

National Negro Anthem

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty. Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us. Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod; felt in the days when hope unborn had died. Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet, come to the place for which our fathers sighed? We have come over a way that with tears has been watered; we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered. Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last, where the white gleam of our bright start is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears; Thou who has brought us thus far on the way. Thou who has by thy might, led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee. Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee. Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land.

On behalf of the Louisville Metro Council we extend our heart filled congratulations and sincere thanks to all of the honorees who have been recognized today. Our city appreciates your efforts and has truly benefited from your tireless and unselfish works in "reaffirming our diverse culture"!

(Please join us for light refreshments, in the 1st floor conference room, immediately following the benediction . Louisville Metro Council Equity, Community Affairs Committee: Barbara Shanklin (D-2), Stuart Benson (R-20), Tammy Hawkins (D-1), Jecorey Arthur (I-4), Andrew Owen (D-9), Dan Seum, Jr.(R-13), Marilyn Parker (R-18), Betsy Rule (D-21)

21st ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM



"Reaffirming Our Diverse Culture"

Thursday, February 29, 2024
Metro Council Chambers
12:00 P.M.

*Sponsored by:
Louisville Metro Council Equity, Community Affairs, Housing, Health & Education
Dr. Barbara E. Shanklin, Chairperson (D- 2)
Stuart Benson, Vice Chairperson (R-20)*

***Special Community Honorees:
“Making a Difference in our Justice System”***

Judge Denise Brown-Jefferson County Family Court

Judge Denise Brown was born and raised in a small town in West Virginia, and one of only a few Black people in her town. Her World Civilization teacher, who exposed her students to things not available in their small community, served as a role model for Judge Brown and was one of the key factors that has led to Brown’s success. Judge Brown acknowledges that growing up had little to do with her race and was more due to socioeconomics. Everybody’s parents were either coal miners or teachers.

Judge Brown earned her B.A. in economics with a concentration in business administration from Howard University, an HBCU that exposed her to a new environment and a culture that she had not experience. She received her J.D. from the Brandeis School of Law.

While seeking employment after passing the Bar Exam, Judge Brown found herself in situations where employers were discriminative towards her, not only as a female, but also as an African American. This situation led to formulate her idea to run for the Judge’s office, as she felt there was a great need for representation in these positions.

Prior to her judicial elect, Brown gained experience as a prosecutor with both the Commonwealth and Jefferson County Attorney’s Offices and was appointed by Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson, as the Executive Director for the Louisville & Jefferson County Human Relations Commission in 1992. *(all information obtained & condensed from Google’s Livewire)

Judge Josephine L. Buckner-Jefferson County District Court

Judge Buckner is a high school graduate of Pikeville High School and states that it took her nearly a decade to seek a degree in law, although she was a member of a pre-law club at the University of Louisville. After earning a BA in English literature and while working at a local bank, she

met a group of lawyers and decided to pursue her Juris Doctor from Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law. Judge Buckner has been practicing law for eighteen (18) years and her dream of becoming a judge was realized in 2021 when she was appointed by Governor Andy Beshear, winning her first election in 2022.

She is a member of the Bar in both Kentucky and Georgia and believes there is a national trend indicating that women are deciding which way they want the county to go. “If women continue to pay attention and to use their voices; not only sharing on social media or with family and friends-but actually voting, it will continue to trend.” *(Information obtained & condensed from Today’s Women Magazine).

Judge Tracy E. Davis-Jefferson County Circuit Court 5th Division

Judge Tracey Davis knew she wanted to become a lawyer since she was five (5) years old. The birth of her first child, on the first day of her senior year at DuPont Manual High School, changed her life, but it did not change her goals. Her parents instilled in her the importance of an education and stressed that knowledge is the one thing that could never be taken away from a person and that anything is possible with an education.

After graduating from high school, Judge Davis earned a BA in finance and a Juris Doctor from Northern University Salmon P. Chase College of Law. Mentors and professors who examined her skill sets would say that she was made for the courtroom.

Judge Davis, having the support of highly vested community leaders, was elected in 2002, defeating Judge Mary Shaw who is notably the judge who signed a falsified warrant which led to the raid of Breonna Taylor’s apartment and her subsequent death.

Judge Davis says “the influx of women judges; shows how far we’ve come as a nation in regard to equity. Whether you are bi-gender, female, trans or whatever the case may be, it goes to show that we all a voice.” (information obtained & condensed from Today’s Women Magazine)

Judge Brian C. Edwards-Jefferson County Circuit Court 11th Division

Judge Brian Edwards has served as Judge of the Jefferson County Circuit Court's 11th Division since September 4, 2009 and from 2017-2019, he served as Chief Circuit Judge for Jefferson County Metro Region.

