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
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

My name is Regina M. Thompson, and I am honored to serve as president of the Black Law Students Association, Benjamin L. Hooks chapter (“BLSA”), for the 2015-2016 school year. I graduated from Central High School in Memphis, TN in 2008, and in 2012, I graduated from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN with a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science. I am currently a 3L at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.

During the 2014-2015 school year, I served as the Community Service Chair of BLSA, and I fervently carried out that position until my term expired. While holding that position, I worked with a steadfast committee that helped make each event a success. While leading my committee, I worked closely with my predecessor, Mr. Corbin I. Carpenter, to learn what the position of president entailed and to ensure that I was informed before attempting to hold the position. He took BLSA to new heights during his term as president last school year, and I will continue to ascend BLSA and make our presence in the Memphis community even greater than before.

This year, BLSA has many great events in store for the students at Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law and the entire Memphis community. We are focusing in on the legal issues that affect the African-American community, with the hopes of raising awareness to effectuate change. We will host events centered around social action, professionalism, academic success, and community engagement. BLSA is under great leadership this year. Our advisors, Ms. Demetria D. Frank, Mr. Daniel Kiel, and Ms. Brigitte Boyd, serve as the overseers and mentors of BLSA. Mrs. Dawn M. Campbell, Mr. Brian C. Dockery, Ms. Kristen J. Downey, Ms. Ashley N.B. Finch, Mrs. Kioni S. Logan, Ms. Danielle M. Salton, and Ms. Faith N. Sanford make up the dynamic executive board of BLSA this year. We look forward to a successful year with our members and we hope to have the support of Memphis in our endeavors. This newsletter is our mode of communication with Memphis residents and it will be used as a means to publicize our upcoming events, spotlight our dedicated BLSA members, discuss current issues, and connect with the community. I am looking forward to a great year as president.

Sincerely,

-Regina M. Thompson
A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
JUDGE D’ARMY BAILEY

Judge Bailey was an influential man of iconic caliber and a holder of many titles—author, civil rights pioneer, visionary for change, actor, gifted jurist, best dressed man in the business, dedicated public servant, advocate for justice and equality, and above all, a loving husband and father to his wife Adrienne and two sons Justin and Merritt.

Judge Bailey accomplished enough accolades for three lifetimes, but the accomplishment that had the biggest impact on me personally was the opening of the National Civil Rights Museum (“the Museum”) on July 4, 1991. The Museum is a treasure of African American history that serves as a living monument for the civil rights movement in our country, which will continue in perpetuity. My favorite part of the Museum is the Lorraine Motel restoration where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Although this area of the Museum may cause mixed emotions for some, I believe all would agree that the preservation and restoration of the area was nothing short of brilliant. The rooms serve as an exact depiction of how things looked on April 4, 1968, which is arguably one of the most notable days, not only in African American history, but in American history as well. Judge Bailey was the principle proponent of this extraordinary vision. The Museum has been nothing less than incredible and will continue to serve as an avenue to witness, re-live, and appreciate history, in addition to being a dynamic teaching tool for all.

I have had many encounters with Judge Bailey, but the encounter that will always stick with me is our last. Judge Bailey was a panelist at the Black Law Students Association’s Civil Rights Panel in February 2015. The panel was moderated by the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, Edward Stanton III, and featured Judge Bailey, Attorney Charles Carpenter, Attorney David Caywood, and Dr. Willie W. Herenton as the panelists. Of course Judge Bailey stole the show, not only with his wit and charm, but with his experiences. In addition to his brilliant legal mind, he gave an interesting outlook on how we as future legal minds should go about doing things, and making our mark in this world. He quoted “always be progressive in whatever you do, be active not sedentary, don’t sit back and let the world pass you by.”

One thing that Judge Bailey and I strongly agreed on was that people today, specifically the younger generation, do not see the importance of learning their heritage and history. Either they do not care to learn it or the information is not readily accessible to them, so it is disregarded. Young children, especially African Americans, not caring about their history or the civil rights movement is disheartening to even fathom, but it appears to be today’s reality. I believe that is what inspired Judge Bailey to go forth with making this information more accessible. Thus, prior to his death, Judge Bailey finished a new project to honor civil rights legends in a way that appealed to a new generation using social media. Judge Bailey
partnered with Comcast NBC Universal to produce short stories called “Moments in Civil Rights History.” He saw this an efficient way to reach the younger generations. Again, another brilliant, innovative idea by a great man. To honor the late Judge Bailey, the Shelby County Commission has voted unanimously 11-0, approving a resolution to rename the county courthouse, “The D’Army Bailey Courthouse Building.”

I want to end this tribute by saying thank you. Thank you for everything you have done for Memphis and our country. Thank you for always being that positive, influential figure for others and myself. You will forever be missed, but never forgotten. It was a true honor and privilege to have known you. Your legacy will continue to live through me and the future generations to come. Rest in peace, your honor—court is adjourned.

