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MINORITY BAR FOUNDATION

Advancing Diversity In The Legal Profession

36TH ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS
CELEBRATION



AUGUST 16, 2018
THE MANSION ON DELAWARE

*"Diversity is being invited to the party;
Inclusion is being asked to dance."*

— Verna Myers

**We applaud the Minority Bar Association of Western New York
for its inspired work to bring diversity into our legal community.**

Sincere congratulations to this year's award winners!



BAR ASSOCIATION
OF THE COURTS

Marianne Mariano
President



William R. Hites
President

Collaborating to build a better Buffalo!

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It is my privilege and pleasure as President of the Minority Bar Foundation, Inc. to welcome you to the Foundation's Annual Awards and Scholarship reception. Thank you for joining us as we recognize law practitioners, students and members of our community for their dedication and achievements in advancing diversity in the legal profession.

This annual event serves as a platform for judges, attorneys, business leaders and others in our community from diverse ethnic back-grounds to come together to celebrate the achievements of individuals who have distinguished themselves through leadership and service. We also honor future leaders of the legal community by awarding scholarships to outstanding law school students.

The Minority Bar Foundation of Western New York was formed in 2004 to advance education and scholarship in the field of law, as the philanthropic arm of the Minority Bar Association of Western New York. Tonight we celebrate the 36th anniversary of these two organizations providing financial assistance to individuals interested in pursuing a career in law and growing minority representation in the legal community.

This year has been an exciting one as the Foundation expanded its board of directors and supported more programs than ever:

- LSAT and Bar Examination preparation assistance;
- High School Essay Competition;
- Say Yes Buffalo Legal Internship;
- Family Court Law Student Internship;
- Appellate Division, Fourth Department Internship;
- Law School Commencement Awards; and
- The Students of Color Undergraduate Moot Court Competition organized by the UB School of Law Black Law Students Association.

The Foundation strengthened its long-standing partnership with the Discover Law program at UB School of Law, an intensive four-week summer program which gives minority and first generation undergraduate students an introduction to law school life and opens their imaginations to careers in the law. In addition to financial support, our members participated in two panel discussions and cultivated mentoring relationships with these future lawyers!

I wish to thank you for your support of our mission and goals of the Foundation. It is only because of your commitment and generosity that we have been able to make a difference. Please continue to partner with us in our efforts to advance diversity in the legal profession.

Joseph S. Brown
President, Minority Bar Foundation, Inc.

HONORABLE HUGH B. SCOTT, JR.,
LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*Judge Barbara
Merrweather Sims*
Posthumously



A true rock upon whose shoulders many stand, Judge Barbara Merrweather Sims boldly paved the way for a legion of women and minority attorneys in Western New York. After becoming the first African American woman to receive a law degree at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo Law School, she entered private practice with her husband, the late Judge William Sims forming Sims & Sims law firm.

This historic journey advanced when she was appointed the first African American woman assistant district attorney in Erie County. While serving, Sims argued cases before the Appellate Division and Court of Appeals, the highest court in the State of New York. She also submitted petitions for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court.

After leaving the district attorney's office, Judge Sims accepted a post at the University at Buffalo as assistant to the president for minority and women's affairs and director of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

She moved on to work in the law offices of Robinson, Sims, Gibson, and Green. During her tenure, she was approached to run for associate judge of the City Court of Buffalo where she became the first African American to run successfully city-wide against a white male opponent.

Judge Sims was one of the founding members of the National Bar Association—Buffalo, New York Chapter, later renamed the Minority Bar Association of Western New York. She served in every executive office in the Women Lawyers Association and as national vice president of the National Association of Black Women Attorneys. Judge Sims was also listed in *Who's Who* of American Women and featured in *Uncrowned Queens: African American Community Builders of Western New York* for her numerous firsts and other endeavors.

It is a privilege to accept the Honorable Hugh B. Scott, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award for our mother.

Sue Sims and Frank Williams Sims
We look forward to meeting you.

MINORITY BAR FOUNDATION
EDUCATION AWARD

Dr. Catherine Fisher Collins



Dr. Catherine Fisher Collins

Catherine Fisher Collins was elected by a joint session of the New York State Legislature on March 10, 2015, to the Board of Regents for a five-year term representing the 8th judicial district.

Regent Catherine Fisher Collins' educational background includes undergraduate degrees from Trocaire College in nursing and a Bachelor of Science Degree from State University College in Vocational Technical Education. She also has an earned doctoral degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in Education Administration. From the same institution she also received her Master's Degree in Allied Health Education and Curriculum Development, graduated from the School of Nursing in the Nurse Practitioner's Program. Regent Collins' holds certifications in Health Occupations and Jr. College Teaching.

Dr. Collins is a respected author of over thirteen published books. In 2011 she launched the Women's Health Radio show that airs on WWWS 1400 AM every other Saturday with a focus on women's health issues and wellness. Dr. Collins has also held positions in health care and education administration, among them school nurse, practical nursing instructor, director/instructor of a Registered Nursing Program, Executive Director of University at Buffalo Offices of Preparatory Programs, Coordinator/Instructor at the Educational Opportunity Center's certified nursing assistant program, Assistant Academic Dean for Allied Health Education and Directory Ambulatory Care and in Health Planning.

Dr. Collins has received over 50 awards and honors which include: Western New York Women's Hall of Fame, SUNY Outstanding Faculty Fellow, Honors from the Governors of New Jersey (outstanding service), New York (Attica Prison Health Initiative), Connecticut (community services), Kentucky (International Community Services), the SUNY Empire State College 2014 Jane Altes Prize for Exemplary Community Services, and the Life Time achievement Award from Jack and Jill of America where she served as National Vice President. Regent Collins is a Trocaire College and Lafayette High School Distinguished Alumna. She is also a graduate of England's Oxford University Women's Roundtable, and in 2015, The New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators Inc., Arthur O. Eve award for individuals who demonstrate a passion for assisting their community in understanding and supporting both public and higher education; she is a strong advocate in promoting the success of all students in New York State.

Regent Collins is currently an Associate Professor at SUNY Empire State College. She has two children, Dr. Clyde A Collins, a gastroenterologist and Mrs. Laura Harris, a school administrator.

MINORITY BAR FOUNDATION
LEGAL SERVICE AWARD

*Erie County District Attorney
John J. Flynn, Esq.*



John J. Flynn became the 41st District Attorney in Erie County on January 1, 2017. The Western New York native served in the Navy after college. After fulfilling his naval commitment, DA Flynn earned his Juris Doctor at the University at Buffalo School of Law and then returned to active duty, serving in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps. He remained in the Naval Reserves when he came back to Western New York, starting out in the District Attorney's office then entering private law practice. Flynn retired as a Commander in the United States Naval Reserves. Flynn also served as a Councilman and Town Justice in the Town of Tonawanda, acting Buffalo City Court Judge and Tonawanda Town Attorney. Flynn lives in the Town of Tonawanda with his wife, Debra and has five children.