He is the 2022 recipient of the *Kentucky Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers* Fair Administration of Justice Award, 2022 recipient of the *American Board of Trial Advocates* Trial Judge of the Year Award, 2021 recipient of the *University of Kentucky College of Law* Distinguished Jurist award, 2018 recipient of the *Kentucky Bar Association's* Distinguished Judge award and the 2014 recipient of the *Kentucky Justice Association's* Trial Judge of the Year award.

Prior to joining the bench, Judge Edwards practiced law for 13 years receiving the *Louisville Bar Association's* Frank Haddad Outstanding Young Lawyer award in 2004 and taught at the University of Louisville in both the College of Arts and Sciences and at *the* Brandeis School of Law.

Judge Edwards attended Northwestern University, graduating with honors in 1992, before attending and graduating from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1996. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Pete Foundation, The Louisville Urban League, Louisville Soccer Alliance; and, also serves as the Founding Director of the West Louisville Soccer Initiative.

Judge Edwards is married to attorney Angela Logan Edwards and they are the proud parents of two sons.

Judge Lori N. Goodwin-Jefferson Circuit Court-Family Division Three

Judge Lori Goodwin, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, is a graduate of Seneca High School who continued her studies at the University of Louisville where she majored in Political Science and minored in Pan African Studies. While attending the University of Louisville, she became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. As a member of the University's Debate Team, for three years, she sharpened her critical thinking and oratorical skills which set the foundation for her legal career.

Judge Goodwin's law school career took her to Marquette University Law School, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she served as the president of the Black Law Student Association, an associate editor of the Marquette Sports Law Review, a member of Marquette's Sports Law Society and a member of the Public Interest Law Society.

After graduating law school, Judge Goodwin returned to Louisville to begin her career as an attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Louisville (Legal Aid), serving for thirteen years representing indigent clients in family law actions.

In November 2020, Judge Goodwin was elected to serve as Jefferson County's newest Family Court Judge, winning her election in 2022, thus securing her seat as Judge for an additional eight years.

Judge Goodwin presides over Jefferson Circuit Court, Family Division Three and was appointed by Mayor Fisher to serve as co-chair of the Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinating Council. She has also served on Jefferson County's Fatality Review Committee and is co-chair of the Domestic Violence Subcommittee.

Judge Goodwin is active in the Louisville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., a member of Bates Memorial Baptist Church; and, in her downtime, loves to read, craft, travel, watch tv, and spend time with her family and friends.

Judge Jessica E. Green-Jefferson Circuit Court

Judge Jessica Green is a life-long resident of Louisville, Kentucky, and a graduate of Louisville Central High School. She is a 2003 graduate of Spelman College with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Comparative Women's Studies. She went on to attend and ultimately graduate from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 2006.

Judge Green began her legal career as a Prosecutor and served as an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney in both Hardin and Jefferson Counties. She was assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit, and prosecuted domestic violence, child sexual abuse and assault cases, and

homicides in the Commonwealth, eventually taking over thirty felony level cases to trial.

The Law Office of Jessica Green was opened in 2012, where she represented hundreds of clients for a decade, specializing in criminal defense, family law, and personal injury. She also served as a Guardian Ad Litem, representing children who were victims of abuse and neglect.

In 2015 Jessica was elected to Louisville Metro Council, where she served as the District 1 Councilwoman for seven years. As Councilwoman, she served as the Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee for several years, and worked to improve public safety, housing issues, and equity issues. She helped with the creation of the Civilian Review and Accountability Board and served as the primary author of “Breonna’s Law”, the police de-escalation ordinance, and authored an anti-harassment policy for all Louisville metro employees to maintain a safe and non-hostile work environment

In January of 2022, Judge Green was appointed to Jefferson Circuit Court by Governor Andy Beshear, making her only the second black woman in Jefferson County to be a Circuit Court Judge. At the time she began on the bench, it had been seventeen years since a black woman had served in Jefferson Circuit Court. In November of 2022, Judge Green ran unopposed for a new eight-year term which began in January of 2023.

Among her professional accomplishments in the field of Law, she is past Vice President of the Louisville Black Lawyers Association, former participant in the Louisville Bar Association Leadership Academy and a former member of the Louisville bar Association’s Community Service Committee. She was honored as a recipient of the “Top 40 Under 40” Award of the National Trial Lawyers.

Judge Green is a member of St. Stephen Baptist Church; the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc; a graduate of the Leadership Louisville Bingham Fellows Program; a volunteer with the American Heart Association and a volunteer and donor with the National Marrow Donor Registry. Jessica also has a strong sense of family especially when it pertains to the welfare of children and is a former foster parent and an adoptive parent.

