What is Houston's Legacy?

Charles Hamilton Houston was a vice dean of Howard Law School and civil rights lawyer. Among those he mentored was Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Although he did not live to see the decision, he engineered the legal strategy that ultimately resulted in the unanimous 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Board of Education, which overturned "separate but equal" Jim Crow segregation. The PBA Minority Bar Committee seeks to honor him by naming its newsletter "Houston's Legacy" and to continue his unfinished work.

For more information about Charles Hamilton Houston, see the article authored by Andy Saylor in the inaugural Spring 2015 issue of the PBA Minority Bar Committee newsletter, "Houston's Legacy."
The Stockton Schoolyard Shooting
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Asian elementary school students? Although President Trump is waffling on his earlier expression of a need to act on reasonable gun safety measures, just as he did after the Parkland High School massacre, polls continue to reflect that the majority (68 to 70%) of Americans of all political stripes favor bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. The president has shown that he will fold when the members of his own party won’t support him, such as in the threatened tariffs on Mexico. While the U.S. Senate is still in recess, now is the time to meet with your senators to urge them to follow the will of the American people for action.


FIRST, BUT NOT THE LAST:

Robert Torres
By Ana Paulina Gomez, Esq.

When you meet Robert Torres, one of the first things you notice is his warm and genuine smile. No matter how busy his schedule is, he makes time to talk to you, ask you questions and engage in good conversation, especially when he speaks with pride about his family. His humble demeanor makes it easy to forget that he is the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging – the first Hispanic to hold this position.

The son of Puerto Rican parents who moved to the United States in 1953, Torres grew up in the South Bronx section of New York. It was not the best neighborhood or environment, but with determination, perseverance and strong family support, he graduated from high school and Pace University, where he earned a business degree. An accounting management trainee job at Bethlehem Steel brought him to Pennsylvania, and the Keystone state became his home. In 1989, Torres decided to attend law school, a goal he had considered for many years. He attended Widener University Commonwealth Law School in Harrisburg while working full time in the health insurance industry and graduated in 1993.

After working for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield for 19 years, he was appointed by Gov. Ed Rendell to serve as a Deputy Secretary at the Pennsylvania Department of Health in 2004. After serving the Rendell Administration, Gov. Tom Corbett appointed Torres to serve as Pennsylvania’s health information technology coordinator where he promoted the advancement of electronic medical records and health information exchange strategies. His efforts in that position helped to achieve the passage of Act 121 of 2012, which created the Pennsylvania eHealth Partnership Authority.

Torres left state government in September 2012 to work in the private sector but his commitment to public service brought him back to work for the Commonwealth. In July 2016, he was appointed by Gov. Tom Wolf to serve as Executive Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of State, and in October 2017, he was appointed Acting Secretary. His primary focus at the Department of State included election security and the modernization of election administration and professional and occupational licensing.

Torres’ hard work and state government expertise paid off. In January 2019, Gov. Wolf nominated him to serve as the Acting Secretary of the Department of Aging. He was confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate on June 4 of that year, becoming the first Hispanic to oversee that department. As secretary, Torres is responsible for the administration of aging programs and services in the commonwealth and is committed to ensuring that the department is being responsive to older adults, a population that is growing significantly and becoming more diverse. He believes that strategic partnerships and collaborations will be essential to help meet the demand for services for an older adult (over 60 years of age) population that is currently 24 percent of the commonwealth’s population and is projected to increase to 30 percent over the next 20 years. Torres is also concerned with the level of fraud, abuse, exploitation and neglect impacting older adults and has made that a priority to address. He is emphasizing the effective use of data and...
The epidemic of violence against women expands individual assailants and encompasses systematic and institutional violence against women of color. The social justice movement #SayHerName fights this state-perpetrated violence by demanding public attention to the brutality committed by our American policing institution against black women, girls and femmes. #SayHerName brings together the stories and experiences of these women, girls and femmes to the front of the #BlackLivesMatter discussion by demanding that their stories be told. The following names are black women who lost their lives to state policing authorities from January 2018 to September 2019.

