

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES
Annual Board of Governors Meeting
September 18-20, 2024
Hyatt Regency Seattle
Seattle, WA

NCBJ/NBA Blackshear Committee

Seattle Blackshear Panel and Networking Reception

Every year our Committee sponsors the Blackshear Panel and Reception for law students in the city where the Annual NCBJ Conference is held. The purpose of the Blackshear Panel is to encourage diverse law students at local colleges and universities to consider bankruptcy and restructuring law as a practice area. Usually, this event is scheduled for the afternoon on the first day before the Opening Reception at a local law school; however, because of the shorten schedule this year, we will hold the event on the day before the Conference begins.

This year the Committee will host a panel for law students from Seattle University School of Law during the 2024 NCBJ Annual Conference. The Blackshear Panel will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 in the afternoon. The 2024 Blackshear Fellows are invited to attend.

Hon. Cornelius Blackshear NCBJ Presidential Fellowship Program

Brief History of the Blackshear Presidential Fellowship

In 2008, the NCBJ Board passed a Resolution naming their minority fellowship program the Hon. Cornelius Blackshear Presidential Fellowship in honor of Judge Cornelius (Neil) Blackshear, who was the first and longest serving African American bankruptcy judge on the Eastern Seaboard. At the Final Night Dinner of the 2009 Duberstein National Moot Court Competition in New York, the Proclamation was presented to Judge Blackshear to evidence Judge Blackshear's history making public service record and the esteem which members of the NCBJ hold for him as a jurist and former colleague.

Every year, we sent Judge Blackshear a letter informing him about the up and coming lawyers chosen for the NCBJ Blackshear Presidential Fellowship. Sadly, Judge Blackshear passed away on June 10, 2021. We now provide his widow, Betty Blackshear, with this information.

The NCBJ awards Blackshear Presidential Fellows in the form of grants to defray part of the cost to attend the Annual NCBJ Conference each year in recognition of Judge Blackshear's record of service and the need to increase the attendance numbers of lawyers of color at the Annual NCBJ Conference.

The criteria used to select the NCBJ Blackshear Presidential Fellows is that the attorney must (a) have two to ten years of experience practicing law; (b) devote at least fifty percent of his/her practice to bankruptcy cases; (c) demonstrate legal excellence in the practice of bankruptcy law; (d) display a serious commitment to principals of civility, ethics and professionalism; and (e) demonstrate commitment to the continued educational development of bankruptcy professionals and to professional activities that will benefit the public, members of the bar and the court system.

2024 Blackshear Fellows

This is the eighth year in which the application was changed to include questions about any disciplinary or professional misconduct and gave notice that bankruptcy judges in the districts where the applicant practices would be contacted for further information about the professionalism and ethical standards of the attorney. To this end, every bankruptcy judge in each district where the applicants are admitted to practice were emailed. All comments received from the judges were compiled and provided to the Committee for their consideration along with the applications and other supporting documents.

The Committee selected the following attorneys to attend the Austin NCBJ Annual Conference as Blackshear Presidential Fellows: **Claudia Coleman**, associate at Armstrong Teasdale LLP in Irving, CA and former law clerk to Bankruptcy Judge Erithe Smith; **Reema Lateef**, Trial Attorney in the Office of the

U.S. Trustee in Brooklyn, NY; **Dominique Mayfield**, Staff Attorney for Chapter 13 Trustee, Sylvia Ford in Memphis, TN; **Destiny Parker**, associate at Baker Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C. in Raleigh, NC and former law clerk to Bankruptcy Judge Craig Goldblatt; **Re'Necia Sherald**, associate at Haynes & Boone, LLP in Houston, TX and former law clerk to Bankruptcy Judge Christopher Lopez; **Raychelle Tasher**, Assistant U.S. Attorney in Miami, FL and former law clerk to Bankruptcy Judge Kathy Surratt-States; and **Miles Taylor**, associate at White & Case in New York, NY and former law clerk to our colleague Craig Goldblatt.

The Blackshear Presidential Fellows will be introduced at the Judges' Breakfast on Thursday, September 19, 2024 during the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy A. Surratt-States
NCBJ/NBA Blackshear Committee Chair

Erithe A. Smith
NCBJ/NBA Blackshear Committee Co-Chair