



Hon. Constance Baker Motley

Born on September 14, 1921, in New Haven, Connecticut, to immigrant parents from the Carribean Island of Nevis, Constance Baker was the ninth of twelve children. After an incident of being denied admission to a local skating rink and public beach, Motley joined a local chapter of the NAACP. It was her speech at a local African American social center that Baker caught the attention of Clarence W. Blakeslee and her dreams of attending college became a reality. Impressed with Baker, Blakeslee, a white builder and philanthropist, offered to fund her college education. After enrolling at Fisk University in Nashville, Baker transferred to New York University and graduated with a degree in economics. In 1943, Baker was accepted

to Columbia Law School, which Blakeslee financed. In her autobiography, *Equal Justice Under Law*, Motley recalls Blakeslee saying, "I guess if I can send [my grandson] to Harvard, I can send you to Columbia." While attending Columbia Law, Baker began to volunteer at the Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF), an affiliate of the NAACP. The position of law clerk for Thurgood Marshall was offered by the future Supreme Court Chief Justice's acting clerk as he prepared to leave the post. Following her graduation from law school in 1946, Baker went from law clerk to a full time member of Marshall's legal staff. It was also in 1946, that she married Joel Wilson Motley Jr. With the NAACP LDEF, Motley played a pivotal role in the battle for Civil Rights. Motley authored case briefs for the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* and argued for James Meredith's admission to the all-white University of Mississippi. The ruling in favor of Meredith case in 1962 was a major victory for the Civil Rights movement. Motley argued a total of ten cases before the Supreme Court, nine of which were ruled in favor of her client.

In February 1964, Motley entered into politics as a Democratic State Senate candidate from the Upper West Side to defeat her Republican opponent to become the first African American woman elected to the position. She was reelected to the Senate in November and remained in office until 1965 for a new position.

An unanimous vote of the City Council selected Motley as Manhattan borough president for a one-year vacancy. She was reelected for a full four-year term, the first candidate to be endorsed by the Democratic, Republic, and Liberal Parties. As borough president, Motley secured \$700,000 for the revitalization of Harlem and East Harlem as well as other impoverished areas with her seven-point program.

In 1966, Motley was named a district judge for the Southern District Court of New York by President Lyndon Johnson, making her the first African American woman named to the federal bench. She would eventually be appointed Chief Justice of the district court—the largest federal trial court in the United States—in 1986. In 1993, Constance Baker Motley was inducted in the National Women's Hall of Fame and in 2001, President Bill Clinton presented her with the Presidential Citizens Medal. The NAACP awarded Motley the organization's highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, in 2003. Constance Baker Motley remained Chief Justice of the Southern District Court of New York until her death in 2005.



HON. CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY TEA

PROFESSOR DEBORAH WAIRE POST

Sunday, April 24, 2016

Garden City Hotel

Garden City, New York

WELCOME

Maxine S. Broderick, Esq.
President, Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association

OPENING PRAYER

Maria John, Esq.
Director, National Bar Association Region II

REFLECTIONS OF THE HON. CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY

Akilah N. Folami, Esq.
Professor of Law & Associate Dean for Intellectual Life
Maurice A. Deane School of Law
At Hofstra University

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Christine Dixon
Actress

PRESENTATION TO PROFESSOR POST

Victoria Gumbs Moore, Esq.
Founding Member & Past President
Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association

PROFESSOR DEBORAH WAIRE POST

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cherice P. Vanderhall, Esq.
Immediate Past President
Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association



Deborah W. Post is Professor of Law at Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg School of Law. She graduated cum laude from Hofstra University with a major in Anthropology and took a job first as an editorial assistant and then as a teaching assistant to Margaret Mead, the noted anthropologist, before attending Harvard Law School. She began her legal career working in the corporate section of a law firm in Houston, Texas. She left practice for a position at the University of Houston Law School and moved to New York to Touro Law Center in 1987. In the academic year 1994-95 she was a visiting professor at Syracuse Law School. In 2000 she was Distinguished Visiting Professor at DePaul Law School. Professor Post has written extensively in what she considers her three areas of expertise: business associations, legal education and critical race theory. Professor Post seeks to apply an anthropologist's sensibilities and methodologies to the study of law.

Professor Post has published many books and articles. Among her most recent publications are a book on legal education, "Cultivating Intelligence: Power, Law and the Politics of Teaching" written with a colleague, Louise Harmon and published by New York University Press and a casebook for contracts called "Contracting Law" with co-authors Amy Kastely and Sharon Hom. Other articles include: "Continuity and Change: Partnership Formation Under the Common Law," Villanova Law Review (1987); "Reflections on Identity, Diversity, and Morality," Berkeley Women's Law Journal (1990-91); "Race, Riots and the Rule of Law," Denver Law Review (1993); "Profit, Progress and Moral Imperatives," Touro Law Review (1993); "Critical Thoughts About Race, Exclusion, Oppression and Tenure," Pace Law Review (1994); "Power and Morality of Grading: A Case Study and a Few Critical Thoughts on Grade Normalization," University of Missouri at Kansas City Law Review (1997). "Cultural Inversion and the One Drop Rule: An Essay on Biology, Racial Clarification and the Rhetoric of Racial Transcendence" Albany Law Review (2009). Additionally, Professor Post has led educational excursions to China. She is the proud mother of Christopher, supportive mother-in-law to Jacqueline, loving grandmother to two wonderful grandchildren, Samuel and Andiara..