



Gary Bledsoe is President of the Texas NAACP and has held that position since being elected in 1991. He is an Austin lawyer, who specializes in employment, civil rights, and public interest law. Bledsoe served as Austin Branch President from 1987 to 1991 and has served on the National Board of Directors since 2003. He currently is the Chair of the Housing Committee and Vice-Chair of the Environmental and Climate Justice Subcommittee and the Legal Committee.

Bledsoe's ties with the NAACP enabled him to make substantial civil rights changes, which include his handling of racial discrimination complaints against the Texas DPS that dismantled racial barriers that prevented minorities and women from becoming Texas Rangers. His involvement in the Cedar Avenue case resulted in heightened public awareness of the Austin Police Department's mishandling of minority youth and led to widespread changes in how police abuse cases are handled. The landmark settlement resulted in the creation of a scholarship program for college-bound minority youth. Bledsoe also negotiated an African-American student scholarship program with HEB, which provides \$25,000 in scholarships for students attending Texas Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, and Huston-Tillotson University. Bledsoe's legal acumen has earned him lawyer of the year awards from the Travis County Bar Association and the Attorney General's Office and an inclusion in Who's Who in American Law. Bledsoe has led the NAACP in redistricting fights since 2001 and under his leadership, the NAACP helped obtain the creation of Congressional District 9 now held by former Houston NAACP Branch President, Congressman Alexander Green. Bledsoe is one of the lawyers also in the recent fights against discriminatory voter identification laws and discriminatory voter identification plans in Texas where they have seen success in front of 3-Judge panel in Texas and Washington, D.C., a district court in Texas and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He is also the author of the Predatory Lending Principles used by the National NAACP to engage banks and seek to change their practices so that the African-American Community has greater access to capital. These principles resulted from a landmark lawsuit brought by Bledsoe and other lawyers for the National NAACP.

Bledsoe has received awards from the Austin and National NAACP's, the Austin Urban League and many other organizations. Awards from the National NAACP include the Kelly Alexander State President of the Year Award and the Benjamin Hooks Keeper of the Flame Award. The Texas NAACP through his leadership has received the Juanita Jackson Mitchell Award for Legal Advocacy on two separate occasions.

Bledsoe served on the Board of Regents for Texas Southern University from 2007 to 2017. Bledsoe was the Acting Dean of Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University from November 2017 to July 2019. Currently, Bledsoe is the Executive Director for External Affairs at Texas Southern University and teaches at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

Bledsoe earned a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from The University Of Texas School Of Law, where he is the permanent class president of the Class of 1976.