Crystal Ragland (2019)

On May 30, 2019, Crystal Ragland, 32, was shot to death by Huntsville, Alabama, police after a brief confrontation at her apartment complex. She was known in her apartment community as a person struggling with mental illness, a military veteran living with both PTSD and schizophrenia. Allegedly, she had a gun at the time of the shooting but did not fire at anyone before her death. The two officers involved in the killing were placed on administrative leave while an investigation took place. The investigation is being reviewed by the police department’s incident review board.

Pamela Turner (2019)

On May 13, 2019, Pamela Turner, 44, was shot and killed in Baytown, Texas, at her apartment complex by her neighbor, a police officer. Like Ragland, Pamela struggled with mental illness. The officer knew of Pamela’s struggle with paranoid schizophrenia. While the police department reported that the use of force was necessary after Pamela gained control of the officer’s taser, members of the community and others on social media called for a more thorough investigation after a video of the fatal incident surfaced online. In the video, Pamela was sitting on the ground away from the officer when she was fatally shot. The officer withdrew a safe distance away before rapidly firing his gun directly at Pamela as she sat. After the killing, the officer was placed on administrative leave for only a few days.

Latasha Walton (2019)

On March 12, 2019, Latasha Walton, a 32-year-old mother of two, was shot and killed by Florida Highway Patrol in

Continued on page 4
Miami-Dade, Florida. After the deadly shooting, a video surfaced showing a Florida Highway Patrol officer firing into passenger side of Latasha’s BMW as she slowly moved on a roadway. The police reported that Latasha was driving erratically and was stopped for a traffic violation. Civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump has been hired by the family to seek justice for Latasha.

April Webster (2018)
On Dec. 16, 2018, April Webster, 47, was shot and killed by police in Darlington County, South Carolina. Police responded to an emergency call made by April’s wife after April was trying to engage in self-harm. April, who was both bipolar and schizophrenic, had a history of police being called to her home. In previous situations, the police resolved the situation without the use deadly force. Despite police assurances to her wife that they would use non-lethal methods to deescalate the situation, the police shot April when they saw her holding a knife. Since there were two officers, April’s wife questioned why lethal force was used at the sight of a knife. The officers were placed on administrative leave during an investigation of the incident.

LaJuana Phillips (2018)
On Oct. 2, 2018, LaJuana Phillips, 36, was shot and killed in a car dealership parking lot in San Bernardino County, California, after being “uncooperative” with police. LaJuana’s family reported that dealership called the police because LaJuana was angry about her white Mercedes-Benz vehicle, previously sold to her by the dealership, being a “lemon.” When LaJuana got into her car and attempted to drive away from officers, the police pepper-sprayed the inside of her car. Next, she allegedly drove at an officer who fatally shot her through the car window. In late October, there was a report that an investigation of the incident was underway. However, in this instance, the officer involved was not placed on administrative leave.

LaShanda Anderson (2018)
On June 9, 2018, LaShanda Anderson, 36, was shot and killed through her car window by police in a Marshalls store parking lot in Philadelphia. In November 2018, a grand jury declined to indict the officer who delivered the fatal shot. No eye witnesses testified before the grand jury. The officers involved in Lashanda’s death believed lethal force was necessary because they feared for their lives after she aggressively drove at them. However, eyewitnesses reported to the media that the police were not in any immediate danger when they fired into LaShanda’s vehicle. They reported that the shooting officer placed himself in the way of LaShanda’s vehicle as she drove away. In April 2019, federal authorities launched an investigation into the fatal use-of-force incident. After the killing, Lashanda’s family hired a Philadelphia civil rights attorney, Stanley King, who welcomed the federal probe.

