP. At least eight of them were NAACP branch presidents. They campaigned for state and local political offices. One third of them became judges. They were community leaders, entrepreneurs, and "firsts" of the race to break color barriers in many areas of the legal profession. They pioneered the path. Eight of them have been inducted in to the National Bar Association Hall of Fame.

In order of their entry into the practice of law in California, these founders are:

Lawrence Sledge

Of the founders, the oldest practitioner was **Lawrence Yates Sledge**. He began practicing in 1908. People called him "Lawyer Sledge," mostly because that is how he referred to himself. Sledge was an Assistant Pastor of a large Oakland Church. Many of his clients were members of his congregation.

Around 1913, he maintained an office at 516 Eleventh Street in Oakland. His wife was Chlora Hayes Sledge, a prominent Oakland Club Woman and Past State President of the California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. Mrs. Sledge was once instrumental in bringing the only Negro United States Congressman, Oscar DePriest, to the city of Oakland to speak.

John D. Drake

In September of 1917, John D. Drake started to practice law. For many years, Drake



was the outspoken President of the northern California NAACP branch based in Oakland. In the December 14, 1929 edition of the *The Oakland Independent*, Drake penned his view on "The Law and the Lawyer" as follows: "Broadly and professionally speaking, one is not known, designated or rated in the professions by his nationality, race or color, but by the ability of those who acquire them. But, because of the ignorance and race antipathy of the white Americans on the one hand and the ignorance and inferiority complex of colored Americans on the other, that broad principle does not obtain in America. Because of the inferiority complex and slave psychology of the American Negro growing out of over two hundred and fifty years of slavery, he believes the ability of the professional man is determined by the color of his skin, and he believes and acts upon that belief, even in California, that it is necessary to employ a lawyer other than a colored lawyer to obtain justice in the courts . . . I know of my own knowledge that there cannot be found in all this land a higher class, more impartial and just set of judges than in the County of Alameda, California. In these courts, there is absolutely no discrimination by the Court against a client or attorney because of race, nationality or anything else. The court records of Alameda County disclose the fact that colored attorneys win a larger per cent of their cases than do the attorneys of any other group. Hence, the colored attorney solicits business, not on the ground of his color, but on the ground of his ability to render as efficient and competent professional services as any other lawyer or group of lawyers."

Edward D. Mabson

Edward Mabson, a native of Columbus Ohio, studied law at night and, in 1919, was admitted to practice in California. He was the vocal leader of a group called the Negro Equity League (NEL), a forerunner of the San Francisco NAACP branch. The NEL emerged during protests over the lo-

cal showing of David W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation*. Mabson later led the call for the creation of a separate NAACP office in San Francisco because the Oakland branch "had its hands full" in the East Bay. By 1923, black San Franciscans had their application for a NAACP branch charter granted. Attorney Mabson married Berlinda Davison, a Cal graduate who went on to obtain a master's degree in education in 1922.

George Robert Vaughns

(1901-1976)

George Robert Vaughns, a descendent of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, was born and raised in the Bay Area and educated in Oakland's public schools. In 1928, he graduated from St. Mary's College of Law.



Vaughns began his legal career as a solo practitioner, but soon teamed up with lawyer Frank M. Larche during the 1930s in an Oakland office. The other black lawyers in the East Bay at the time included men such as Walter A. Gordon, Henry J. Meadows, Jr., and H. Leonard Richardson.

In the early 1940s, Vaughns' advocacy on behalf of the Local A26 of the Boilermakers Union compelled Bay Area shipyards to comply with President Roosevelt's executive order against discrimination in war-related industries. This victory contributed to the subsequent employment of thousands of African-Americans in the ship building industry.

Throughout his life, Vaughns helped launch many legal careers. The firm of Vaughns, (John) Bussey & (Thomas) Berkley is credited by some as the first all-black law firm in the state that had more than two lawyers. At various times,

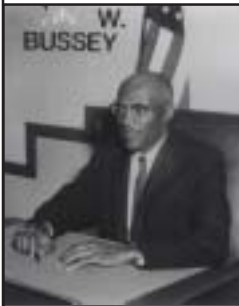
Vaughns' office was the professional home to attorneys Clinton White, William "Billy" Dixon, and Lionel Wilson.

As an able entrepreneur, Vaughns founded the Trans-Bay Federal Savings and Loan Association, one of the largest African American controlled savings and loan companies in the country. He also served as the first African American Commissioner on the Alameda County Planning Commission, a position he held for 15 years (1958-1973). In 1962, he made an unsuccessful run for a judicial seat in Alameda County.

Recognizing his importance in the black legal community, a 1964 edition of the Oakland Post newspaper referred to him as "the dean of Negro lawyers" in the Bay Area.

Hon. John Wesley Bussey (1904 – 1969)

Founder John W. Bussey was the first African American to become a municipal and superior court judge in San Francisco. He earned his law degree from Harvard in 1931 and passed the California State Bar that same year. He briefly practiced criminal law as a deputy district attorney in Alameda County (circa 1945), taught



criminal law at Howard University (1946 – 1948) and entered private practice as a partner in the firm of Vaughns, Bussey & Berkley. His appointment to the municipal bench arrived in 1958 from Governor Goodwin J. Knight. Governor Edmund Brown elevated Judge Bussey to the Superior Court.

As both lawyer and then judge, Bussey enjoyed the reputation as a counselor of young attorneys and law students, many of whom he gave instruction to help them pass the bar exam. "You couldn't toss a rock on Montgomery Street without hitting an attorney he'd helped pass the bar," remarked one of Bussey's friends just days after the judge succumbed to cancer at age 65. Carl B. Metoyer acknowledges that Bussey had a good business with his bar preparation course. At that time, his was probably the best "bar prep" or "refresher course" in the area. Bussey enjoyed constant strong enrollment and taught both black and white students. Indeed, founders Tom Berkley and Claude O. Allen profited from taking Bussey's exam refresher course.

The son of a minister, Judge Bussey was born on a farm near Columbus, Georgia, but grew up in southern California after his family moved West shortly after his birth. In 1926, he graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was also a track athlete.

John Charles Henderson

Born in Texas, John C. Henderson arrived to California at a young age and grew up in Oakland. For many years, he worked as a clerk at the Oakland Post Office, a job he maintained even while attending law school. For a period time, he also worked as a night clerk at a hotel. After law school, he enrolled in John Bussey's bar review course to prepare himself for the difficult examination.

Henderson began practicing law in June of 1934. His first office was on 7th Street in West Oakland. Years later, he relocated to 10th Street and Broadway. His daughter, Elberta Eriksson, recalls spending much of her teenage years in her father's office and at the law library. A close childhood friend of hers was Allen E. Broussard, a future state Supreme Court Justice and CHBA member.

During World War II, Henderson handled a well-publicized trial in Vallejo that involved black sailors accused of mutiny. In 1950, a group of prominent African American professionals had been charged in the criminal court. Each of the defendants promptly hired a white lawyer, except for one, who retained John Henderson. When the jury returned its verdict, only Henderson's client was acquitted. After that case, Henderson's office telephone practically rang off the hook.

Henderson was one of the men the NAACP frequently called upon to handle their west coast cases. He was also politically active, and once introduced United States President Truman at a local rally supporting the President's re-election. He campaigned for a seat in the State Assembly and was considering a run for an Alameda County judicial seat when he died suddenly on May 22, 1952. His active pallbearers included attorneys George Vaughns and Augustin Donovan. Clinton White, a longtime friend of Henderson, stepped in to take over Henderson's practice.

