



# Gary L. Bledsoe

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## **Acting Dean, Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law**

Assumed Acting Dean Position on November 1, 2017.

## **Owner, The Bledsoe Law Firm, PLLC**

In the private practice of Law, I am the proprietor of the Bledsoe Law Firm PLLC. I have handled numerous civil rights cases of great public importance, represented many police officers in discrimination and retaliation claims, and represented many professionals, schools and institutions.

## **Education**

- J. D., The University of Texas at Austin School of Law, Permanent Class President, 1976 and recipient of consul award for outstanding contribution to the Law School during my years of attendance. Served as SBA representative and member of the Academic Standards Committee for 2 years. Vice President and Conference Coordinator for the Thurgood Marshall Law Society, a recruiter of minority students for Project INFO and coordinated bringing Heman Marion Sweatt to the Law School.
- B.A., The University of Texas at Austin, Government, 1973 with Honors and Special Departmental Honors, Honor's Thesis on Coalition Prospects of the Black Caucus of the Texas Legislature
- High School Diploma, Ector High School in Odessa, Texas

## **Career Developments & Awards**

- Top Rated Lawyer by several services, including a 2019 AVVO Rating as a Superior Lawyer
- 2019 Recipient of the Roberson L. King Excellence in Education Award by the Houston Lawyers Association for my history of work on impact litigation
- 2019 Recipient of The Virgil C. Lott Medal established by The University of Texas School of Law
- Legal Committee, Vice-Chair, National NAACP, and 1 of approximately 50 Voting Rights Lawyer's invited to the White House in 2015 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act
- Travis County Bar Association Young Lawyer of the Year Award
- Attorney General of Texas Lawyer of the Year Award
- Two Juanita Jackson Mitchell Advocacy Awards for Texas State NAACP Conference under my Leadership for providing the most outstanding advocacy for the year

- Given award by Congressional Black Caucus for crucial role in obtaining the extension of the Voting Rights Act in 2006 (year of the extension), award presented by Congressman Lloyd Doggett
- Top Attorneys of North America 2017 Top 100
- 1999 Special Recognition of Year Dedication and Contributions to Improve the Quality of Life For All Texans awarded by The Race and Ethnic Studies Institute of Texas A&M University College Station, Texas
- National NAACP State President of the Year Award
- Benjamin Hooks Keeper of the Flame Award, National NAACP
- Lawyer of the Year in Texas Attorney General's Office 1984
- Travis County Bar Young Lawyer of the Year 1988
- LULAC President's Medal, LULAC's Highest Award
- Austin NAACP Arthur B. Dewitt Award
- Urban League of Austin Community Service Award
- Houston NAACP Award for Contribution to Civil Rights

## **Community Service**

### ***National***

- Attorney in National class action case against 4 of the 5 largest banks and 3 others for predatory lending discrimination. Authored predatory lending principles that were ultimately agreed to by the companies involved in the litigation.
- Lead Lawyer representing Texas' African American Congresspersons in Texas Redistricting cases 2001, 2003-2006, 2011-present and Texas NAACP in 2001, 2003-2006, and 2011 to present.
- Lead Lawyer for the NAACP in Texas Voter ID litigation 2011-present.
- Joined in 2 Amicus briefs in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, one as Lead Counsel on the brief.
- Joined in efforts with Attorney General John Cornyn and others to seek reversal of conviction in *Saldano v. State*, a case that went to the U.S. Supreme Court involving whether African-Americans and Latinos were inherently more inclined to criminality than whites and others, and if so whether this justified considering their race as a reason to justify them receiving more severe punishment such as the death penalty.

### ***Statewide***

- Elected President of Texas NAACP 1991-present
- Member National Board of Directors 2003-present
- Member Texas ACLU Board 2017-present
- Member Texas Advisory Commission to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission 1994-2001
- Member Texas Southern University Board of Regents 2007-2017
- Under my leadership, the NAACP eliminated racist and sexist hiring and promotions barriers at the Texas Department of Public Safety and Negotiated Terms for the first African-American and female to become Texas Rangers. Integrate Texas Rangers where first African-American and first Female Texas Rangers were promoted into the Rangers Organization by the Texas Department of Public Safety
- Led efforts to remove Confederate Plaques from Texas Supreme Court Building; and led efforts to identify and remove racially-offensive names (such as "Nigger Creek") from Texas Rivers, Lakes, Mountains and other public assets. Under my leadership, we passed a bill to enact those provisions.

- Helped lead efforts to persuade Texas Motor Vehicle a Commission to reverse decision to permit a Confederate Flag on Texas license plates, a decision that ultimately went to the United States Supreme Court.
- Helped lead efforts to improve minority hiring in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- Helped lead efforts to remove heads of the Capitol Police and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission who had been accused of discrimination and other forms of misconduct.
- Secured racial profiling study that helped lead to Texas Racial Profiling Law.
- Actively involved as an advocate in efforts to free Clarence Lee Brantley, Ricky Dale Thomas and Andrew Lee Mitchell for Crimes they had not committed, but were convicted of. Two of them were charged with capital crimes.
- Involved in local Redistricting litigation in Galveston County.
- Helped lead efforts to change governance of the Austin Independent School District change to single member districts.
- Led efforts seeking to achieve Desegregation of housing complex in the all white town of Vidor.
- Along with State Representative Al Edwards, I helped persuade Governor Richards to temporarily stay execution of Gary Graham.

## Teaching & Scholarly Activities

- Taught at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law since Fall 2018.
- Taught at St. Mary's School of Law (hired by Dean Barbara Aldave, worked under Dean Bill Piatt).
- Faculty and instructor for the Texas Municipal Court Training Association 1983-87.
- Faculty and instructor for the Texas Justice Court Training Center.
- Director Texas Department of Crime Prevention in the Texas Attorney General's Office, where I authored a statewide publication intending to keep Judges, District Attorneys and Law Enforcement informed of important decisions by the United States Supreme Court, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and the Texas Supreme Court. I also prepared Special Legislative Editions of the Texas Crime Prevention Newsletter and coordinated a hotline to provide answers to all County and city officials around the State,
- Sole trainer in statewide CLE training for voting rights litigation in 2012.
- Trainer for Civil Rights Voting CLE in 2018 sponsored by NBA and NAACP.
- Trainer in NBA/NAACP National Seminar on Litigation skills.
- Trainer in NBA/NAACP National Seminar on handling predatory lending litigation.
- Trainer at National NBA Convention on Voting Rights Litigation.
- Led Department in Texas Attorney General's Office charged with representing State whenever validity of state law was challenged.

## Author

- Overview, 2019 Symposium of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law on the "New Civil Rights". Scheduled for publication in Thurgood Marshall Law Review.
- The Houston 19 and the Road to Justice, accepted for publication by the Black History Bulletin.
- United States Supreme Court Amicus Briefs in *Fisher v. State*.
- *Crutch v. Scott* Brief that led to Statutory and regulatory changes.
- *Fisher v. University of Texas Amicus Briefs*
- Article on Conflicts of Interest for the National Black Law Journal
- Briefs defending various state laws