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THE BLSA APPEAL



National Black Law Students Association
The University of Memphis
Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter



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National Black Law Students Association

The University of Memphis

Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter

The National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA), is the largest student-run organization in the nation. NBLSA has chapters in more than 200 law schools representing 48 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and six foreign countries.

The organization encourages the development of talented, socially conscious law students. Additionally, NBLSA engages in legal activism to effectuate change in the legal community.

While, the organization may have “black law students” in the name, BLSA and NBLSA are organizations geared towards helping students of all colors and ethnicities; these organizations are not limited to African American students only.

One of the goals of our local chapter is to assist you in successfully completing your legal education. To accomplish this goal, we have implemented a number of academic, professional, and social programs,

To learn more about the national organization please visit [http:// www.nblsa.org](http://www.nblsa.org)

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**Black Law Students
Association
Cecil C. Humphreys
School of Law**

BLSA Spotlights

Michael Shepherd

1L Representative

Michael is a native of Los Angeles, CA and graduate of John Glenn High School. He attended Tennessee State University in Nashville, TN where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science and a minor in History. He chose to pursue a law degree because of his passion for entrepreneurship and helping people.

Prior to law school Michael started an organic juicing business (Just Juice Organics) in Nashville, and operated as a sole proprietor for two years. His business was centered on helping customers reach their respective health and fitness goals while consuming my quality juices. Michael has a passion for community service and helping others succeed. While in Nashville, he worked at a large law firm and had the pleasure of being a weekly volunteer through its Nashville Pencil Foundation's mentorship program with Antioch Middle School. He was able to assist students' with the planning of their future education goals and give guidance on how to overcome peer pressure. Continuing his goal of community involvement, he was recently selected to participate in the Embark Leadership Program at the New Memphis Institute beginning in March.



Michael is pursuing the JD/MBA joint degree and upon its completion he hopes to practice transactional law in Memphis or start a private equity company.

Michael is an avid golf, basketball and football fan. GO TIGERS! He is married to my college sweetheart of five years Anastasia and is a member of St. Andrew AME Church in Memphis.

Dawn Campbell

Dawn is a first year law student at the University Of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School Of Law and a current member of BLSA. She has also served on the Law School's Student Diversity Committee. She is a California native, born and raised in Los Angeles California, where her parents and siblings currently reside. Both her and her family settled in Memphis in 2003 and have yet to look back.

Dawn currently works for Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare's Corporate Revenue Department, where she has worked for the past 12 years. In addition to working for Methodist, she is also the owner of Nuttin' But Wings, a small business restaurant. Her passion for the field of law was cultivated by her desire to advocate for those without a voice and to play an integral role in advancing the good of the communities throughout the city of Memphis. Dawn hopes to use her law degree to make positive changes by advancing principals of law as they pertain to the healthcare community in the City of Memphis. She is also deeply involved in her community, volunteering as Cheer Director for the Cordova Wolves Cheer Squad, teaching girls ages 5 to 14 endurance, teamwork, and dedication by learning these valuable life skills through cheer athletics. She also served as Coordinator for the MLH My Healthy Living committee, promoting health and wellness amongst Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare associates through daily exercise and healthy eating.



Dawn's road to law school has been far from traditional. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration Summa Cum Laude from Strayer University Memphis, TN, while raising her three beautiful children, Ereka, 13, Amaiyah, 11, and Kyle, 8. Her dream of attending law school began at an early age when her grandfather, a sheriff with the LA County Sheriff's Office, continuously stressed the importance of education and how hard he had to work in life with only a 9th grade education, growing up in rural Louisiana in the 1930's. He made it clear to her very early on that with the opportunities not available to him that are afforded to her generation; there is just no excuse imaginable for why the sky should not be the limit.

Dawn's strong faith has allowed her to overcome many obstacles that have come before her and to be a prime example not only to her children, but to anyone balancing the struggles of life, that with hard work and dedication, nothing can come between you and God's plan for your life.

Darius Walker

Darius Walker, Jr. is a second year law student at the University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, and member of the Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter of the Black Law Students Association (“BLSA”). Darius is originally from Atlanta, Ga and is a graduate of Tennessee Technological University, where he majored in Psychology and minored in Business Administration. Darius has a passion for advocacy and during his first year summer he worked as a Summer Law Clerk for the Public Defender’s Service for the District of Columbia in Washington, DC. He is a current member of the University of



Memphis National Trial Team and his team advanced undefeated to the finals of the regional competition under the leadership of coaches: Professor Daniel Schaffzin, Professor Michelle Slack and Brigid Welsh. Darius also was a finalist in the University of Memphis in-school Mock Trial Competition where his team won, “Best Written Motion” and he received the honor of “Best Oral Advocate Runner-Up.”