Thomas Lucius Berkley

One day during 1942 in the Peralta Housing Project, Tom Berkley learned that he had passed the difficult California bar exam. Word of his success spread quickly throughout the community and, on that same night, Attorney Robert Vaughns paid an unannounced visit to the young man's residence to invite him to join his law practice.

"He was a doer with boundless energy. An idea man with a broad range of interests and a wealth of knowledge on any topic," observed Paul Cobb, current publisher of the Oakland Post.



Berkley scored at the top of his class at Fullerton Junior College in 1936. He earned public attention as a track-and-field star for the Bruins after he transferred to UCLA. He obtained his law degree from U.C. Hastings College of the Law in 1942 and practiced for only a few months after passing the bar before he was inducted into the army. After his honorable discharged in 1946 as a Second Lieutenant, he established his own firm, Thomas Berkley and Associates. Joining him at the firm were future law club members Terry Francois, Joseph Kennedy, and Clinton White, depicted together on the cover of this publication. The firm specialized in personal injury litigation and grew quickly. The firm's name changed to Berkley, Randall and Harvey, and became renown as the largest racially integrated, bilingual law firm in the entire country. Allen Broussard once worked there too.

In addition to a law practice, Berkley served as Commissioner of the Port of Oakland. He founded the Inter-City Democratic Club of Northern California and co-founded the Beneficial Savings & Loan Association in Oakland, an institution providing financial assistance to low-income people. In the early 1960s, he founded the Post Newspaper Group. He also served on numerous boards of directors, including the Oakland Unified School District and the Commercial Bank of San Francisco. Fluent in Spanish,

he also owned a Mexican restaurant.

In 1986, the NBA inducted Berkley into its Hall of Fame.

Tom Berkley passed away in 2001 at the age of 86. The following year, the city of Oakland renamed downtown's 20th Street in the attorney's honor, Thomas L. Berkley Way.

Hon. Justice Cecil F. Poole

(1914-1997)

Cecil Poole was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1946. His stellar career saw him become the first black deputy district attorney in San Francisco, the first black United States Attorney in the continental United States, and the first black federal judge for the Northern District of California. He completed his career as a Justice on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.



He obtained undergraduate degrees from the University of Michigan (A.B. 1935; LL.B. 1938) and attended law school at Harvard (LL.M. 1939). He started his legal career at a firm in Pennsylvania (1940) but soon left to join the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C.

During World War II, he served for three years as a first lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General's office for the 447th Bombardment Group.

In 1945, Poole relocated to San Francisco. For one year, he worked in the West Coast Regional Office of the Office of Price Administration as Chief of the Appellate Department. He left that office to start his own practice and, a few years later, was invited to join the San Francisco District Attorney's office, becoming its first African-American deputy in 1949. By 1955, the year the Law Club formed, Poole was a supervisor in that office.

Beginning in 1958, Poole spent three years working as the Executive Clemency Secretary and Legal Counsel to Governor Edmund G. Brown. President John F. Kennedy then nominated him to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of California in 1961. (At that time, California had but two judicial districts, the Northern and the Southern.) Judge Poole was thus the first African-American to serve as a United States Attorney on the continental United States. He resigned after eight years to become Regents Professor of Law at Boalt Hall and later returned to private practice in 1970.

In 1976, Poole became the first African-American appointed to the United States District Court for the Northern District of California after President Gerald R. Ford nominated him. Three years later, under President Jimmy Carter, Judge Poole was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He assumed senior status on January 15, 1996.

Judge Poole was born in Birmingham, Alabama.

"He was . . . an invaluable mentor to so many, including myself. When I was first appointed to the bench, Judge Poole took me under his wing, and I will never forget the friendship and guidance he gave me over the years." - Judge Thelton Henderson.

Judge Poole also served as director of the NAACP Defense and Legal Education Fund, as a trustee of the Urban League and in various other community organizations. In 1986, he was inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame.

**John Adams Jr.
(1905-1999)**

John Adams, Jr., the son of a lawyer, began practicing law in Omaha, Nebraska in 1929. Less than six years later, he was elected to the Nebraska state legislature, a position he held until he enlisted in the army in 1943. While in the state legislature, he proposed legislation that made lynching a criminal offense. He discharged from the military as a captain in 1947 and moved west to Berkeley, California.

Adams established law offices in San Francisco and developed a successful private practice over thirteen years. During this time, he announced his intention to file as a Republican candidate for election to the State Assembly for the 17th District. He was then 47 years old.

In 1957, he and colleague Terry Francois were described at "two of San Francisco's most outstanding Negro attorneys" in an article about their involvement in the national presidential campaign then under way. Both men toured the state urging black voters to cast their ballot for Eisenhower and the GOP ticket. Adams was a member of the Northern California Steering Committee of the Eisenhower-Nixon Campaign.

In 1960, he joined the Veteran's Administration of San Francisco as its Attorney General. He held this position for four years until taking the post as Chief Counsel for the Department of Real Estate in San Francisco.

Described as a loving husband, father, and friend who was "always willing to help," Adams contributed his energies to many groups, including: Berkeley Addiction Treatment Services, the San Francisco Urban League, and the St.

Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Berkeley. He was also a past president of the San Francisco NAACP branch.

At its 1986 annual meeting, the NBA inducted John Adams Jr. into its Hall of Fame.

Charles Howard Blagburn was admitted to practice in November of 1946.

**Hon. Raymond Jordan Reynolds
(1906-1995)**

R.J. Reynolds was born and raised in Topeka, Kansas. There, he earned both his bachelor's and law degrees from Washburn University. He then practiced in Kansas for 17 years until he moved to the Bay Area in 1946. While in Kansas, Reynolds spent seven years as president of the Topeka branch of the NAACP. He was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1948. Three years later, in 1951, he was elected president of the local NAACP branch.

Reynolds became the first African American lawyer to join the San Francisco city attorney's office when he became a deputy in 1954. In 1969, Governor Ronald Reagan appointed him to the San Francisco municipal court where he served as a judge until his retirement in 1979.

Judge Reynolds was active in the community and was a member and trustee of the A.M.E. Church. He died on August 14, 1995 in Oakland after a long illness. He was 89 years old.

The judge was inducted into the NBA Hall of Fame in 1986. He also authored two books: *Sharing My Notebook*; and, *Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury*.

**Hon. Justice
Clinton Wayne White
(1921- 2001)**

Clinton W. White was a masterful trial lawyer who later served as a Justice

on the California Court of Appeals, First Appellate District. As acknowledged by John Burris, "In the 1950s, '60s and '70s, he was the consummate lonely warrior representing African Americans in courtrooms where the odds were perpetually stacked against them."

The son of a barber, White grew up in Sacramento. One of his high school teachers suggested to him that he might make a good lawyer. The idea stuck.

After graduating from Boalt Hall, White was one of two African-Americans admitted to the state bar in January of 1949. At that time in the Bay Area, one could practically count the total number of black attorneys on two hands. White went to work for Thomas L. Berkley



where he became the firm's primary trial lawyer. The juries hearing the cases he tried in the first ten years of his career rarely included a single African American juror.

In an obituary article, Burris continued, "As a physically imposing and proud man with a rich baritone voice, he demanded respect for himself and his clients. As such he, more than any lawyer of his gen-

eration, changed the perception of African American lawyers."

