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# THE BLSA APPEAL



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



### BLSA Officers

**President**– Regina M. Thompson

**Vice President**– Faith N. Sanford

**Executive Secretary**–Danielle M. Salton

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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 SPOTLIGHT**

## **Erica Coleman**

### **2L**



As a freshman entering the University of Memphis, Erica was awarded the opportunity to take part in the Emerging Leaders Program and experience training through a progressive leadership training model. This model used hands on approaches to teach about different theories on leadership. It allowed her to integrate and become accustomed to these theories by carrying out different group projects, and putting these theories into practice. She graduated with Honors thesis and Magnum Cum Laude distinctions.

Erica was also a part of the Professional Connections Program, which joined a select group of highly motivated students with community leaders. This program allowed

Erica to meet and connect with professionals in the Memphis Community. Additionally, Erica completed an internship at The American Red Cross Jackson Area Chapter. Through this internship, she managed emergency relief efforts within a 10 county area. She learned how to work with a group of others to promote goals, plans to recruit volunteers, and effectiveness for the overall quality of our organization.

Erica completed an internship with the Honorable Magistrate Judge Edward G. Bryant with the United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee. Erica participated in the Black Law Student Association's Frederick Douglass Moot Court travel team and was awarded second place in the Southern region and will compete for national placement in March. She is completing the Business/Tax Certificate Program and working simultaneously to gain her masters in Political Science. She is currently the President of the Christian Legal Society, chaplain of the Black Law Student Association and an active member of the Association of Women Attorneys. Erica also enjoys serving her local community and church of Jackson, TN. She is an active volunteer for the Jackson Regional American Red Cross, youth volunteer for Love and Truth Church, mother, and wife.

## Ashley Finch

### 2L



Ashley Finch is a second year law student at University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Prior to law school, Ashley attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where she received a Bachelors of Science degree in Psychology, and a minor in Women's Studies. Upon completion of her degree, she took a year off to explore her interests in teaching children. During that year, Ashley worked as a supervisor for a preschool on Fort Meade's military base in Baltimore, Maryland. Although she would describe law school as a much more rigorous experience, she definitely feels it heightened her ability to "roll with the punches".

Since the beginning of her academic career at the law school, Ashley has been a member of the Black Law Students Association, along with the Association for Women Attorneys. In her second year she also added the Student Bar Association, the ABA Mediation Team, and Student Ambassadors to her list of involvement. For Ashley, law school has been an exciting challenge. The experience has opened her eyes to a whole new way of thinking, increased her sense of self, and shown her just how much she can accomplish if she works hard enough.

Ashley is so grateful for the acknowledgment she has received throughout law school, such as the BLSA spotlight and the AWA Judge Rita Stotts Scholarship. Uncertain with where this journey will take her, Ashley is so pleased with the doors that have opened up for her thus far. Law school has given her the opportunity to bring more awareness to issues she's most passionate about, such as sex trafficking survivors, domestic violence, and children. Along with those interests, law school has also opened her eyes to other areas of law such as business and estates & probate. Ashley looks forward to the second half of law school, and can't wait to begin working as an attorney.

## **Christian West-Coleman**

### **2L**



Christian West-Coleman is a second year law student at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law and a member of the Black Law Students Association. A native Memphian, Christian graduated from White Station High School in 2008. She went on to receive her B.A. from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She majored in History and received a double minor in Religious Studies and Film Studies. During college, Christian struggled with various circumstances, the most difficult being the onset of Lupus SLE. Thankfully,

she was able to endure and completed her degree with her history thesis in tow. After college, Christian worked as a legal assistant in private practice in 2013 prior to starting law school in Fall 2014. She is grateful to be a recipient of the Herbert Herff Law Review Scholarship and the First Tennessee Law Scholars Scholarship. After 1L year, she learned about the power and necessity of advocacy as a summer extern with Memphis Area Legal Services and interned with the City Attorneys Office during the summer of 2015. As a 2L, Christian currently works as a law clerk and learning some of the practicalities of civil and criminal litigation in private practice. She and her partner were finalists in the law school's Advanced Moot Court Competition, where she and her partner took home the reward for Runner-Up Best Brief. She also was a member of the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Travel Team and helped her team secure the win in a round of the SRBLSA Convention Mock Trial Competition in Durham, North Carolina. She now hopes to learn more about trial advocacy in the upcoming intra-school Mock Trial Competition. Christian is now half way through law school and cherishes the experience. Though she still has a lot to learn, she is finding budding interests in areas of law such as healthcare, insurance, criminal, estates & probate, construction, and civil rights. Christian loves her school and the city of Memphis. She hopes that as she grows and reaches her full potential, she can help her city do the same.

# **FALL 2015 BLSA EVENTS**

## **Security and Custodian Appreciation Lunch**

On Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, BLSA treated the security guards, maintenance staff, and custodians to lunch to express gratitude for their hard work. Day-in and day-out, they continue to motivate the students and make our law school a great place to be. Students flooded the Gordon Ball scenic reading room to embrace our honorees and thank them. Peter Letsou, the Dean of the Cecil C. Humphreys School of law, along with other faculty members, took the time to stop by and show their appreciation as well.

## **Christmas Donation**

This year BLSA sponsored a child from the Rice, Amundsen & Caperton, PLLC law firm. The child was picked by our own BLSA member, Joseph Smith. We chose to buy and donate gifts to a little boy who was seven years-old and had recently lost his mother. BLSA was thrilled to be able to provide and help a child in need during the holiday season.