Geraldine Townsend (2018)
On Jan. 17, 2018, police fatally shot Geraldine Townsend, a 72-year-old mother and grandmother, during a marijuana raid in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. According to the police department, Geraldine fired a BB gun at the officers during the raid. An officer hit by a BB pellet shot and killed Geraldine. In a video filmed by another officer, Geraldine’s son is heard begging to be by his dying mother’s side. Police ignored his request. The officer involved was placed on administrative leave during the investigation of the incident.

In short, our criminal justice system is not designed to protect a black woman from violence. In fact, it is designed to do just the opposite. History has not repeated itself; it has only continued. #SayHerName wants us to do more than just acknowledge these women’s stories. We must also demand justice by calling for policy change that combats systematic violence and police brutality against our black women, girls and femmes.
We know summer is at an end when the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Minority Attorney Conference is just around the corner. The conference is Oct. 3-4, 2019, at the PBI Conference Center in Philadelphia. This year’s theme is "Communities Under Attack: Leadership Going Forward."

This year is extra special as it marks the 30th anniversary of the conference. Although it is called the Minority Attorney Conference, ALL attorneys are invited to attend. That’s right, that includes you!

The Minority Attorney Conference Planning Subcomittee co-chairs are Marisa Lattimore, Esq., Rhodia Thomas, Esq. and Gina Thomas, Esq.

The interesting, informative, action-packed panels that start on Thursday, Oct. 3, include: 1) Communities Under Attack, moderated by Rhodia Thomas, Esq.; 2) Leadership Going Forward, moderated by Nigel Scott, Esq.; 3) Humanitarian Crisis From the Border to the Heartland, moderated by Tsiwen Law, Esq.; 4) Voter Suppression, moderated by Wesley Payne, Esq.; and 5) Common Ethical Issues Faced by Minority Attorneys, moderated by Gina Thomas, Esq.

During lunch on Thursday, Patrice M. Turenne, Esq., McCausland Keen & Buckingham PC, will receive the Rising Star Award. Congratulations, Patrice! Also on Thursday, to help celebrate our 30th anniversary, we have the distinguished Chancellor Phoebe Haddon of Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey, as our kick-off speaker. Phoebe became chancellor of Rutgers University in 2014. She previously served as dean of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. Prior to that, she served for more than 25 years as a distinguished faculty member at the Temple University Beasley School of Law.

There is more excitement to come the following day, Friday, Oct. 4, with additional interesting and informative panels. They are: 1) CannaBusiness For Us, moderated by Carlton Johnson, Esq. and 2) Best Practices Regarding Batson Challenges and other Juror Diversity Issues, moderated by Judge Stephanie Domitrovich.

Prince Altee Thomas, Esq., Fox Rothschild LLP will be presented the A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award during our luncheon on Friday in the beautiful Crystal Tea Room. Congratulations, Prince!

Another highlight of the luncheon is the keynote address by the esteemed Thomas R. Kline, Kline & Specter. He is well-known as a personal injury and medical malpractice attorney and, dare I say, huge verdicts and settlements. Have you heard of The Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law? Yes, the law school at Drexel University is named for him. He has been chosen the #1 attorney in Pennsylvania by Super Lawyers since its inception in 2014 and is one of the nation’s most celebrated lawyers.

Recognition and a special thank you must be given to our sponsors: Corporate Sponsors: USI Affinity Gold Sponsors: Archer Law PC; Fox Rothschild LLP; Kline & Specter PC; Stevens & Lee

Phoebe A. Haddon, Esq., Kick-off Speaker Thursday Evening

Thomas R. Kline, Esq., Keynote Speaker Friday Afternoon
Come One, Come All!
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Bronze Sponsors: Asian Pacific American Bar Association (APABA-PA); Ballard Spahr LLP; Charisse R. Lillie, Esq. & Thomas L. McGill Jr., Esq.; Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott LLC; Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin PC; Pepper Hamilton LLC; Super Bakery Inc.