Clinton White had not aspired to be a judge. **Henry Ramsey** tipped that hand of fate by putting forth White's name to be considered for judicial appointment. White was appointed to the Alameda County Superior Court in 1977, but was promptly chosen to sit as a pro tem judge on the Court of Appeals. Governor Jerry Brown turned that pro tem assignment into a permanent job by appointing White to the First Appellate District in 1978.

"Clinton White, the lawyer, could not be overwhelmed in court. He was respectful, but made sure his point was made and he refused to back down." -- George Holland, July 2001.

Garfield Walton Steward (1915-1990)

A native of Seabreeze, New Jersey, attorney Garfield W. Steward began practicing law in 1949.

An article in the San Francisco Chronicle commented that Steward "was well known for championing unpopular causes, particularly for the poor. He graduated from Hastings College of the Law and waged legal battles for the local chapter of the NAACP."

He fought for civil rights. As a life-long member of the NAACP, Steward served as chairman of its legal redress committee for many years. In 1962, he successfully argued a major housing discrimination case before the state Supreme Court. In 1974, he became involved in the "Zebra Killers" case.

In 1990, attorney Steward was fatally shot at his Market Street law office. His assailant reportedly died in a subsequent gun battle with responding police officers. At that time, Steward, a widower, had been

living alone near Ocean Beach. He was 75 years old.

"Garfield Steward was a great lawyer, brilliant, gentle, steady and honest," said Willie Brown in an interview after the shooting. "He did as much pro bono work as any lawyer I've ever met. That's the kind of thing that sums up a man."

Sherman W. Smith was admitted to the California bar about six months after Clinton White and Garfield Steward.

Hon. Lionel J. Wilson (1915-1998)

Lionel Wilson became the first African-American judge on the Alameda County bench and later became the first African-American mayor of Oakland, California.

In 1960, Wilson became the first Black judge in Alameda County, a position in which he served until 1976. One year later, he was elected mayor of Oakland, CA, where he led what was then considered the most integrated city in America. Wilson was elected to a total of three terms, but lost his bid for re-election in 1990 to his CHBA colleague Elihu Harris.

Wilson grew up in Oakland. His family moved to the East Bay from New Orleans around 1918. He attended Clawson Elementary and McClymonds High School. In 1932, he entered U.C. Berkeley with the hopes of playing basketball or baseball for the school but was rejected on account of his race. Naturally, it was the university's loss. Wilson had played professional baseball for the Oakland Larks, a Pacific Coast Negro League team. Even after that experience, Wilson's love of sports never waned.

Wilson worked his way through school, taking jobs as a porter, dishwasher, and sugar factory laborer to support himself. He obtained his juris doctorate from U.C. Hastings and

was admitted to practice in January of 1950.

Lionel Wilson died of cancer in 1998 at his Montclair home. He was 82.

"Lionel Wilson, a giant both in law and politics, blazed trails over which many have followed, including myself." -- former Oakland Mayor Elihu Harris.

Terry Arthur Francois (1922-1989)

Terry Francois, the first African-American to sit on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, was one of the principle movers behind the Charles Houston Law Club.



Born in New Orleans, Francois graduated from Xavier University in 1940. He made his way to California after serving in World War II as a sergeant in the Marines. After arriving to the Bay Area, he married Marion Le Blanc in 1947 while he studied law at U.C. Hastings. He was admitted to the state bar in 1950.

He clerked at the firm of Thomas Berkley & Associates where he worked with Joseph Kennedy and Clint White. After law school, he created his own practice in the Filmore District. His office at 497 Fulton Street would, over the years, host many prominent Bay Area lawyers including Joseph Williams, Willie Brown Jr., Garfield Steward, and John Dearman (now a San Francisco Superior Court Judge).

Francois' practice covered both general civil and criminal cases. He made a name for himself in 1952 as part of an NAACP legal

team that successfully challenged San Francisco's discriminatory public housing policies in the celebrated case of *Mattie Banks v. San Francisco Housing Authority*. That case was one of his proudest moments.

Terry Francois hosted one of the first law club meetings when it was decided, in his living room, to take the name of Charles Hamilton Houston. Speaking of her husband's optimism for the fledgling club, Marion Francois recalled that the law club founders hoped to stimulate younger black attorneys enough so that they would not let themselves be marginalized.

Francois lost his bid for the presidency of the San Francisco branch of the NAACP in 1955, but successfully ran again in 1959.

In 1957, Francois' legal work for the NAACP led to the creation of a fair employment practices ordinance in San Francisco.

Unquestionably, Francois was outspoken. In a 1963 interview, he explained an aspect of the relationship between police officers and the black community. "Most Negroes who migrate here, unfortunately, come with preconceived ideas about police. A policeman is not the protector but the oppressor. To turn a fellow Negro over to the police is to turn him over to the oppressor. Our police here tend to minimize this fact, partly because of their own hostility to the Negro, partly because most policemen's contact is with the Negro they arrest in a ghetto tavern . . . Incidentally, I heartily recommend to you the action of the Berkeley police, who now have standing orders to address all arrestees as 'Sir.' You can't imagine how demeaning it is to be called 'boy' when you're being arrested." Francois himself was arrested on

Sept. 15, 1963, for protesting housing discrimination at a sit-in.

He was named to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1964 by Mayor John Shelley, and in 1967 won election to a four-year term. His popularity led him to serve as a supervisor for fourteen years. He resigned to return to private practice in 1978.

Terry Francois passed away on June 9, 1989. He was 67. The city of San Francisco renamed a China Basin street in his honor, Terry A. Francois Boulevard.

Hon. Joseph Gamble Kennedy

Admitted to the state bar in January of 1950 alongside his Hastings classmates Lionel Wilson, Terry Francois, and Garfield Steward was Joseph Kennedy, the second African American judge to sit on the San Francisco bench. He was first appointed to the municipal court in 1963 and was subsequently elected to the superior court by a large margin of votes. His tenure as a judicial officer lasted for over fifteen years.

Before becoming a judge, Kennedy had worked as a public defender in San Francisco for almost ten years. Before that, in 1950, he got his start working as a new lawyer at Thomas Berkley & Associates.

Kennedy was born in Marysville, Tennessee and received his undergraduate education in that state before moving to Chicago to be near his mother. He moved to California with his first wife who passed away in the late 1940s.

Kennedy served during WWII in the Air Force. He was honorably discharged in 1946 as a lieutenant.

In 1954, he married Willie B. Kennedy. She recalls that her late husband's ambition was always to be a judge. He used to tell her that his

main goal was to be a state supreme court justice. At Charles Houston Law Club events, Kennedy was close to both Wiley Manuel and Allen Broussard.

Also in 1954, Kennedy campaigned for a seat in the state assembly, but lost in the Democratic primary to the incumbent. Notwithstanding the set-back, he remained politically active by supporting other democrats in their efforts.

On January 23, 1963, Kennedy, 46, was sworn in as a member of the State Industrial Accident Commission and thus became one of the highest ranking African American state officials in California.

As a president of the San Francisco NAACP, he emerged as a prominent voice in the community. He served as a national director of the NAACP and was actively involved in the Urban League, the Booker T. Washington Community Center, and the Family and Service Agency of San Francisco, among other groups. Later, he further served as president of the San Francisco Council of Churches. With these community credentials behind him and calls from the black community to fill municipal court vacancies with at least one black judge, Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown appointed Kennedy to the San Francisco Municipal Court in 1963.

