



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

By Dean Browne C. Lewis

As we transition from Black History Month to Women History Month, it is fitting that the first black woman has been nominated to the United States Supreme Court. The legal eagles of North Carolina Central University School of Law (NCCU SOL) are overjoyed by President Biden's nomination of Judge Jackson to the United States Supreme Court. This is a great day for our country and for the Court. After a thoughtful process, President Biden selected a qualified, hard-working woman who is dedicated to the rule of law to serve on the highest court in the country. He could give no better gift to the Court. The decisions the Court makes have a profound impact on our daily lives. Thus, it is critically important that we have justices who are well-versed in the law and committed to public service. Judge Jackson possesses those traits. As a result, she is uniquely qualified to serve on the Court.



Judge Jackson received a quality legal education from Harvard Law School where she served as editor of the Harvard Law Review and graduated with honors. After law school, she further honed her legal skills by clerking for United States Supreme Court Justice Steven Breyer. Then, Judge Jackson developed practical legal skills and a solid understanding of the rule of law by practicing in the private and the public sectors. At NCCU, our motto is "Truth in Service." Consequently, we are especially proud of the work Judge Jackson has done as a public servant. Her work as an attorney for the U.S. Sentencing Commission and as a federal public defender enabled her to understand the responsibility lawyers have to protect the rights of people while upholding the rule of law. Judge Jackson took those lessons with her when she became a federal judge, serving as a United States District Judge for the District of Columbia and in her current capacity as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

We understand the significance of this moment in history. A black woman has been nominated to the highest court in the land. A woman who looks like me and many of my students will be on the United States Supreme Court. Nonetheless, in the coming weeks, the only thing that should matter is that President Biden has nominated a respected federal judge who graduated from Harvard Law School and clerked for the United States Supreme Court to be a justice on the Court. Moreover, Judge Jackson has the preparation and the temperament to serve all citizens of the country and bring her unique perspective and experience in making extremely impactful decisions.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY COURTHOUSE RENAMED IN HONOR OF JUDGE OLA M. LEWIS '90



The Brunswick County Courthouse was officially renamed in honor of the late NCCU School of Law alumna, Judge Ola M. Lewis. The special dedication ceremony took place Friday, February 18, 2022, at the Brunswick County Courthouse, 310 Government Center Drive in Bolivia.

Judge Lewis had many accomplishments during her service to the County and the State of North Carolina. She was appointed District County Judge in 1993 serving until 2000 when Governor Jim Hunt appointed her to a Special Superior Court judgeship. Judge Lewis served as senior resident Superior Court Judge for Judicial District 13B (Brunswick County) since 2003.

Judge Lewis was the longest serving female judge in the history of North Carolina. Under her supervision the county's drug court program earned national recognition and has been implemented in similar initiatives across the country helping hundreds of people find sobriety, reducing inmate populations and giving citizens a second chance.

Throughout her career, she was awarded the Old North State Award in 2010, the Dogwood Award in 2017 and the Order of the Longleaf Pine in 2018.

Source: Brunswick County Government

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Welcome to the Nest New Employees**
Greg Raymond • Semika Astin • Immanuel Bryant • Cedric Pickett, Esq.
- **Level the Playing Field Deans Panel** - Virtual discussion with leaders at UNC and NCCU March 7th at 7p.m.
- **Legal Eagle Review** - Aired every Sunday at 7p.m. on WNCU 90.7 FM
- **Maroon and Gray Day** - Rock your maroon and gray on Tuesdays!



STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT Women’s Law Caucus - Alexis Carter

Alex Carter (3L) proudly presides over the 58-member NCCU Women’s Law Caucus (WLC). Professors Lydia Lavelle and Nikki Perry serve as advisors to the student led organization which was established to empower and promote awareness of issues affecting women in the legal field. The organization hosts numerous events throughout the year including “Weekly Wine Down Wednesdays” where students gather to discuss a range of topics from mental health to goal setting.



Carter says she did not realize how involved she would have to be as president, but she has enjoyed the comradery among her classmates. “I’ve learned to be a better listener for my peers who come to me for advice,” she said. She explained WLC has also helped her develop a growth mindset. Carter a native of Wilson NC, is savoring her last two months as a law student. In August, she will head north to work as Assistant District Attorney for the Bronx New York District Attorney’s Office. She’s excited to begin this new chapter in her life. Carter offered this advice for 1L and 2L students. “Remember the reason you’re here and don’t get caught up in comparing yourself to others. Always do your best.” WLC will host a Judges Forum in March and its Annual Women’s Tea on April 9.



WLC Leadership Left to Right : Rianah Alexander-Programming Director; Mary Beth Davis- Treasurer; Alexis Carter- President ; Abigail Parlier- Communications Director; Lexus Real- Secretary

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT - Professor Lydia Lavelle ‘93 Mayor of Carrboro, NC (2013-2021)

Professor and former Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle has blazed a trail not just for herself but others. Lavelle graduated from NCCU School of Law in 1993. She clerked for the Honorable Clifton E. Johnson on the North Carolina Court of Appeals from 1993 to 1995 before joining the faculty at NCCU School of Law in 1996. Lavelle was the Law School’s first Pro Bono Coordinator and Alumni Relations Director. She served as Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at the Law School for ten years. She currently teaches Civil Procedure, State and Local Governmental Law, and Sexual Identity and the Law.



In 2018, Lavelle was appointed to North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper’s Commission on Inclusion. Professor Lavelle has been involved in public service for many years, including nearly a decade as a member of the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission. After being elected to two terms on the Carrboro Board of Aldermen (now Council), she served four terms as mayor of Carrboro from 2013-2021. Lavelle is the third woman to serve as Carrboro’s Mayor.

One of her proudest accomplishments as mayor was her involvement in The Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act, known as HB2, a North Carolina statute passed in March 2016, by Governor McCrory. HB2 barred cities from discriminating against the LGBTQ community. When the bill expired, Professor Lavelle helped other mayors pass non-discriminatory ordinances in their towns and cities. During Lavelle’s final term as Mayor she also faced opposition in her refusal to remove a Black Lives Matter flag which hung on the Town Hall Building in a show of solidarity during a nationwide movement against racial injustice. At the time, the Town Hall Building served as a polling site for early voting. The North Carolina Board of Elections notified the town of complaints from voters who reported the flags as violating the required 50-foot buffer zone around the polling site’s entrance. Lavelle maintained her position allowing the Black Lives Matter Flag to remain.

Lavelle encourages women matriculating through law school to get involved in the North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys (NCAWA) and the Women’s Law Caucus where she and Professor Nikki Perry serves as advisors. Lavelle is married to her wife, Alicia and they have two adult children Riley and Avery.

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