-Corbin I. Carpenter, 3L
EVENT RECAP

BLSA REMEMBERS THE CHARLESTON NINE

On June 25, 2015, the Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter of the Black Law Students Association held a candlelight vigil to commemorate the lives of Reverend Clementa Pinckney (41), Reverend Sharonda Coleman-Singleton (45), Tywanza Sanders (26), Ethel Lance (70), Susie Jackson (87), Cynthia Hurd (54), Myra Thompson (59), Reverend Daniel Simmons Sr. (74), and DePayne Middleton Doctor (49), collectively known as “The Charleston Nine,” who were slain in a racially motivated hate crime during their prayer service at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015. At sunset, members of the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law gathered with the Memphis community on the Mississippi River at Tom Lee Park in the pursuit of peace and solidarity. Nine candles, which represented each victim, were lit to memorialize the Charleston Nine.

(pictured here: The Charleston Nine)
A powerful invocation led by Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson and Reverend Marilynn S. Robinson of the St. Andrew A.M.E. Church moved the diverse crowd of attendees as they stood hand-in-hand and reflected on the significance of the precious lives of those nine individuals. All those within hearing distance felt a calmness and sense of hope through the message. Instead of dispersing at the close of the vigil, attendees embraced one another in fellowship and love, which is symbolic of progress in the right direction.
The tragic shooting was a brutal awakening for some, who were oblivious to the fact that racism and ideals of White supremacy still plague our country. Over a century after the emancipation of slaves in the United States, sixty-one years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, 50 years after the appointment of the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, and 7 years after the election of the first African-American President of the United States, the battle against racism is ongoing in 2015. Every person in attendance at the Charleston Nine Vigil was charged with the obligation to keep racism out of his or her home and to maintain intolerance for such hatred. The vigil was merely a miniscule portion of the work that is still left to be done, but BLSA intends to continue pressing toward unifying our community in the midst of the attempts to divide our nation into black and white.
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**BLSA School Supply Drive—August 17th-31st**

It’s that time of year again! Each year BLSA hosts a school supply drive for a school in Memphis. In order for the drive to be a success, BLSA is asking for the help of students and faculty here at the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Please show your support by donating items in the designated bins located around the school. This drive will be held from August 17 - August 31. Some of the items needed are listed below:

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<td>“Fiskar” scissors</td>
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<td>“Crayola” crayons</td>
<td>Large Black Dry Erase Markers/1 Dry Eraser Folders</td>
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<td>Wet wipes</td>
<td>Pencil Pouches (NO BOXES PLEASE)</td>
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<td>Gallon size freezer bags zip-loc bags</td>
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Challenges in Tennessee Voting Rights Discussion—August 24th

On Monday, August 24th at 12:00pm in Wade Auditorium at Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, BLSA will be hosting a discussion featuring Attorney Jon Sherman, who will be speaking about voting rights challenges and, in particular, the issue of students being prevented from using their school-issued ID as valid identification to vote in Tennessee. Attorney Sherman is representing a class of undergraduate students in this case and is looking to recruit more plaintiffs and educate more students on the issue. This event will be co-sponsored by the Public Action Law Society (PALS) and the Student Bar Association (SBA).

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Tennessee Students are Fighting for their Right to Vote!

YOU CAN HELP!

A lawsuit was recently filed to force Tennessee to accept student photo ID cards as voter ID.

Student IDs are not accepted at polling places, even though Tennessee state college and university faculty and staff can use their campus ID cards to vote.

If you:

- Do not have a Tennessee or federal government photo ID, and
- Do not drive a car in Tennessee

you could potentially be part of this case and help student IDs be included on the list of voter IDs.

If you want more information and would be interested in being a part of this case OR if you know someone else who may qualify for the case contact:

Jon Sherman
from the Fair Elections Legal Network at jsherman@fairelectionsnetwork.com or (202)248-5346

www.FairElectionsNetwork.com
BLSA ALL-STARS

Special Congratulations To:

Corbin Carpenter, 3L: CALI Award, Federal Courts

Kristen Downey, 2L: Law Review

Danielle Salton, 2L: Law Review

Shelby Smith, 2L: Law Review

Darius Walker, Jr., 3L: Law Review & CALI Award Trial Advocacy

Larry Williams, 3L: CALI Award Child and Family Litigation Clinic
BLSA DONORS

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

Demetria Frank, Assistant Professor of Law

Peter Letsou, Dean & Professor of Law

Dr. Sue Ann McClellan, Assistant Dean of Law Admissions, Recruiting and Scholarships

Steven J. Mulroy, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law

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

Mr. Sam O’Bryant

Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson, M.D, M. Div., of the Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church

Reverend Marilynn S. Robinson, M.P.H., of the Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church

BIRTHDAYS

Faith Sanford, 3L, August 9th
Corbin Carpenter, 3L, August 28th
Angellika Campbell, 3L September 3rd

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