




**Committee on
Civil Rights**

2023 Haywood Burns Memorial Award Ceremony and Reception

 **Tuesday, April 25, 2023**
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

 CUNY School of Law Auditorium
2 Court Square West
Long Island City (Queens), NY

Honoring Hon. Betty E. Staton

Former Judge, New York State Family Court,
Kings County; President,
Brooklyn Legal Services
Legal Services NYC





Hon. Betty E. Staton

The spirit of service was first nurtured in Betty by her grandmother, Elizabeth, after her mother joined the great migration and moved her family from North Carolina to New York City in 1944. Under her grandmother's influence, Betty became a national leader of a young people's church group that gave her the opportunity to travel across the country.

When she graduated from high school and entered Brooklyn College, teaching was her career goal. Her college career ended with a proposal of marriage. Eighteen years later she reentered Brooklyn College to complete an undergraduate degree while raising two young sons as a single parent and with a new goal of becoming a lawyer.

The generosity of New York University Law School which granted her a full scholarship with a stipend, made it possible for her to go to law school. While a law student, she was active in BALSAs and traveled to several HBCUs to recruit students for NYU. She was also one of four students that formed what is now the NYU Law Alumni of Color Association (LACA). This year it will celebrate its 45th anniversary. Betty also participated in the Government Benefits Clinic to help prepare her for a career in public interest.

After graduation, Betty joined the staff at Bedford Stuyvesant Community Legal Services, part of Legal Services NYC, where she worked for eight years, ultimately becoming the Deputy Director and Director of Outreach and Education. As the director of outreach and education, she created a law related education course for community residents, tenant representatives and community advocates teaching the basics in areas of landlord tenant, SSI, unemployment, and consumer law. She also created an advance course that prepared the participants to represent clients in fair hearings and other administrative proceedings. Over the course of three years, more than 200 students graduated from the course, three of whom went on to law school.

In 1987, Betty joined two other African American former legal services attorney and formed the first African American female law firm in the country. She remained a partner in the firm until 1991, when former mayor David N. Dinkins appointed her to a ten- year term on the family court. She was reappointed in 2001 by former mayor Rudolph Giuliani and served until mandatory retirement.

After retirement, Betty returned to Bedford Stuyvesant Community Legal Services and served as the Executive Director until the three Brooklyn legal Services programs consolidated. She then assumed the title of President, a position which she currently holds. She continues to mentor students of various ages as well as young attorneys. She has received numerous community and professional awards and she volunteers with various community and professional organizations. Betty is a proud mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. Betty is an active member of her church, and she loves to travel and enjoys dancing.

PROGRAM

6:00 p.m.

Welcome remarks

Michael D. Diederich, Jr., Esq., and Hanna F. Madbak, Esq.
Co-chairs, New York State Bar Association Committee on
Civil Rights

6:10 p.m.

Award Ceremony

- Welcome from Sudha Setty, Esq.
Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law
- Remarks from Sherry Levin Wallach, Esq.
President, New York State Bar Association
- Recognition of Dean Burns and Past Awardees
Jennifer Dohrn, DNP, CNM, FAAN
- Remarks from Vince Warren, 2023 W. Haywood Burns
Chair in Human and Civil Rights, CUNY School of Law,
and 2016 Recipient of the Haywood Burns Award
- Presentation of Award to Hon. Betty E. Staton by Michael
D. Diederich, Jr., Esq., and Hanna F. Madbak, Esq
- Remarks from Hon. Betty E. Staton

7:00 p.m.

Reception

THE HAYWOOD BURNS AWARD

Presented to honor an individual, not necessarily a lawyer, who has contributed to New York State in a manner that reflects Dean Burns' commitment to the struggle for justice and the qualities that made him an outstanding advocate for civil rights and the empowerment of the powerless.

PREVIOUS AWARD RECIPIENTS

2022 No Award Presented

2021 No Award Presented

2020 Armen H. Merjian, Esq.

2019 John R. Dunne, Esq.

2018 Esmeralda Simmons, Esq.

2017 Frederick K. Brewington, Esq.

2016 Vincent Warren

2015 Glenn D. Magpantay, Esq.

2014 Robert Gangi

2013 Howard Glickstein, Esq.

2012 Bryan D. Hetherington, Esq.

2011 Cesar A. Perales, Esq.

2010 Mary Crisalli Sansone

2009 Dr. Parveen Chopra

2008 Donna Lieberman

2007 John F. Boston

2006 Hon. Cornelius Blackshear

2005 Laurie M. Lambrix, Esq.

2004 Leroy Wilson, Jr., Esq.

2003 Juan A. Figueroa

2002 Hon. Ellen M. Yacknin

2001 Rockwell J. Chin, Esq.

2000 Hon. Pam Badoria Jackman Brown, Esq.

1999 Prof. Randolph M. Scott-McLaughlin

W. HAYWOOD BURNS

JUNE 15, 1940 - APRIL 2, 1996

W. Haywood Burns was a passionate advocate for civil rights, racial justice, gender equality, and equal and international human rights.