In 1968, upon receiving the S.F. Council of Churches' Ecumenical Award, Judge Kennedy was recognized for "his sensitivity to the needs of people, especially the poor, the disadvantaged and the oppressed; for his courageous



leadership in realms which are filled with controversy and which demand personal risks; for his cheerful buoyant manner and sense of humor; for his workable visions and for his vital faith."

Like Judge John Bussey and Judge Lionel Wilson, Kennedy also made a priority of being available to counsel other black lawyers. He wished to promote more young black lawyers to become judges.

Judge Kennedy passed away in 1979.

1950: In 1950, the State Bar of California also admitted **Francis Sidney Heffron** (SBN: 21259) and **Charles Edward Wilson** (SBN: 21755).

In December of 1955, the black legal community was outraged when San Francisco judge Timothy I. Fitzpatrick commented of attorney Charles Wilson, while Wilson was questioning a witness, "Who do we have here, the Ace of Spades?" This remark sparked heated controversy. Franklin Williams, secretary for the NAACP, publicly demanded an apology. Wilson himself told the press that he expected "no preferential treatment in the courts, but I do expect to be treated as any other attorney regardless of the color of my skin." Judge Fitzpatrick admitted making the remark, but explained that "When Wilson stepped forward, I did not know he was the attorney in the case. I remarked in a whisper to my court commissioner . . . something about how he looked like the ace of spades. But no insult was intended, and it was in a whisper. I believed that no one heard it . . . I am ignoring the demand for an apology." (California Voice, Dec. 23, 1955.)

1952: In July of 1952, **William ("Billy") C. Dixon** and **Murville**

Clement Abels joined the northern California legal community.

A graduate of Cal Berkeley and Golden Gate University School of Law, **Billy Dixon** was a partner in the prestigious Oakland firm of Vaughns, Dixon & White and served on the executive Board of the Oakland NAACP. In July of 1955, during the formation of the Houston Law Club, he participated in the NAACP's 46th annual convention held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where he was chairman of the Constitutional Revision Committee. The ambitious theme of that NAACP convention was the abolishment of all vestiges of discrimination by 1963.

Dixon was very active in the community and frequently received mention in the society pages of the *California Voice* newspaper. He was a member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, president of the East Bay Council of Clubs, a member of the Bachelors and Benedicts, The Renaissance Club, The Exclusive Men, The Men of Tomorrow, The Octagons, and the Elks.

Dixon married Ola Andrews in June of 1957. News of the popular couples' engagement made headlines. (*California Voice*, January 25, 1957.)

Murville Abels practiced law in the Filmore District. For a time, he practiced law with his brother Ulma Abels, Esq.

Hon. Franklin H. Williams
(1918-1990)

Franklin Williams spent his life advancing the cause of civil rights. Among his many accomplishments, he was the first African-American named to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and served as the American ambassador to Ghana.



His prolific legal career began after he returned from serving in a racially segregated army unit during WWII. He joined the NAACP and worked directly with its special counsel, Thurgood Marshall, on several cases heard by the United States Supreme Court (e.g. *Watts v. Indiana* (1949) [reversal of murder conviction based on a coerced confession], *Barrows v. Jackson* (1953) [a restrictive covenant case] and *Sipuel v. University of Oklahoma* (1948) [state law school cannot deny qualified black candidate based upon her race].)

The NAACP then sent Williams to California as its regional secretary-counsel for the western states. He was admitted to the California bar in 1953, two years before the Charles Houston Law Club formed.

In 1959, he served as Assistant Attorney General for the State of California. In that position, it is said that Williams forced the Professional Golfers Association to admit black players. After two years, Stanley Mosk appointed Williams Chief of the Attorney General's constitutional rights section. This promotion likely recognized Williams' superior analytical skills learned during his NAACP days working with Thurgood Marshall's team of lawyers.

When President John F. Kennedy was elected, Williams moved to Washington D.C., where he helped create the Peace Corps and worked as its regional director supervising its work and activities on the African continent.

In 1963, Williams was named U.S. representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council and later led several American delegations to United Nations conferences.

In 1970, he was named president of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, a foundation that works to improve edu-

cation for American Indians, Africans, and African-Americans. The Phelps-Stokes Fund presently has an award named in Franklin Williams' honor.

He died in May of 1990 of lung cancer. He was 72.

Carl B. Metoyer

On Friday, January 9, 1970, 44 year old attorney Carl Bernard Metoyer became the first African-American president of the Alameda County Bar Association. Prior to that, he had also been the first African-American to sit on its board of directors, including the position of Vice President in 1969.

Metoyer was born in 1925 and grew up in North Oakland, not too far from his boyhood friend Lionel Wilson. His father was a carpenter and his mother was a housewife who worked at the Del Monte cannery on San Pablo Avenue during summertime.



After graduating from Oakland's University High School, he spent

two and a half years in the Navy where he was part of an all-black unit sent to occupy the city of Okinawa, Japan at the end of World War II. He was 21 years old.

After his discharge in 1946, he returned to Oakland and began undergraduate studies at the University of California as an economics major. At that time, there were so few blacks at Cal, they used to joke that they could all sit on the bridge at Sather Gate and still have room for some more folks.

By the time he graduated from Berkley, Metoyer was both a husband and father. He enrolled at U.C. Hastings to study law and,

upon recommendation, gained a job as a bailiff at the California Supreme Court for Justice Phil Gibson.

Academically, Metoyer was at the top of his class at Hastings. He perhaps set an example to another young black student in the class behind him named Wiley Manuel, who would also score at the top of his law class. "We drove [the other students] crazy!" Metoyer defiantly laughed during a 2004 interview. "They couldn't understand how that could happen . . . and we used to tease the hell out of them."

He graduated in 1952 and joined fellow Hastings alumnus Terry Francois at his practice in the Filmore District after passing the bar exam. He was admitted to the state bar in 1953.

In 1955, Terry Francois told Metoyer about the plan for Bay Area black lawyers to form a law club. Metoyer actively participated in the group from the beginning.

During the 1960s, Metoyer worked with Wilmont T. Sweeney and earned a reputation as an east bay "leader in antipoverty and jobs campaigns."

Metoyer continues his private practice in West Oakland in the same office he built in 1959, located at 6014 Market Street in Oakland.

In 2002, he was inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame.

The **Hon. George D. Carroll** and **Horace Leroy Cannon** both joined the state bar in 1953. Judge Carroll had studied law at Brooklyn Law School in New York. In 1961, he was elected to the Richmond City Council and, during ten months covering 1964 and 1965, he served as that city's mayor. Carroll was later appointed to the municipal court bench. In 2002, the National Bar Association admitted Judge Carroll into its Hall of Fame.

"Roy" Cannon was one of Carl

Metoyer's classmates at U.C. Hastings. Upon graduation, he set up a private practice in the Filmore District. He later worked as a Deputy City Attorney in San Francisco. Away from his legal career, Cannon was a minister.

Hon. Richard A. Bancroft, Sr. (1918 - 2005)

Richard A. Bancroft died peacefully on May 7, 2005, at age 86, in Washington D.C. A graduate of Howard Law School, Bancroft was the founder who suggested that the law club take the name of Charles Hamilton Houston.



Like his contemporaries, Judge Bancroft also led an amazing life. He was one of seven children who enjoyed what he described as a "big, full rich family life; we had a lot of singing going on, a lot of dancing, a lot of good humor. It was difficult to believe, as I can now, that our privation was so bad." At a young age in his hometown of Albany, New York, Bancroft earned money shining shoes and selling newspapers in front of the state Capitol. His mother died in 1928 when he was ten. Six years later, he set out on his own and found work as an amateur boxer, a janitor, and a tap dancer.