Jessica lives with her husband Dwayne, and their fourteen-year-old son, Zion, three-year-old son Lennox, eighteen-month-old daughter, Eden, and ten-year-old Goldendoodle, Daisy.

Judge Tanisha A. Hickerson-Jefferson County District Court

Tanisha A. Hickerson has been serving our community as a Judge since 2019. She presides over various cases, from criminal, traffic, small claims, juvenile to probate matters. She is a proud graduate of the Louisville Central High School Law & Government Program; earned her B.A. in Philosophy with a minor in Communications from the University of Louisville and her Juris Doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law. Prior to the bench, Judge Hickerson practice law in the field of civil litigation defense.

Judge Hickerson is active in the legal community serving as Chair of the Criminal Justice Commission; member of the Opportunity Network, a successful re-entry program; and member of the Charles W. Anderson, Jr. Bar Association (formerly known as the Louisville Black Lawyers Association).

Outside of court, she can be found on the court as both a basketball and volleyball official for the Kentucky High School Athletic Association.

Judge Angela J. Johnson- Family Court Division 1

Judge Johnson earned her B.A. in English and political science from the University of Kentucky; and, received her Juris Doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law.

She has practiced law since 2005 serving as an appellate attorney for the Department of Public Advocacy in Frankfort, Kentucky and later became an assistant commonwealth attorney in Louisville where she served as a prosecutor for nearly six years. Judge Johnson has held a solo law practice for eleven years and her current term in Family Court ends in 2031. *(Information obtained and condensed from Google’s Ballotpedia),

Judge Lisa L. Langford-Jefferson County District Court

Judge Langford, a Louisville native, moved to Indiana upon obtaining an accounting degree, auditing livestock yards and meat packing plants. She

returned to Louisville, three years later, as she was a city girl at heart. She obtained her Juris Doctor from the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville, began working as a prosecutor and after fourteen years, assumed office as a judge in 2019.

Growing up in Prospect, she was fortunate enough to have a very good life and educated parents; “but being a woman of color, I was kind of always the only one in the room that looked like me” (sic). There were things that she wanted to change, and she wanted to help make the world a good and fair place for everyone. “I always wanted to make a difference” She appreciates the fact that as a judge, she not only helps victims of crime but also persons who have been in a cycle of poverty, homelessness, mental illness or domestic violence. “I am a very spiritual person and I believe that this is a calling”. (Information obtained & condensed from Today’s Woman Magazine).

Judge Derwin L. Webb-Family Court

Deputy Chief Judge Derwin L. Webb is the first African American male Family Court Judge elected to serve in the history of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, and a first-generation attorney, Judge Webb has lived in Louisville for more than twenty-five years. He was a former standout basketball player at the University of Louisville for Hall of Fame basketball coach Denny Crum, and was a captain during his senior year, earning the respect of his peers both on and off the basketball court.

As an undergraduate, he was elected as a senator in the Student Government Association. In this role he represented the interests of the student population and discovered the importance of public service. During this period, he joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated in 1990 to continue his service in the community.

After receiving his B.S. in Political Science, he attended the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville. Upon graduation, he began his legal career with the prestigious law firm, Stites & Harbison, where he learned all aspects of business and corporate law.

After stints in the corporate world, Derwin returned to his roots, his “legal” roots, opening the Webb Law Offices, where he quickly earned the reputation as one of the hardest working young defense attorneys in Kentucky and Indiana. He represented the interests of several high-profile cases throughout both states, fighting for the rights of individuals that needed assistance as private counsel and in his capacity as a public defender in Clark & Floyd County Indiana. During a portion of this time, he also served as the chair of the Criminal Law Section of the Louisville Bar Association and served as a panelist in several conferences within the region discussing issues of equality and individual rights of citizens.

After actively and consistently representing clients for close to twenty (20) years, he was appointed to preside over the Jefferson County Circuit Court, Family Division 10, the same courtroom where he served as a parent’s attorney for nearly a decade. Along with his normal day-to-day duties, he has presided over Truancy Court, Teen Court, and Family Recovery Court. He also serves as the chair of the Status Offender Subcommittee, and as co-chair of the Adoption Subcommittee.

Shona Tucker is an actor, director, writer and educator. She is currently a Full Professor and Chair of the University of Louisville Theatre Arts Department. Prior to U of L, she served as the Mary Riepma Ross Chair and Full Professor of the Vassar College Drama Department.

As an actor, Shona has done two Broadway Shows “Death of a Salesman” and To Kill a Mockingbird; She has worked with such talents as Peter Garrity, Uman Thurman, BD Wong and David Strathairn.

As a writer, she has recently completed “Mississippi Mud”, a trilogy based on true stories of three African American women.

She is an Audelco Award winner and Fulbright Scholar with a BS from Northwestern University and MFA: NYU/Tisch.