Haywood's political activism showed at age 15, when he helped integrate a swimming pool in his native Peekskill, N.Y. After graduating with honors from Harvard College and earning his law degree from Yale, Haywood served as the first law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Constance Baker Motley. Then, while Assistant Counsel to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, he also served as general counsel to Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign.

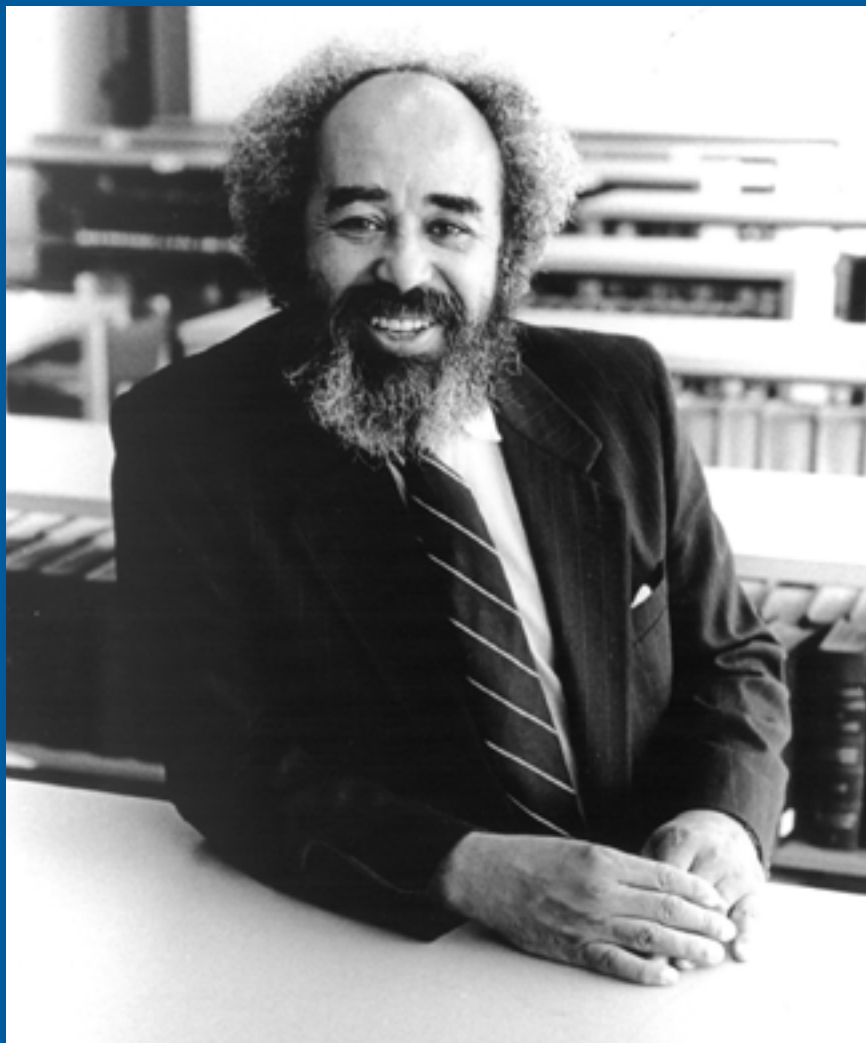
In 1969, Haywood helped found and became the first director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. He became the first African-American president of the National Lawyers Guild. He led both organizations in championing international solidarity from Grenada to Namibia. He monitored trials in Northern Ireland and South Africa's first election, and advised on drafting South Africa's Interim Constitution.

Haywood continuously battled racism in his writing and the courtroom, from proudly coordinating the Attica prisoners' defense, to protecting the rights of lawyers of color, and opposing Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court nomination.

A recognized constitutional and criminal law authority, Haywood was founding Dean of the City College Urban Legal Studies program from 1977 to 1987. He then became the first African-American Dean of a New York law school and led CUNY Law School in gaining its accreditation, ensuring the survival of its progressive commitment to public interest law. An excellent teacher, Haywood mentored thousands of students, particularly African-Americans, fostering their entry to legal practice.

In 1995, after a year as a Senior Visiting Scholar at Yale Law School, Haywood returned to CUNY as a University Professor. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, he was President of the Nation Institute, a pillar of the Center for Constitutional Rights, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and numerous other organizations.

Haywood's generosity of spirit and appetite for people were unbounded; he always reached out with true emotional concern to others. His talents, passions, and zest for life were his signature: husband; father; motorcyclist;



basketball player and Knicks fan; dancer and rock 'n roll enthusiast, treating himself to a pair of blue suede shoes on his fiftieth birthday.

Haywood lost his life in a car accident, along with M. Shanara Gilbert, an associate professor at the Law School, while attending a conference in South Africa on the transition to democracy in that country.

As David Gonzalez wrote in his *New York Times*' column, Haywood's "career cut across racial and ethnic lines, uniting politicians and persecutors, eager young attorneys and prosecutors, and grizzled civil rights veterans, the famous and the forgotten."



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