In terms of service, Darius served as a member of the Student Diversity Committee where his group presented, “Miranda Rights and You” to a class of local Memphis high school students. He also volunteers with the Legal Eagles program. The program’s goals are to encourage early interest in the legal profession and develop critical thinking, analytical and reading comprehension skills in young Memphis students.

Darius believes that education of our youth is vital. He looks forward to using his platform to mentor and inspire youth to pursue their dreams of a post-secondary education.

Brittany Williams

Brittany Williams is currently a third year law student at The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. She is a native of Memphis and graduated from Cordova High School. Brittany attended The University of Tennessee in Knoxville where she majored in Sociology.

Along with being a member of the Black Law Students Association, Brittany is also the Director of Student Affairs for the Student Bar Association, a member of the Moot Court Board, a senior associate for the Mental Health Law and Policy Journal, and a member of the Student Diversity Committee. For the past two years Brittany has been a member of the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Team. This year the team, which also included Jana Mitchell, Joseph Smith, Crystal Johnson-Cath and coaches Professor Demetria Frank and Attorney Bridgett Stigger, won second place in the region and will be competing in the national competition in Portland, Oregon.



During her time in law school Brittany has worked with Advance Memphis as a Legal Intern, assisted the Law Offices of the Shelby County Public Defender during Alternative Spring Breaks, externed with the City of Memphis Anti-Blight Litigation Unit, and worked as a law clerk for The Wharton Law Firm. Currently Brittany externs with the Law Offices of the Shelby County Public Defender on the General Sessions team.

Brittany is passionate about Juvenile Justice, Education Reform, the VOLS and the Grizzlies! After graduation she would like to practice Criminal Law or work in Education Compliance and Regulation. Also known as, “B. Will” by fellow students, Brittany hopes she has inspired, renewed, or uplifted classmates like former students, professors, and/or local attorneys have done for her.

EVENT RECAP

Attorney Meet and Greet

On January 30, 2015, the Black Law Students Association hosted our mentor/mentee kick-off. The members of BLSA have been paired up with various attorneys throughout the Memphis Bar that are affiliated with the National Bar Association. This event served as gateway for many BLSA members to get their first taste of the practical side of the legal world.

Community Service Event

On February 7, 2015, The Black Law Students Association took donations for the Calvary Rescue Mission, a local shelter for homeless men in Memphis. BLSA donated paper goods such as napkins, paper towels, toilet tissue, canned goods, coffee (regular), creamer, and sugar.

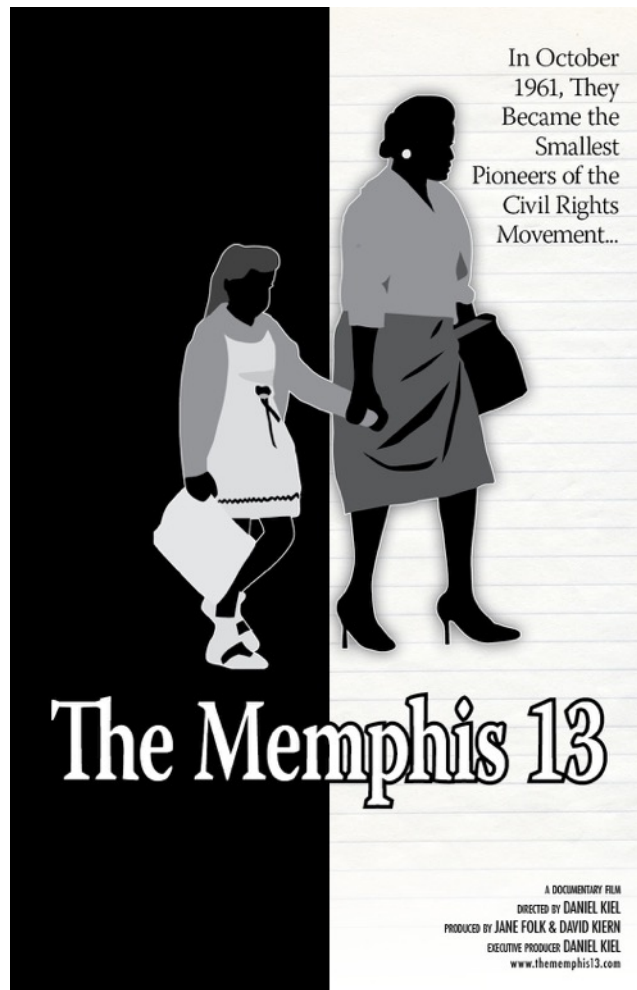


The Memphis 13

On February 9, 2015, the Black Law Students Association showed the famous documentary, “The Memphis 13.” The creator of this documentary is our advisor, Professor Daniel Kiel. When asked why he created this documentary, Professor Kiel stated:

“Sparked by a curiosity about how my schools ended up the way they did, I began researching school desegregation in Memphis as a law student. Although I had no difficulty finding court opinions or newspaper articles, I always felt that the absence of personal accounts of students directly involved left the narrative incomplete. The Memphis 13 is an attempt to fill that void. It was produced from interviews with the all 13 students who first desegregated schools in Memphis in 1961 or their families, along with other individuals involved. The film seeks to explore questions about the use of children on the front lines of social movements, the responsibility of lawyers and advocacy groups pushing broad agendas to individual clients, and the challenges of breaking down barriers. In addition to the film, a personal account of the experience of making it, “Lessons from the Memphis 13,” was published in the Thurgood Marshall Law Review in 2014.”

For more information, including a curriculum and links to other content, is available at www.thememphis13.com.



Hugs and Kisses St. Jude Fundraiser

From February 12–13, the second annual Black Law Students Association Hugs and Kisses for St. Jude fundraiser was held. BLSA sold hugs and kisses to benefit the children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. We decided on hugs and kisses because, let's face it, they are both pretty awesome to give and receive! Not that we need an actual medical reason but research shows that hugging is extremely effective at curing loneliness, depression, anxiety and stress, and who hasn't suffered from at least one of those at some point? Our goal was to spread a little love at the Memphis law and to bring a lot of smiles to the children at St. Jude. We sold real hugs or four chocolate kisses for \$1 in the student lounge at Memphis law on February 12th and February 13th during the lunch hour. This was an awesome event!



Civil Rights Panel

On February 19, 2015, the Black Law Students Association hosted our Civil Rights Panel. This panel focused on the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement and how the law has progressed since that era. In addition, the panelists shared their personal experiences that they endured during that time and today as an attorney, judge, or public figure. The panel was moderated by the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, Edward Stanton III, and featured Judge D'Army Bailey, Attorney Charles E. Carpenter, Attorney David Caywood, and former Memphis Mayor, Dr. Willie Herenton as the panelists.



Student Diversity Panel

On February 26, 2015, the Black Law Student Association hosted a candid discussion about the current state of diversity and how it has come to be construed in today's society. The goal of this discussion was to encourage open conversations about the state of diversity at Memphis Law, in the city of Memphis, and our nation. The audience was challenged and motivated to think outside the box to present remedies on how to create an environment that encourages diversity for the betterment of society. This program was moderated by DeAntwaine Moye, and featured Brian Burns, Cesar Arbelaez, Elicia Ray, Erica Tamariz, Mitch Raines, and Meagan Jones as the panelists.



UPCOMING EVENTS

St. Jude Basketball Tournament

The 2nd Annual Black Law Students Association Basketball Classic benefiting St. Jude Children's Hospital will be taking place March 21st from 10am-4pm. The three on three basketball tournament will take place at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church. If you are interested in playing, the cost is \$50 per team and you must register by March 20th at 1pm. Teams can have up to, but no more than, five players. Please contact Brittany Williams at bjwllms4@memphis.edu if you are interested in playing. Participants can only be U of M students, family, faculty, staff and St. Jude staff.



**2nd Annual Black Law Students Association
Basketball Classic**

MARCH 21, 2015 - 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

co-hosted by the Student Bar Association

**THREE ON THREE
BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT @**
Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

\$50 per team; contact bjwllms4@memphis.edu
REGISTER BY March 20 at 1 p.m.

Teams can have up to, but no more than, five (5) players

Participants must be U of M Law students and family, faculty/staff or St. Jude staff

Proudly benefiting

St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital



BLSA ALL-STARS



Congratulations to **Preston Battle, Darius Walker, & Rodrequez Watson**
for competing in the finals for the school 2015-2016 Mock Trial
Competition!



Congratulations to **Professor Lynda Black** for being the recipient of the
2015 Outstanding Alumni Award by the University of Memphis College of
Arts and Sciences Alumni Chapter Board of Directors.





BLSA DONORS

The Black Law Students Association would like to send a special
thank you to:

Mrs. Jacqueline M. O'Bryant, Coordinator of Law School Diversity



BIRTHDAYS



Brigitte Boyd, Administrative Assistant, Student Affairs, January 31st

Erin Cox, 1L, February 29th

Ariel Anthony, 3L, March 10th

Preston Battle, 2L, March 21st

Please share this newsletter with friends, colleagues and family. If anyone would like to be added to this mailing list,
please email fnsnford@memphis.edu