

Fred Gray, Esquire

Civil Rights Attorney, Author and Speaker

Fred David Gray, a native of Montgomery, Alabama, is a landmark-setting civil rights lawyer. Educated at the Nashville Christian Institute, Alabama State University and Case Western Reserve University, Gray's legal career spans a time period of over 60 years.

Enthusiastic, energetic and out of law school less than a year, he began a dynamic civil rights career in 1954. His first civil rights case was representation of Claudette Colvin, a 15-year old African American high school student who refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1955. In December 1955 he represented Mrs. Rosa Parks who was arrested because she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, igniting the Montgomery Bus Boycott, *City of Montgomery v. Rosa Parks*. He was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s first civil rights attorney.

As an author, Gray wrote *Bus Ride to Justice* first released in 1995, Revised Edition released in 2013, was previewed at the Jimmy Carter Center and broadcast on C-Span Book TV. Upon receipt of a copy, President Barack Obama wrote in a letter to Gray, “*Today, we stand on the shoulders of giants who helped move us toward a more perfect Union, and I appreciate your sharing your story.*” The Tuskegee Syphilis Study was released in May 1998. He also wrote *The Sullivan Case: A Direct Product of the Civil Rights Movement*, a review for Case Western Reserve Law Review.

Gray filed suits that integrated all state institutions of higher learning in the State of Alabama, and 104 of the then 121 elementary and secondary schools systems in the state, *Lee v. Macon*. He was counsel in preserving and protecting the rights of persons involved in the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study in 1972, the case of *Pollard v. United States of America*. In July of 1993, he argued on behalf of Alabama State University, the higher education case, *John F. Knight, Jr. v. State of Alabama, et. al.*, U.S. District Court for the Eleventh Circuit. The court held in that case that there are still vestiges of racial discrimination in higher education in Alabama.

One of the first African Americans to serve in the Alabama Legislature since reconstruction, he served from 1970-1974. He received the Capitol Press Corps Award for Best Orator in the House of Representatives in 1972 and was a

member of the National Society of State Legislators from 1970-1974. His love and commitment in promoting the works of the National Bar Association gave him recognition as its 43rd President, 1985-86. He initiated the NBA Hall of Fame (becoming an inductee in August of 1995), and was the recipient of the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit from the Washington Bar Association.

Gray is the first person of color elected as President of the Alabama State Bar Association and served as its 126th President for the year 2002-2003. As president he was instrumental in the Board of Bar Commissioners initiating the Alabama Lawyers Hall of Fame. Inductions are now held annually.

Currently Gray is the senior managing shareholder in the law firm of Gray, Langford, Sapp, McGowan, Gray, Gray & Nathanson P.C., with offices in Alabama. The firm is nationally recognized and has received extensive press coverage in such publications as USA Today, Ebony Magazine, Jet Magazine, NBA Magazine, The Washington Times, Case Western Reserve University Magazine, New York Times, and ABC's Prime Time Live.

An Alabama State University (ASU) graduate, Class of 1951, Gray has made substantial contributions to his alma mater. He was the first President of the National Alumni Association of ASU when it was reorganized in approximately 1964 and the first person of color to serve as General Counsel for Alabama State University. He was inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame in 2003.

Under the ASU Trust for Excellence he has established an endowment trust in the name of his late wife, Bernice H. Gray, a 1956 graduate of ASU. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. An elder of the Tuskegee Church of Christ, Gray is married to Carol Porter of Cleveland, Ohio. He is the father of four, grandfather of six and stepfather of three.