



OUTLOOK

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FSU COLLEGE OF LAW
BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK

FEBRUARY 2023



A History Lesson

Black History Month began in 1915 with the celebratory trip of Carter B. Woodson from Illinois to Washington, DC. Marking 50 years of emancipation, Woodson and others showcased exhibits dedicated to the strides Black individuals had made since the destruction of slavery. He urged civic organizations to promote the achievements uncovered by research and to popularize the findings.

If we do not know our history, we are doomed to repeat it. Today, there are politicians who desire to dismantle Black History studies in school and choose to exclude the sheer facts of our cultural history because it “aids in divisiveness.” However, Black history is American history and should be taught as such. With the current racial disparities in this county, it is important, now more than ever, to ensure our young people remain informed.

Still, we keep climbing. Life has been no crystal stair. Although hurt, harmed and often overwhelmed, we are resilient, intelligent, and role models for future generations to know and hold the reins. We are inventors, lawyers, doctors, musicians, investment and wealth managers, CEOs, sportsmen, athletes, elected officials, US Presidents, US Supreme Court Justices and loving parents. We are Black people and proud of it. Let us rejoice to the rhythmic

tunes that pulses and flows through us as we continue to learn our history and make history
365 days each year.

- Salesia Smith-Gordon, Esq. '92, Immediate Past President



JUDICIAL CHAIR
Judge Stephen Stokes, Esq., ('91)
District Court – Fayetteville, NC

Black Like Me And You: So What?! **(A Tribute to Tyre Nichols)**

Five, College-Educated Brothers, Dressed In Blue,
Brothers With Mothers Who Look Like Ours Do,
Brothers Who Were Divine Not Long Ago,
Are Not Any Longer, In The Minds Of The Nine I Know;
It's a fact, They Are Black, Like Me And You,
And While This Familial News Is Factually True,
Alas, Alas, I Must Ask, So What?!

To "Protect And Serve" is What They Swore To,
But, for Tyre Nichols, They Never Ever Tried To!
The Thin-Blue Line Can't Shield This Truth
Body Cams and SkyCops Are Solid Proof
Yes, These Cops Are Black, Like Me And You,
So, I Ask, Really, Because I Have To: So What?!

We Color it Good, That Blacks Wear Blue
In Our Own Hood, Our Prayers Came True,
We Prayed Because Too White Was Blue,
But, in Order to Back Our Blacks in Blue,
They Must to Their Oath and Own Be True,
And Not Make Us, Their Actions Rue, as Their Brethren Do,
As The Facts Construe, They Are Black, Like Me and You,
So, I Ask, Still, Because I Have Too: So What?!

Black on Black, The World Did See, So
The Whole World Asks, "How Can This Be?!"
Since They Are Black, Like You And Me,
How Could They Murder, Brother Tyre?!
Five Brothers to One, a Cowardly Task
The Swarm Was Fast, so I Hasten to Ask,
That Which Will Linger and Last: So What?!

Now, Brothers, Like Others, Will Kill Me And You,
They Have Plunged Too Deep in a Sea of Blue,
Too Deep to See That Black Lives Still Matter, Too!
And Since They Fail to Love Self as They Ought To,
The Question I Asked, Still Holds Fast: So What?!

And If by chance, They Love Me And You,
We Just Ask - For A Much Clearer Clue,
But, If They Fail to Honor What They Pledged To,
And In Spirit, And In Truth, They Really Don't Care Too,
We Must Pass This Remedial Class, of Ask, Ask, Ask,
What We've Repeatedly Asked, of Our Brothers In Blue:
Just To Be Served And Protected, Like They Swore To,
Like Somehow, for all Others, They Manage to,
Otherwise, So What, If They Look Like Me And You?!

Sirens Abound As In Surround Sound, to Make Tyre Sigh!
Hateful Words Confound And Redound To Make Him Cry!
A SkyCop, on the Block, Told the Truth and Did Not Lie,
Brothers in Blue, Black Like me and You, Made Tyre Die!

Tyre Nichols Now Joins A Long Roll Call Of Black Bodies,
Who Cast An Eerie, Neon Death Scroll Across The Sky,
Images of Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" Are Magnified,
And Are Tethered To A Blue-Ordained Evil That Stupefies.

As Tyre's Wise, but Weary Mother Cries,
Her Cry Will Forever Be, "Why?!" "Why?!"
Did Men In Blue, Black Like Me And You,
Brutally Beat Her Dear Son Until He Died?
Black Men, Like Her Black Son, Beat Him, Until He Died!
So Alas, Alas, We Really Must Ask: So what?!

CLASS NOTES



Ben Crump at the 54th Annual NAACP Image Award receiving the Social Justice Award. Photo: Getty Images.

Ben Crump Receives Social Justice Impact Award

Ben Crump received the Social Justice Impact Award at the 54th NAACP Image Awards held in California on Sunday, February 26. Recognized for his tireless work and effort in many cases, including high-profile civil rights cases, Crump used his time on stage to enlighten and excite the crowd with clear calls to action. Crump shared a five-minute speech detailing the importance of ensuring that Black history is not forgotten in spite of newly passed regulations. "I will continue to fight in the court of law and the court of public opinion," Crump exclaimed as he detailed his current and upcoming efforts in his field. Congratulations, Ben Crump on receiving this notable honor! Watch the replay here.

[Watch Now](#)



Members of the Sheree D. Cunningham Black Women Lawyers Association outside the U.S. Supreme Court. These women traveled from Palm Beach County with FSU Law Alumna Salesia Smith-Gordon, Esq. and Sia Baker-Barnes, Esq. who served as sponsors for the inductees.

Alumna Travel to DC for Historic Supreme Court Induction

FSU Alumna Salesia Smith-Gordon, Esq., and Sia Baker-Barnes, Esq. traveled to Washington DC this month with members of the Sheree D. Cunningham Black Women Lawyers Association. The SDCBWL A delegation included five judges and seven lawyers. All Palm Beach County Black women judges were inducted into the US Supreme Court. "Our quest was to uplift each other and do what we can to promote Black women legal eagles to a higher plain," said FSU Law Alumna, Salesia Smith-Gordon. Sia and Salesia were proud to co-sponsor the SDCBWL A members (as per the SCOTUS rules). Sia served as the 'movant' for the inductees, facing the Supreme Court as she announced each name and vouched for their readiness and character for admission. Salesia was sworn in 20 years ago before the en banc tribunal of US Supreme Court judges and says the moment was one of pure joy. The organization's name sake, Sheree Davis Cunningham was present as a special guest.



Ben Crump with Actor Will Smith and St. Thomas University President, David A. Armstrong, J.D. at ceremony in Miami, FL on February 8, 2023.

Benjamin L. Crump College of Law unveiled at St. Thomas University

On February, 8, St. Thomas University School of Law granted nationally recognized civil rights and personal injury attorney, Ben Crump, an esteemed honor by naming the college after him. Crump will become the first practicing Black attorney to receive this honor. His work has gained local and national recognition in the realm of civil rights law. This acknowledgement comes in response to the great strides he has made for social justice throughout the country. The new building signage was unveiled in a ceremony celebrating Crump for his groundbreaking accomplishments.

[Read the Story](#)



Marlon Hill Makes Partner

Alumnus Marlon Hill ('95), earns partner at top Miami firm Weiss Serota Helfman Cole + Bierman (WSHC+B). Hill took the reins as WSHC+B partner in January, a leadership role essential to firm success. The Jamaican native and Miami transplant has made an impactful mark within his two years with WSHC+B, earning this advancement through the support of his peers. With nearly 20 years in Law, and 16 of those years running a firm of his own, Hill's extensive experience supports this honor. Hill will continue to be an active member in the Miami community by serving on many local and national boards.

Tiffany Moore Russell...Madam Clerk



FSU Law Alumna, Tiffany Moore Russell, '99, made history in 2006 by becoming the youngest County Commissioner ever elected to serve on the Orange County Commission representing District 6. She served two terms on the County Commission (2006-2014). Then, again made history in 2014 as the first African American female Clerk elected in Florida where she remains with the voter's confidence. The wife and mother of two keeps a busy life balanced by family, work, professional and civic organizations where she has significant leadership responsibilities.

BLSA CORNER



BLSA Wins Regionals

This month the BLSA teams competed in the Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition in Washington, D.C. The competition took place over four days as teams from across the country put their skills to the test. Prior to the competition, two BLSA teams competed in the SRBLSA Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition which is the pre-qualifier for the national competition, with Team Garnet placing in 3rd place and Team Gold placing in 2nd place. This year's teams include four members. Team Gold included Larry Lynn 2L, Kennedy Kimble 3L, Jayla Edmonds 2L, and Candice Hopkins 1L. Team Garnet included Briana Saffold 3L, Khamisi Thorpe 3L, Sarai Glaze 2L, and Kaya Small 2L.



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