## **Career Services Office Fall 2015 Big Breakfast Blowout**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Career Services Office and students at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law held its bi-semester Big Breakfast Blowout. It all started in Fall 2012 when LaTanyia Walker, a former BLSA member and University of Memphis law graduate, and Mrs. Stephanie Hope of the Career Services Office, conjured up the perfect idea. The two wanted to share their culinary skills with the school and provide a little motivation for students, faculty, and staff during the exam period. Word quickly spread and others decided to participate. Many students generously brought donuts, breakfast casseroles, fruit, juice, breakfast bars and so much more. It was such a great community effort that Ms. Walker and Mrs. Hope decided to try it the following semester—thus, the Breakfast Blowout was born. Although Latanyia has graduated and has entered into her career as an attorney, the Big Breakfast Blowout lives on. It has become the highlight of each semester for students, and it continues to get better with time.

# BLSA BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

## Judge D'Army Bailey Reception

On Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, BLSA hosted a reception in honor of the Honorable Judge D'Army Bailey. In attendance were students, faculty, and staff from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Also present were Judge Bailey's sons and members of the legal community. Friends of Judge Bailey, Attorney Charles Carpenter and the Honorable Judge Jerry Stokes, recalled their memories of moments with Judge Bailey. Attorney Carpenter stressed the importance of keeping Judge Bailey's legacy alive, while the Honorable Judge Stokes reflected on his friendship with Judge Bailey, and he highlighted Judge Bailey's impact on civil rights through his tireless efforts to form the National Civil Rights Museum. Students, Dawn Campbell and Preston Battle, spoke from the perspective of students who were personally impacted by Judge Bailey's influence through mentorship. The reception concluded with words from Justin and Merritt Bailey, Judge Bailey's sons, who shared not only the story about the man the public at large knew Judge Bailey to be, but also the amazing father they had the pleasure of being raised by. BLSA is, and will continue to be, grateful for Judge Bailey and all that he has done to impact the lives of the law students at Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, the city of Memphis, and his contributions to civil rights.



## **Civil Rights Panel**

On February 24th BLSA hosted its 2nd Annual Voices Civil Rights Panel. The panel focused on the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement and speakers talked about how the law has progressed since that era. Each panelist spoke to relevant issues concerning effects of discriminatory police brutality, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and changes in the United States since the Civil Rights Movement. The panelists included:

Professor Daniel Kiel

Reverend James Netters

Reverend Johnson Saulsberry

Jocelyn Wurzburg



## **Memphis Unity March**

On Saturday February 27th, students and faculty gathered in Downtown Memphis to march to the National Civil Rights Museum. The purpose of the march was to highlight the fact that despite our differences, we are all human beings who deserve dignity and respect at all times. Memphis students used this march to reach out to the greater Memphis community to work together and promote unity, peace, and humanity. In attendance at the march was former Memphis Mayor Wharton and Maureen Holland, who both spoke and gave words of encouragement.



(pictured here Former Mayor Wharton and marchers)



(pictured here Maureen Holland, Regina Thompson, & Preston Battle)





# **BLSA ALL-STARS**



## **Congratulations to our Fall 2015 Graduates:**

Larry Williams

Joseph Smith

## **Congratulation to the Fall 2015 Cali Award Recipients:**

Brandon Boykin- ADR/Labor

Corbin Carpenter- Pretrial Litigation

Lani Lester- Neighborhood Preservation Clinic, Voting Rights and  
Election Law

Joseph Smith- Child and Family Litigation Clinic

Regina Thompson- ADR/Mediation

Shanell Tyler- Business Organizations

## **Congratulations to the newest Law Review Editorial Board:**

Kristen Downey- Notes Editor, Law Review, Volume 47 Editorial  
Board

Danielle Salton- Articles Editor, Law Review, Volume 47 Editorial  
Board

## Cecil C. Humpreys School of Law In-School Mock Trial Competition Awards:

Faith Sanford and Rod Watson—Mock Trial Finalist

Brandon Boykin—Top Oral Advocate

Rod Watson—Top Oral Advocate

Faith Sanford—Top Oral Advocate

Shelby Smith—Top Oral Advocate

Christian West-Colemean—Top Oral Advocate

Faith Sanford and Rod Watson—Best Written Motion

Congratulations to our Frederick Douglass Moot Court  
Team,

**Dawn Campbell**

**and**

**Erica Coleman,**

for advancing to the National BLSA Moot Court  
Competition!

Wish them luck as they compete in Baltimore,  
Maryland March 9th-13th.

## **BLSA ALUMNI ALL-STARS**



Recent Memphis Law alum William Terrell is traveling to Europe as part of an International Study Program with the Inns of Court. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to read more about Will and his upcoming trip abroad, as well as a look at how important mentoring, and the advice given to him by his mentor Richard Glassman, was in helping him achieve success.



Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell has named David McKinney as director of legislative affairs, effective Jan. 1. McKinney, most recently an assistant county attorney, replaces Paul Young, who will join the city of Memphis as director of Housing and Community Development. McKinney will be responsible for advocating the county's interests at the state, federal and local level, and to coordinate special projects and initiatives on behalf of the county mayor. Before joining the county, McKinney was an attorney with the law firm Burch Porter & Johnson.



## **BLSA DONORS**



Thank you to the Ben F. Jones  
Chapter of the National Bar Association for your donation to  
the Civil Rights Panel.



## **BIRTHDAYS**

Erica Perry, 3L-November 3  
Shanell Tyler, 2L-November 11th  
Christian West-Colemen, 2L-  
November 17th  
Brittany Neal, 3L-December 17th  
Brandon Boykin, 3L-January 17th



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](mailto:fnsnford@memphis.edu)