Advice from a social worker led him to enroll at Howard University for his undergraduate studies. There, he supported himself through school by cleaning student dormi-

tories. His major was political science.

In 1942, Bancroft joined the United States Marine Corps where he served for four years.

After the war, he worked for two years as a labor union official before applying to law school. He graduated from Howard University in 1951 at the top of his law school class. His high marks also earned him a fellowship at Boalt Hall in Berkeley where he pursued his LL.M. He was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1954.

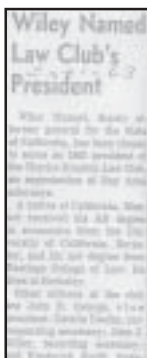
After twenty-four years of private practice (1954-1976), he submitted his name for consideration as a judicial officer. Three months after he first expressed interest in a judgeship, he received his answer. On April 8, 1976, Gov. "Jerry" Brown appointed Bancroft to the Alameda County Superior Court. There, he served from 1976 until his retirement in 1988. Of his work on the bench, he grew especially fond of presiding over adoptions. "There's a lot of laughter and a lot of joy, and a lot of fun," he said in a 1986 interview.

In 1998 at its meeting in Memphis, the National Bar Association inducted Judge Bancroft into its Hall of Fame.

Hon. Justice Wiley William Manuel (1927 – 1981)

On February 12, 1977, Founder Wiley William Manuel became the first African-American Justice of the California Supreme Court.

Manuel attended Hastings College of the Law where he graduated second in his class in 1953. He had been number one in his class two



years in a row as both a 1L and 2L. He earned Order of the Coif honors, was editor-in-chief of the Hastings Law Journal (the first African-American to do so), and was a member of the Thurston Society.

Manuel was also the first African-American appointed to the State Attorney General's Office in 1953 when he was sworn in as a student legal assistant. The position proved to be a stepping-stone for Manuel, who, after graduation, spent over twenty years in the AG's San Francisco office, including five years as Chief Assistant. In 1963, he served as president of the Charles Houston Law Club.

In 1976, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Manuel to the Alameda County Superior Court. One year later, he was again selected, but this time as Justice of the state supreme court. He was subsequently elected to a twelve year term that would have expired in 1990. Sadly, he passed away on January 5, 1981.

Justice Manuel was known for his active involvement in numerous community, civic and fraternal organizations. He had also been lector and lay minister of communion for Saint Paschal's Catholic Church in Oakland.

He married Eleanor M. Williams in 1948 and raised two children, Yvonne and Gary. Eleanor Manuel continues to champion her husband's causes by steering the Wiley Manuel Law Foundation, Inc. (WMLF), a non-profit scholarship foundation that conducts high school appellate argument competitions and hosts an annual awards dinner honoring its student scholarship recipients.

A downtown Oakland courthouse bears Justice Manuel's name. (It is across the street from another courthouse that bears the name of another

law club member, Justice Allen E. Broussard, the second African-American to sit on the California Supreme Court.)

Hiawatha T. Roberts

National Bar Association Hall of Fame inductee (2002) Hiawatha T. Roberts was a past president of the Charles Houston Law Club, serving for two consecutive years. He graduated from Hastings College of Law with Wiley Manuel. They were the only two African-American graduates that year. Roberts has practiced in Oakland ever since. His successful career in private practice has spanned fifty years.

"Hi" Roberts devoted his legal career to advance the causes of the underprivileged. A veteran of the Army Air Force during WWII, he has occasionally described his advocacy as "guerilla fighting." One memorable case involved the City of Hayward's move to annex, through eminent domain, Russell City, a predominantly African-American settlement. Roberts' work helped assure that the affected residents were appropriately compensated for the taking.

Over the course of his career, he landed positions including General Counsel for the United Auto Worker's Union and General Counsel for the Oakland Unified School District. He was the first African-American to hold the latter post.

Roberts graduated from the University of Denver in 1950 with a degree in political science.

He has been active in numerous community organizations and has been a member of the Evergreen Baptist Church since 1956.

In 2004, the Wiley Manuel Law Foundation recognized him as a

Legal Pioneer. After fifty years of private practice, he plans to return to Texas.

Claude Otho Allen

Claude Allen's colleagues delighted in the way he took over any courtroom he entered. "I say a man can do anything he wants to," he once observed of his life. "I'm willing to fight for the rights of my people."

Allen was born in 1916 in Lumberton, Mississippi. In high school, he was the catcher for the Piney Woods High School baseball team. During summers, the team traveled throughout the midwest playing exhibition games against other Negro teams. When a town didn't have a field, they'd set up on the prairie. During the summer of 1934, Allen caught from famed Negro League pitcher Leroy "Satchell" Paige at a game in Jackson, Mississippi. It was an honor he never forgot.

Allen enrolled at Alcorn College, an all black institution, but was expelled in 1936 when he and twenty-five others organized a strike to protest the school's poor treatment of its students. He spent the next year at Jackson College.

Allen worked briefly as a life insurance salesman before joining the army in 1941. At the time, there were very few Blacks in the service. This was before the Pearl Harbor attack inspired widespread enlistment. Allen made extra money tutoring soldiers in his segregated company, most of whom did not know how to read or write.

Like many, Allen found his way to the Bay Area after WWII. In 1947, shortly after arriving to Oakland, he campaigned for a seat on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Though he was not elected, he would run for office several more times, twice as the candidate

of the Democratic Central Committee. Of his political aspirations, Allen mused, "I was a little too honest at the time for politics."

A self-described "ambitious" man, Claude Allen had always wanted to attend law school. After moving to Oakland, he found part-time work as a clerk running errands for attorney John C. Henderson. In 1950, he enrolled in the night program at San Francisco Law School. During the day, he worked at a warehouse, a job that gave him opportunities to sit down and study. Allen graduated in 1953 with an LLB degree. He next took John Bussey's review course to prepare for the California bar exam.

Allen was admitted to the state bar in July of 1954 around his 38th birthday. He quickly set up shop. "I made money from the first day," he recalled in a 1980 interview. "I had a couple 'drunk cases' the first day. I went to court and I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how to get the guy out of jail . . . I went to court that morning. Murphy was the judge . . . I said [speaking to the court in chambers] 'I don't know what the hell I'm doing. I got a client; he's got a drunk driving beef. I don't suppose I should go back home?' They laughed.

Allen developed great relationships with the criminal court judges. His reputation as an effective criminal defense lawyer grew with his experience. "I had about seven cases of murder," Allen recalled. "Six of them walked out free."

In 1956, vandals burned a cross on the lawn of his Oakland home on Seneca Street. The neighborhood was predominantly white. Neighbors believed that the culprits were some kids having "fun." Allen didn't get excited over it. He had grown up hearing the word "nigger." He had even watched the corpse of a lynched black man being dragged down the road of his hometown. Said Allen of the

cross-burning: "The police threw water at it. We went home."

Over the course of his legal career, Allen experienced ups and downs, made a lot of money, and, despite having done much, always aspired to accomplish more. He loved his wife, Nell, and was very proud of his children. "I do anything I can for family. I only want them to live good," he said in the same 1980 interview.

In 1976, Attorney Allen suffered a paralyzing stroke that curbed his career as a trial lawyer.

Armeka Theophilus Jackson

In 1955, Armeka Jackson began practicing law. He had wanted to be a lawyer all of his life and achieved that goal at the age of 41 when he earned his law degree from the University of San Francisco.



Jackson arrived to California around the start of World War II and began to prepare himself to study law by taking night classes in typing, bookkeeping, shorthand, English and public speaking. In 1951, he took a job as a reptile handler at the San Francisco Steinhart Aquarium, a job that fit with his studies at night.

He resided in Berkeley with his wife and four children.

Hon. Maurcie H. Hardeman and Solomon Elihu Johnson were both admitted to the state bar in June of 1955.

Hardeman, the first African-American municipal court judge in Santa Clara County, returned from WWII and attended law school at Hastings. Upon graduation, he worked for John Bussey and later became an associate at the Filmore District office of Terry Francois and

Willie L. Brown Jr. The three sought to expand their practice by setting up another office in San Jose. However, Francois and Brown had political aspirations that required their presence in San Francisco. In 1957, Hardeman agreed to test the waters in Santa Clara County by agreeing to start the new office. He began commuting from San Francisco. Eventually, he built his own practice in San Jose. For a period of time he worked with Wester "Wes" Sweet, another black pioneer lawyer in San Jose. (Wes later worked with his brother Clifford Sweet).

Judge Hardeman married Vatchye Hardeman in 1956. They had two children, Maurice Jr. and Anne-Maria.

Hon. Wilmont Sweeney
(1925 - 1999)

The Honorable Wilmont Sweeney served as Superior Court Judge in Alameda County for seventeen years. He was presiding judge of the Juvenile Division for the majority of those years.



He was born in Austin, Texas in 1925. During WWII he served in the army as a sergeant. Sweeney then enrolled at the University of California where he received his undergraduate degree in political science in 1950.

Sweeney earned his law degree in 1955 from Hastings. There, his high grades kept him in the top quarter of his class each semester. For his 2L and 3L years, he won scholarships. Sweeney received moot court awards and was also the Note and Comment Editor of the Hastings Law Journal (1954 to 1955). After passing the bar exam, he was sworn-in on December 21st.

From 1955 to 1974, Attorney Sweeney remained in private practice handling a diverse array of cases. He first worked with criminal trial lawyer Clint White. Thereafter, he became a partner in the firm of Wilson, Metoyer, & Sweeney. The firm later included Allen Broussard as a partner.

Sweeney was elected Berkeley City Councilman from 1961 to 1974. He served as vice mayor of the city from 1967 to 1974.

On November 15, 1974, Governor Ronald Reagan appointed him to the Municipal Court of the Berkeley-Albany Judicial District of Alameda County. He was elected to that same seat in 1978, but was elevated by Governor Jerry Brown in 1979 to the superior court. He was elected to superior court in 1980 and reelected six years later.

Judge Sweeney retired from judicial office on May 31, 1996. Judge Martin Jenkins acknowledged of his friend that "Judge Sweeney literally dedicated his life to the task of improving the lives of our youth through innovative programming. Alameda County is particularly blessed to have had, for fifteen years, a judge who is recognized across this country as a pioneer in the area of juvenile justice and a man who cared so deeply about children."

Judge Sweeney passed away on Saturday, April 24, 1999, in Oakland, CA.

IS COACHING FOR YOU OR YOUR LAW FIRM?

By Tamara Wiggins Steele, Esq.

Coaching is becoming one of the leading tools that successful people use to live extraordinary lives. Athletes have known for years that in order to stay at the top of their game they need a coach. A life coach forms a relationship with an individual, working with them to make lasting changes in their life - whether it involves their career, finances, relationship or health. A coach skillfully identifies things that they cannot see, and encourages and challenges them to be more than what they can imagine.

Often times, people are faced with internal challenges that fall within one of the following categories: 1) Inability to make and/or keep commitments; 2) Lack of follow-through; 3) Inability to set and/or achieve goals; 4) Paralysis due to fear; and/or 5) Low self-esteem .

These challenges, if not properly addressed, hinder one's growth. A skillful coach will encourage, challenge and hold one accountable to being true to themselves. Coaches are not therapists or psychologists. They deal only with the present and guide individuals from where they currently are to where they want to be.

Coaching is not for everyone, only those who are committed to making a positive change in their life.

Tamara Wiggins Steele, Esq.
is CEO and founder of New Heights Company, an executive and life coaching company in the city of Oakland, California.
www.NewHeightsCompany.com

Founders & Past Presidents Reception

On Thursday, June 23, as part of the organization's Fiftieth Anniversary events, the Charles Houston Bar Association honored its Founders and Past Presidents at a special reception held at Maxwell's in downtown Oakland.

On display at the event were CHBA albums and memorabilia depicting the association's history through photos and documents. An official proclamation from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors declaring April 22, 2005 "Charles Houston Bar Association Day" was also available for inspection. April 22 is the anniversary of Charles Hamilton Houston's death.

President Jennifer Madden led the program with remarks celebrating CHBA's history and reciting the names of our esteemed law club founders. Charles Smiley, our newsletter editor, spoke briefly about some research he has conducted on the founders that is featured in this newsletter.

Vice President Kimberlei Evans recited the names of CHBA's past presidents and presented those present with a certificate from Congresswoman Barbara Lee's office praising their service and leadership. Past President Robert L. Harris addressed attendees about CHBA's transformation from a little known law club into a nationally recognized bar association. Speaking from his own experience, he recalled the push in the mid-1970s to increase membership and gain public visibility by taking a stand on the critical legal issues of the day. Harris reserved special praise for the Honorable Benjamin Travis, a past president and principle architect of the modern Charles Houston Bar Association.

Attorney Hiawatha Roberts, a law club founder, and Warren Wilson, Esq. (brother of founder Lionel Wilson and respected local attorney in his own right) also spoke during the program. Roberts, who received a legal pioneer award last year from the Wiley Manuel Law Foundation, talked about the early days and reminded attendees of the importance of the Charles Houston Bar as a vehicle to influence positive change in society at large. The event was a distinguished tribute to those who have made CHBA what it is today. The reception hinted of an incredible Gala Dinner this December.

Thanks for your support!

The Hon. Gail Bereola (Past President), Congresswoman Barbara Lee; Supervisor Keith Carson; Fred Jordon; John L. Burris (Past President); Simona Farris; Robert L. Harris (Past President); Demetrius Shelton (Past President); Rozenia Cummings (Past President); Paul Henderson; Carl Hackney; Regina Maloof; Fidel and Chonda Nwamu; Pacific Gas & Electric; Bank of America; California.Com; Maxwell's (Oakland); Alameda County Bar Association; California Association of Black Lawyers; The Wiley Manual Law Foundation; The Boy & Girls Club of Oakland; The San Francisco 49ers; Reed Smith LLP; Kazan, McClain, Edises, Abrams, Fernandezx, Lyons & Farris; Duane Morris LLP; Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe; Thelen Reid & Priest LLP; Hanson Bridgett Marcus Vlahos & Rudy LLP; Taylor & Goins LLP; *For contributions to CHBA history*: Rick Platz, Esq.; Estella Dooley, Esq.; Hon. Willie L. Brown, Jr.; Carl B. Metoyer, Esq.; Marion Francois; Joseph Williams, Esq.; Vatchye Hardeman; Elberta Erikson; Howard Abels; Gail Berkley; Hon. Gordon Baranco; Hon. Benjamin Travis; Hon. Elihu Harris; Alli Latimer, Esq.; Charles Smiley, Esq.; The Oakland Public Library; The African American Museum and Library at Oakland; U.C. Hastings Law Library; For support with the Run Walk for Justice: Kimball's East; Pampered Man/Pampered Woman; Oakland Black Firefighters Assn.; GymMasters; Soothin Creations; Stepping Out The Urban Shoe Spa; Shades of Sienna; Next Level Fitness Center; The City of Oakland; Ancilla, Inc.; Atlas Financial Services; Big Printing T-Shirt; Ekklesia Printing; and Red Cloud Inc.

CHBA Life Members:

Simona Farris, Esq.
Hon. Trina Thompson Stanley
Byron Cooper, Esq.
Gordon Greenwood, Esq.
Robert L. Harris, Esq.

African Americans and the Law in Early California

African-Americans, perhaps more than any other race of American people, have endured a peculiar relationship with the law. Enslaved under the original United States Constitution, excluded from citizenship by *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), promised participation by the Emancipation Proclamation and three constitutional amendments, but then kept at arm's length by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the history of American law is disturbingly preoccupied with the control of African-Americans.

Our own state of California shares this history. When California joined the Union in 1850, slavery was forbidden, not because of the institution's immorality, but because its was an expedient political move to encourage Washington D.C.'s ratification of its statehood. Popular sentiment also disfavored the idea of Blacks working in the rich Sierra gold mines. The first state governor, P.H. Burnett, is said to have called for a law excluding even free Negroes to halt the westward migration of more black settlers. The early California government, however, did not exclude free Blacks. Instead, the it enacted statutes meant, in large part, to construct a California that would be inhospitable, hence unattractive, to African-Americans. These laws denied African-Americans the right to receive a public education, homestead public lands, or vote.

In 1850, the new state Legislature also enacted section 394 of the Civil Practice Act, a statute providing that no Black, mulatto person or Indian would be permitted to give evidence in any action to which a white person was a party. The legislative intent behind this law was explained in *People v. Hall* (1854)

4 Cal. 399 which construed the statute as an attempt to "throw around the citizen a protection for life and property, which could only be secured by removing him above the corrupting influences of degraded castes," such as the Negro, Indian, and – as *Hall* held – the Chinese. (*Id.* at p. 403.) The court continued: "The same rule which would admit them to testify, would admit them to all the equal rights of citizenship, and we might soon see them at the polls, in the jury box, upon the bench, and in our legislative halls." (*Id.* at p. 404.) Such events, Chief Justice Murray concluded, posed "an actual and present danger."

When a harsh fugitive-slave law followed two years later, "no free black person was really safe in California. He might be claimed as a fugitive slave and thus be liable for removal by a former master if he could not prove with a legal document that he was in fact a free man." (Heizer & Almquist, *The Other Californians*, Univ. of California Press 1971.) In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court told *Dred Scott* he could not sue for his freedom. He was not a person, but property.

In 1860, Alameda County was one of the few California counties to support republican Abraham Lincoln for President. Historian Howard Zinn reports of Lincoln's presidential campaign theme: "He opposed slavery, but could not see blacks as equals, so a constant theme in his approach was to free the slaves and to send them back to Africa." After Lincoln's election, several southern states seceded and a bloody civil war followed. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

The federal Constitution was amended by adding the Thirteenth Amendment that abolished slavery (ratified in 1865), the Fourteenth Amendment which, among many other things, recognized the citizenship of African Americans (1868), and

the Fifteenth Amendment that conferred upon Blacks the right to vote (1870). *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), however, limited the citizenship rights of Blacks under the Fourteenth Amendment by establishing the legal doctrine of "separate but equal," an edict that gave rise to over half a century of American apartheid, only overruled in 1954 by *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Against this strong current of legalized discrimination, men and women of African descent in California sought legal training and admission into a profession that did not hide its unwillingness to embrace them. Hugh Macbeth, the 1927 President of the Blackstone Club (a forerunner to Los Angeles' Langston Bar Association) led successful efforts to advocate the inclusion of black lawyers in the State Bar of California, which was then being re-created by the state legislature as a state entity under court jurisdiction. Nationally, it would be another sixteen years before the American Bar Association would open its doors to black lawyers.

It is no wonder, then, that groups like the Charles Houston Law Club emerged throughout the country. Black attorneys organized both as a tactical response to the prevailing hostile social climate and as a proactive effort to diversify the future of the profession. As CHBA celebrates its 50th anniversary, we do well to remember our history, to be thankful for those who came before us, and ponder our duty to the future.

Spotlight: Estella W. Dooley, Esq.

Law Club Executive Board Member (1963)

Estella Dooley is among the first African-American women admitted to practice law in California. She was member of the Charles Houston Law Club and served as its Secretary in 1963. "Being part of the Law Club was relaxing. It was refreshing to be among people who were, of course, concerned with making a living, but who were even more concerned with doing something for the community." Ms. Dooley, age 83, presently resides in San Francisco.

Attorney Dooley graduated from Loyola Law School in 1958, joined the Langston Bar Association, and started practicing in the Los Angeles area. Her solo practice was profitable. Other black women practicing at the time included Martha Jefferson Louis (who had once been married to Bernard Jefferson and later remarried to famous boxer Joe Louis), Lucy Washington, Arleigh Maddox Woods, Vaino Spencer (who became the first Black Woman judge in Los Angeles), and Yvonne Braithwaite (who became a congressional representative).

Her classmate from Howard Law School, Richard Bancroft, was working in Oakland. He recommended Dooley to the partners of the Oakland firm of Edises Truehaft Grossman & Groghan and they hired her. Before her arrival, the firm was comprised entirely of white men. Being the only woman and only African-American there did not present difficulties. "I grew up in a segregated society in a well to do family; I never grew up with any sense of inferiority."

Back then, black lawyers in Northern California were few and they were concentrated in the East Bay. Statewide, she remembered there being "a few black lawyers in Sacramento, and a few starving in San Francisco, but for the most part, the largest concentration of Black lawyers [in California] was in Los Angeles."

In 1966, she joined the ranks of the San Francisco Public Defender's office where Law Club member Fred Smith worked. In so doing, Ms. Dooley became the first black woman deputy public defender in the state. She was certainly the first in San Francisco and remained in that office until her retirement in 1992.

Reminiscing on her activities with the Charles Houston Law Club, Ms. Dooley fondly remembers the club as a refuge where she could discuss difficult cases, talk about unpleasant judges, and share her own ideas. Her public defender sensibilities didn't always see eye-to-eye with her friend, neighbor and Law Club

colleague Cecil Poole, a United States Attorney and future Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Justice. Other members of the club during those years were John Stewart, Joe Williams, and John Dearman (who is now on the San Francisco Superior Court).

Ms. Dooley was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1921. Her father, the son of an African American mariner who owned tugboats on Baltimore's harbor, was a politician.

Dooley's undergraduate studies were completed at Howard University where she studied under prominent professors. She enrolled at the age of 16 on a scholarship from the University of Maryland. Professor E. Franklin Frazier taught her sociology. She was a student in the last political science class taught by Ralph Bunche. She studied philosophy from Allain Locke, who despite his brilliance, put the young Dooley to sleep with his lectures. During this time, she socialized with people such as poet Sterling Brown, jurist William Hastie, and Dr. Charles Drew.

Dooley acquired a strong academic background in science at Howard but later put her talent as a writer to use. She had worked in New York City writing publicity for Russian War Relief (Russia was a U.S. ally at the time). Dooley left that job to accept employment as a research mathematician with the U.S. government's Math Tables Project in Manhattan. This was a small office of 25 employees, most of whom had advanced degrees in mathematics. After the war, she belatedly discovered that they had been doing research for the Manhattan Project. Dooley remained with the Project until she learned that the Red Cross was recruiting staff assistants. She was sent to the South Pacific with the Red Cross and, while there, did some side reporting for the Associated Black Press, unofficially.

Today, Ms. Dooley travels extensively and has visited most parts of the United States. She continues to devote her energy to young people, particularly young black men whom she feels are particularly susceptible to being pushed to "drop out mentally" from community participation. "We have a responsibility to the community," she explains. Owing up to this responsibility, Ms. Dooley informally tutors black men, teaching them to read.

Members and News

2004: The national legal community recognized the efforts of the Charles Houston Bar Association. At the 2004 National Bar Association Convention, CHBA earned the NBA's **2004 Outstanding Affiliate Award!** We thank our membership, law firm and corporate supporters for making 2004 so successful! **June 9, 2004:** Members meet at the The Rex in Oakland for a happy hour mixer; **June 29:** CHBA provide free community legal advice on Landlord/Tenant issues at the Master Seal Baptist Church, Oakland; **July 9:** Members support the Boys & Girls Club of Oakland at its Dedication and Grand Opening of its new Anna Marie Whalen Clubhouse; **July 30:** Members gather at the home of Past President **John L. Burris** for the annual Membership Appreciation BBQ; **NBA Convention in August:** CHBA officers and members attend NBA Convention in Charlotte, NC. President **Vernon Goins** accepts the NBA's 2004 Outstanding Affiliate Award on behalf of CHBA. **Sept. 7:** Assisted by volunteer lawyers from CHBA, the Wiley Manuel Law Foundation held its 20th Annual Benjamin Travis Moot Court Competition; CHBA supports the Election Protection Coalition to encourage participation in registering new voters and protecting the right to vote on election day. **Sept. 18:** CHBA supports NBLSA's annual Northern California Job Fair held at USF. **Sept. 23:** Hosted by the **Hon. Thelton Henderson**, CHBA holds a well-attended reception for **Christopher Edley, Jr.**, new Dean of Boalt Hall. **Oct. 2:** California Women Lawyers, in conjunction with CHBA, conducts the popular "SO, YOU WANT TO BE A JUDGE?" seminar, featuring John Davies, Judicial Appointments Advisor to Gov. Schwarzenegger (program chair, **Judge Brenda Harbin-Forte**); **Oct. 14:** General Membership Meeting at Milano Ristorante features presentations by Cal Stanley, Exec. Dir. of the Boys and Girls Club of Oakland and by Bank of America; **Nov. 18:** CHBA Election Meeting at Taylor & Goins LLP. **Jennifer Madden** elected Golden Anniversary president. Ms. Madden is a Boalt Hall grad who works in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office; **Nov. 30:** CHBA's College Awareness Advisory Program spend the day with teens at Castlemont High School to discuss pursuing a college education; **Dec. 3:** CHBA lawyers participate in Congresswoman Barbara Lee's "State of the African American Male: A closer look at former felons and challenges they face re-entering the community," a free, one-day conference at Laney College; **Dec. 4:** At the CHBA Gala Dinner Dance, Past President Vernon Goins receives a well-deserved standing ovation from appreciative attendees. **2005 GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY YEAR** **Jan. 7:** **Ray Marshall** and his firm Bingham McCutchen present a lecture by **Prof. Charles J. Ogletree** who discussed the impact of anticipated vacancies on the U.S. Supreme Court. Afterwards, the professor gave away free copies of his book *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half-Century of Brown v. Board of Education*; **Jan. 20:** CHBA participates at New College School of Law BLSA's presentation entitled *African American Leadership in Law*; CHBA lawyers join members of the Bay Area's various African American professional organizations at the annual Connect the Dots Mixer in San Francisco; **February:** CHBA board members use this month to reach out to youth, speaking at various "Law Day" events to educate high school students from Castlemont, McClymonds, Skyline, Balboa, Golden Gate Elementary and the Donald P. McCullum Youth Court; CHBA members attend a presentation at the Commonwealth Club by Wade Henderson who shared his views on the direction of the United States Supreme Court; **Feb. 26:** Annual Soulfood Potluck at the home of Carl Hackney brings over 90 members, friends, and family together for great food, music and fun; **Feb. 28:** Hastings BLSA hosts a symposium entitled, Revisiting Proposition 209: A case for Affirmative Action in Higher Education with keynote speaker Dean Christopher Edley. **March 2:** Executive Bd. Members visit Golden Gate Law School to attend BLSA meeting; **March 5:** Members participate in the Alameda Contra Costa Links Inc. Youth Symposium. Attorney **John Burris** spoke on "Teen Law." At another workshop, **Judge Evelio Grillo** (Alameda County), along with President Madden and **Charles Smiley**, conducted two demonstration mock trials where teens participated; that same day, in San Francisco, Hastings BLSA opened its doors to teach minority youth about the law school experience. **Apr. 2:** **Judge Gordon Baranco** and other CHBA lawyers volunteered at **Congresswoman Barbara Lee's** Alameda County Criminal Record Expungement Summit, co-organized by **Tirien Steinbach** and the lawyers of the East Bay Community Law Center. The all-day event provided information and free lawyer consultations to the public explaining how to clear up one's record to enhance employment opportunities; **Apr. 2:** CHBA sponsored a track and field event at the Oakland Invitational Relays, an annual sports competition among Oakland High Schools; **April 29:** Ten past presidents of CHBA and current board members fly to Los Angeles to support the installation of **Demetrius Shelton** as President of the California Association of Black Lawyers; **May 21:** Past President Vernon Goins gives keynote address Hastings BLSA graduation ceremony; Organized by **Kwixuan Maloof**, CHBA teams up with St. Paul's Church to provide food and clothing to the needy. **June 15:** Happy Hour at Luka's in Oakland; **June 23:** A special reception honoring CHBA's Founders and Past Presidents was held at Maxwell's in Oakland; **June 25:** CHBA holds its first 5k Run/Walk fundraiser around Lake Merritt. **In memoriam.** CHBA mourns the loss of the following beloved friends and colleagues: the **Hon. Claudette Brooks-Cooper** (Alameda County), **Patricia Mills-Ndlela** (founding member of BWL Northern California), the **Hon. Richard A. Bancroft** (a Charles Houston Law Club founder), longtime beloved member **Jerry Curtis, Esq.**, **Johnnie Cochran, Esq.**, and Judge **Hugh W. Goodwin**, the first African-American lawyer in Fresno County (1952) and the first black judge in that county (appointed in 1976).



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Every few days, new court decisions affecting California attorney conduct are filed. I summarize these cases on the What's New page at www.FishkinLaw.com

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Visit us on-line at:

www.charleshoustonbar.org

Upcoming Events:

August

4 - 7 ABA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois

September

8 - 11 State Bar of California Annual Meeting, San Deigo

17 Student Resume & Interviewing Workshop

Taylor & Goins LLP, Oakland, CA

8:30 - 12:00pm

30 Annual "Jurists at Sea" Cruise

October

Applications become available for
CHBA Student Scholarships

November

CHBA Scholarship applications deadline

December

3 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner!

Oakland Airport Hilton

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