Friends of the Committee: Anne N. John, PBA president; The Barristers Association of Philadelphia Inc.; Court Call LLC; Hispanic Bar Association of PA; Meyer Unkovic & Scott LLP; Michael J. McDonald, Esq.; Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency; Triquetra Law; White and Williams LLP.

Thanks again to our sponsors for helping to make our conference a success!

Because we couldn't have done it without them, thank you to our subcommittee members as well as PBA staff, Louann Bell, Suzanne Crist, Diane Banks, Bridget Gillespie, Esq., Trent Hargrove, Esq. and the PBI's Clair Papieredin. They helped us pull the conference together.

You don't want to miss our 30th Minority Attorney Conference. We look forward to seeing you there!

MBC Chair Tyesha Miley, Vice-chair Tony Thompson and Secretary Andrea Farney work hard all year long to keep our committee going strong. They, along with our subcommittee chairs and our membership, help make our MBC what it is today.

Our Membership Development Subcommittee is chaired by Cherylle Corpuz, Sharon Lopez and Jacqueline Martinez. They are currently working on a pictorial directory for our website. The Diversity Summit Subcommittee is chaired by Andrea Farney, Sharon Barney, Anthony Cox, Jay Silberblatt and Patrice Turenne. The Community Outreach Subcommittee is chaired by E. Nego Pile and Raphael Castro. Our Government Attorneys Subcommittee is chaired by Beverly Ram-Royal, Nefertiri Sickout and Gina Thomas.

Marsha Grayson chairs our Governance Subcommittee, and our Legislative Subcommittee is chaired by Ti-West Law and Brenda Marrero. The Nominations Subcommittee is chaired by Henri Pierre Marcial and Sharon López. The editor-in-chief of our Newsletter Subcommittee is Tom Lee. The Minority Law Day chairs are: Philadelphia: Nigel Scott and Patrice Turenne; Pittsburgh: Verdell Dean and Imogene Cathey; Central Pennsylvania: Rachel Hadrick and Robert Datorre.

If you are not already a member of the PBA and our Minority Bar Committee, please join today. As Mahatma Ghandi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.”

Marisa Lattimore is counsel for Super Bakery, concentrating on intellectual property. She served as manager of diversity and professional development initiatives for Wolf Block LLP. She helped create a series of professional development lectures designed to transition associates into legal practice with a multidisciplinary firm. She worked for the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for more than 20 years, serving Chief Justices Robert Nix, John Flaherty and Stephen Zappala. Marisa is a director on the board of the Senior Law Center, the only nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania dedicated solely to protecting the legal rights of the elderly.

Pennsylvania Bar Association
Minority Bar Committee

Volunteers Needed!

2019 Minority Law Day
Oct. 21 at PBI Conference Center, Philadelphia
Oct. 24 at Widener Law Commonwealth, Harrisburg

Minority Law Day is designed to expose high school students to the law and the daily work of lawyers. The day’s activities are interactive and structured to encourage critical thinking. Volunteers will actively work with students throughout the day’s sessions, including in a mock trial program focusing on a relevant current events issue. Volunteers can be lawyers, judges and law students. CLE is currently being sought for these programs; attorney volunteers may be eligible to receive CLE credit for their time spent working with the students.

To volunteer, contact Louann Bell, Committee Relations Coordinator 800-932-0311, Ext. 2276, or Louann.Bell@pabar.org

Funded by Pennsylvania Bar Foundation

Education - Justice - Equal Access
The A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the accomplishments of a lawyer or judge who has demonstrated dedication to the legal profession and the minority community through civil, community or legal service. Higginbotham, who died in 1998, was a civic leader, author, academic and federal appeals court judge who fought tirelessly against racial discrimination. The 2019 recipient is Prince Altee Thomas.

Prince Altee Thomas is counsel with Fox Rothschild LLP and co-chair of the firm’s Diversity Committee. His practice involves debtors’ and creditors’ rights, bankruptcy, federal, state and local tax compliance issues, and civil and commercial litigation. An established bankruptcy attorney with transactional and litigation experience, Thomas effectively counsels clients on the full scope of their financial issues.

Thomas formerly supervised the Eastern Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Financial Enforcement Section, where he served as the lead attorney in enforcing claims of various state agencies in state and federal courts against debtors for breach of state contracts or nonpayment of taxes. He is admitted to practice in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Middle Districts of Pennsylvania, the U.S. Courts of Appeal for the Third and Fourth Circuits and the U.S. Supreme Court. Thomas has appeared before numerous other courts on a pro hac vice basis, including the Districts of Delaware, New Jersey and New York.

Thomas received his B.A. from Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, and a masters in education and J.D. from Temple University.

He is a member of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and American bar associations, the American Bankruptcy Institute, the Barristers Association of Philadelphia and the Eastern District of Pennsylvania’s Bankruptcy Conference. He is a past chair of the PBA Minority Bar Committee and current co-chair of its Community Outreach Subcommittee. He is a member of the PBA House of Delegates. Thomas was unanimously elected a member of the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute in 2008. In 2013, he was appointed PBI’s representative on the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, PBA’s charitable arm. He is a board member of the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group, a past treasurer and former executive board member of the Barristers Association and past chair of the Minority Outreach Committee of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania’s Bankruptcy Conference.

Thomas is known among colleagues and peers for his dedication to full and equal participation and inclusion. Throughout his career, he has promoted mentoring and provided service to organizations that work on diversity issues in law firms, law schools and the larger community. The PBA honored Thomas with Special Achievement Awards in 2007, 2008 and 2012 for his roles in planning its First Annual Diversity Summit, as chair of the Minority Bar Committee and for his work on the “You and the Law” community outreach programs, respectively.

Thomas was appointed to the 2010 PBA Diversity Task Force. The Philadelphia Legal Intelligencer named Thomas one of its 2009 Diversity Attorneys of the Year. In January 2017, the Philadelphia Bar Association Business Law Section honored Thomas with the Albert S. Dandridge III Diversity Award, which recognizes extraordinarily committed individuals who have made a substantial contribution to diversity in the legal profession. Thomas is a member of the board of directors of the Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project (CBAP), a nonprofit organization providing bankruptcy counseling to the indigent. He volunteers and provides pro bono professional services to CBAP and has received awards for outstanding service to CBAP and its clients in 2001 and 2005. Upon CBAP’s nomination, Fox Rothschild LLP received the Philadelphia Bar Foundation’s 2012 Pro Bono Award, and Thomas was the designated recipient of the award for the firm. In 2015, the Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia honored him with the J. Austin Morris Award in recognition of his career-long efforts to improve the position of African Americans in the Philadelphia legal community. In 2016, Thomas was honored with The Legal Intelligencer’s Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes Pennsylvania legal luminaries for their work in shaping the law and having a distinct impact on the legal profession in the state. In 2018, he was honored with the Temple Black Law Student Association’s Professional Mentor of the Year Award.
The Rising Star Award recognizes the outstanding achievements and accomplishments of a member of the Minority Bar Committee on the rise. The recipient of the award for 2019 is Patrice M. Turenne.

Patrice received her Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from the University of Pittsburgh and her Master of Arts degree in professional and business communication from LaSalle University. In 2015, she obtained her law degree from Widener University School of Law. At Widener, she was a merit scholar and an executive board member of the Widener Journal of Law, Economics, and Race. Her practice focuses on labor and employment matters. After spending her first few years in private practice, she recently moved to an in-house position with Bimbo Bakeries USA. Patrice was named a 2019 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers "Rising Star.”

Patrice is committed to pro bono and community services. In 2018, she was named to The Garage Community and Youth Center’s Executive Board. She served as the YLD liaison to the Minority Bar Committee from 2017-2019. She also serves as Young Lawyers Division Zone 9 co-chair, co-chair of the Philadelphia Law Day and the Diversity Summit subcommittees. Patrice is a member of the PBA’s 2019-2020 Bar Leadership Institute. Patrice is an active member of the Montgomery Bar Association, including participating in the 2019 Leadership Academy and serving as the treasurer of the Young Lawyers Section.

Maraleen D. Shields: Let me be the first to say congratulations on being named the 2019 Rising Star Award recipient. As I was reading through your accomplishments and community involvement, I had to confirm that you have, in fact, only been practicing law for four years. When do you sleep? What motivates your level of involvement?

Patrice M. Turenne: Maraleen, thanks so much! Yes, it’s true. I have only been practicing for four years but my involvement in my local legal community really began during law school. Since law school I have had mentors encourage me to remain active in both the legal community and the greater community. My level of involvement is greatly motivated by my love of people and my desire to be of service.

Maraleen D. Shields: Your legal career has focused on labor and employment matters. What drew you to this practice area?

Patrice M. Turenne: I started my legal career with a focus on litigation. I was really drawn to labor employment because of the people aspect of the practice. In private practice, I had numerous opportunities to impact the lives of others whether by providing a defense to a company, counseling an employer on the law or helping an individual get closure following an unlawful termination.

Maraleen D. Shields: You recently made the move from private law firm practice to an in-house position. What prompted your move?

Patrice M. Turenne: My passion for labor and employment is what motivated my move to an in-house position. In my current role, I get to do it all day, every day, which I truly enjoy.

Maraleen D. Shields: In addition to developing your practice, you have been active in several pro bono and community service activities. What is "the Garage," and how did you become involved?

Patrice M. Turenne: The Garage Community & Youth Center is an organization which started in Kennett Square, Pa., and has since expanded to a second location in West Grove, Pa. The Garage is an after-school and youth development program serving middle and high school students. The organization’s mission is to empower youth to pursue their potential. I got involved while I was in private practice. My firm at the time conducted a back-to-school drive for school supplies. I had an opportunity to hear Kristin Proto, the executive director, speak about the organization, its mission and various programs. I knew after hearing her speak and visiting The Garage that I wanted to get more involved and the rest is history.

Maraleen D. Shields: You are also quite active within the Pennsylvania Bar Association, as well as your home county bar association. How are you serving these organizations?

Patrice M. Turenne: I started my involvement with the PBA as a YLD member and then YLD liaison to the MBC. Many thanks to Sharon Lopez for reaching out to me when she became a co-chair of the MBC and pulling me further into the fold. I have been able to get more involved with the commit-
Patrice M. Turenne: My community service informs my legal practice by keeping me attuned to the issues impacting the community at large. I endeavor to apply what I learn to my practice. I have been fortunate to work for organizations that are passionate about community involvement and service. I am always on the lookout for ways to positively impact the community with my own skills and through partnerships with community organizations.

After nearly a decade of medical malpractice defense and risk management experience, Patrice M. Turenne joined Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba in 2014, where she is a shareholder.

A member of the firm’s Healthcare Group, her practice focuses on peer review and credentialing matters, licensing and professional board disputes, Health Care Quality Improvement Act (HCQIA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and Health Information Technology and Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) compliance, the OIG exclusion program, and risk mitigation and event management. She is a member of the firm’s Litigation & Trial Practice Group. She has been recognized as a “Pennsylvania Rising Star” several times. Originally from Pittsburgh, she relocated to the Lehigh Valley in 2006. In 2015, she was named to Lehigh Valley Business’ “Forty Under 40.”
Minority Bar Committee Leadership

Tyesha C. Miley, Philadelphia Chair
SEPTA
1234 Market St., Fl. 5
Philadelphia, PA 19107
tcmiley@yahoo.com

Tony J. