

President Randall L. Dunn and the NCBJ-NBA Liaison Committee  
are soliciting applications for the Annual NCBJ  
Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Presidential Fellowship Recipients

### *History of Fellowship*

At the September 2008 NCBJ Board meeting in Phoenix, the Board unanimously approved a Proclamation to present annually a stipend/scholarship totaling \$2,500.00 for the cost of travel and registration for one or more minority attorney(s) to attend the NCBJ Annual Meeting.<sup>1</sup>

The Fellowship was established in honor of Judge Corneilus Blackshear, Southern District of New York Bankruptcy (ret.). A copy of the Resolution listing Judge Blackshear's extensive public service record and enduring contribution to bankruptcy jurisprudence are attached for your information.

### *Eligibility Requirements in the United States*

The selection criteria that will be used by the president to make the award to the recipient(s) are as follows:

- (1) a substantial part of attorney's practice is in bankruptcy law, and
- (2) the attorney is involved in a solo, small firm or government practice, and
- (3) he/she would not otherwise be able to attend the annual meeting of NCBJ because of financial constraints.

### *How to Apply*

The application form for the NCBJ Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Presidential Fellowship is attached to this announcement.

### *Publication*

Judges are encouraged to announce the availability of the Blackshear Presidential Fellowship at their local and state bar associations.

Attorneys wishing to apply for the stipend should complete the form and return it to the Chair of the NCBJ-NBA Liaison Committee, Honorable Jeffery P. Hopkins (fax: 513-357-5420) no later than **August 26, 2011.**

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<sup>1</sup> If the NCBJ President decides to award the stipend to more than one recipient, the \$2,500.00 will be divided between the recipients as determined by the President.

**Hon. Cornelius Blackshear Fellowship  
Application Form**

**Please complete the form and return it to the Honorable Jeffery P. Hopkins, no later than August 26, 2011.**

Name of the Blackshear Fellow Applicant (first, middle initial, last name and title): \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's home address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate's office telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's business address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's fax number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Educational background (name(s) of college(s)/university(ies), location(s), degrees and dates of graduation)

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Professional background (include in this section the organizations for which the nominee has worked throughout his career and positions, beginning with the most recent). **Curriculum, Vitae, Resume or similar documentation may be substituted**

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Any special awards or other recognitions the applicant has received \_\_\_\_\_

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Professional, civic and community affiliations \_\_\_\_\_

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Hobbies and/or special interests \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGES

*Action Item Approved by the Executive Committee  
and For Consideration by the NCBJ Board*

## **Honorable Cornelius Blackshear NCBJ Fellowship Program**

This proposal requests that the NCBJ fund a fellowship in honor of Neil Blackshear (Bankruptcy Judge, S.D.N.Y. (ret.)) for one to three minority attorney(s) to attend the NCBJ Annual Meetings. The Fellowship would provide an annual stipend/scholarship totaling \$2500 that will be distributed among the recipient(s) according to the President's discretion.

The stipend recipients will be called NCBJ Blackshear Fellows in recognition of our former colleague Honorable Cornelius Blackshear. Neil was the first and longest serving African American bankruptcy judge on the East Coast. During Neil's extensive career, he distinguished himself through his scholarship and in the development of bankruptcy jurisprudence. Neil's dedication to public interest is epitomized by his long service to the bar and our nation. (See biography below). Recent health issues have forced Neil's early retirement. Neil is well-deserving of this recognition.

*Selection Criteria for Recipient(s) of Blackshear Fellowship:*

- (1) the attorney must practice in a solo or small firm or government practice,
- (2) the attorney would not otherwise be able to attend the annual meeting of NCBJ because of financial hardship and,
- (3) a substantial portion of the attorney's practice must be committed to bankruptcy law.



**HON. CORNELIUS BLACKSHEAR** also known as Neil Blackshear, was born in Sanford, Florida, on November 2, 1939. He attended Jones High School in Orlando, Florida from which he graduated as a member of the National Honor Society in 1957.

Following graduation, Neil relocated to New York City where he held sundry jobs, including pushing dress racks in the garment district, a shipping clerk at Macy's and Gimbel's Department Stores, and a mail clerk at the United States Post Office. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1959. Thereafter, Neil became a member of the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

Neil was a member of various units within the NYPD, including the Tactical Police Force, the 79th Detective Squad, Brooklyn North FIAU, the Office of Management Analysis and the Department Advocate Office. During his tenure with the NYPD, Neil attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, from which he graduated cum laude in 1971. Thereafter, he attended Fordham Law School and graduated in 1977. In addition to his studies at Fordham, he was Vice President and later President of the Black American Law Students Association, during which time he was actively engaged in the development and participation of programs designed to increase enrollment and retention of minority law students.

Concurrent with his attendance in college and law school, Neil was promoted to Sergeant on Special Assignment while serving in several extra-duty capacities with the NYPD. As a life member of the Guardian Society, he participated in the development and instruction of courses designed to assist minority police officers in passing promotion examinations.

Additionally, he was the representative for the Office of Management Analysis (OMA) on the NYPD's committee to increase the number of minorities entering the NYPD. While working in OMA, Neil was a member of a team that designed and developed an anticrime experiment, which was to determine the minimum manning levels of non-uniformed personnel, which would ultimately result in a reduction of violent street crime. That

team's effort was nominated as the NYPD's entry for the Police Science Award, given by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 1977.

In 1979, after 16 years of service in the NYPD, Neil was appointed by the United States Attorney General, The Hon. Griffin Bell, as Assistant United States Trustee in Bankruptcy for the Southern District of New York. In 1983, Attorney General William French Smith elevated Neil's position to United States Trustee. In The Hon. Smith's press release, he stated, "Mr. Blackshear is an example for us all. In 1951, he came to New York from his home in Florida as an unskilled laborer. He put himself through college and law school while a patrolman and, later, a detective sergeant on the New York City Police Department, where he served with distinction. During Neil's tenure as the United States Trustee for the Southern District of New York, he was responsible for the supervision of some of the largest cases before the bankruptcy court. He has received substantial recognition for his achievement of rebuilding an understaffed office, which was suffering from low-morale while, simultaneously, supervising the exceptionally complex Johns-Manville chapter 11 reorganization proceedings.

On November 25, 1985, Neil was sworn in as a United States Bankruptcy Judge for the Southern District of New York. During his tenure, Judge Blackshear's Chambers were located at the United States Bankruptcy Court, United States Custom House, One Bowling Green, Room 604, New York, New York 10004-1408.

During his esteemed career, Judge Blackshear received numerous awards and recognitions. Among them are: the "Special Achievement Award," by the Department of Justice (1980); the "1981 Ruth Whitehead Whaley Award," by the Black American Law Students Association of Fordham University; the "Executive Office of the United States Trustee's Award" (1985); the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives New York Chapter's "Lloyd George Sealy Award" (1986); the "John Jay College of Criminal Justice 1987 "Alumnus of the Year Award"; the "Dean's Medal of Recognition," from Fordham Law School in 1988; the John Jay College of Criminal Justice "Fourth Annual Lloyd G. Sealy lecture African American in the Judicial System Award" (1990); In October, 1990, he also received an award from the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association; Neil received the "Ellis Island Medal of Honor" in May 2002; and, in June 2003, he received the New York Institute of Credit's "Leadership in Education Award."

Judge Blackshear has lectured on criminal justice at colleges and law schools and has also been a speaker at a number of bankruptcy seminars. He is presently an adjunct professor at City University of New York Law School as well as New York City Technical College. He also instructs the Bankruptcy Clerk's Office on bankruptcy. Additionally, Judge Blackshear has lectured at several panel discussions dealing with various aspects of bankruptcy law. He developed the draft manual for Chapter 7 Administration for the United States Trustee Program. His other activities include being a member of Fordham Law School's Advisory Committee on

Minority Affairs, a member of Board of Directors for Fordham Law Alumni Association, chairman of the Scholarship Committee for the Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association, writer for the Board of Contributors of The Bankruptcy Strategist, contributing author to "Bankruptcy Practice and Strategy," and he was appointed by Chief Justice Rehnquist to the Committee on Court Security for The Federal Judicial Conference, for a term ending 1994. In 2001, he was appointed to become a member of the Bankruptcy Judges Advisory Group and in 2002, he was appointed to serve on the Bankruptcy Court Advisory Council.

Some of the more notable cases Judge Blackshear presided over include Pan Am, Alexander's Department Stores, 47th Street Photo, Inc., McCrory Corp., Laventhol & Horvath, Gaston & Snow, Integrated Resources, Inc., The Wiz, Iridium Spiegel and Eli Jacobs. Eli Jacobs was the owner of the Baltimore Orioles, which, in August 1993, was auctioned by Judge Blackshear for a record \$173 million.

Judge Blackshear is married to the former Betty Dennis and is the father of five sons, Adam, Michael, Gregory, Kevin and Edjuan.

*Recommendation:*

The NCBJ-NBA Liaison Committee each year will recommend eligible candidates for the Blackshear Fellowship annually to the President and Executive Committee. The President will select the successful Fellow(s)

and communicate the NCBJ's offer of a stipend prior to the annual meeting. The recipients of the Blackshear Fellowship will be introduced at the various conference events. This proposal seeks to institutionalize a program already in place and to make it an official NCBJ annual event. Historically, the NCBJ-NBA Liaison Committee has budgeted for the stipend and administered the Fellowship program. Past recipients of the Blackshear Fellowship include: Tracie Brown – solo practitioner in St. Louis, Missouri; Chuck Walker – an AUST in Nashville, Tennessee; and Latasha Bush – former law clerk to Honorable Charles Caldwell and a solo practitioner in North Augusta, South Carolina.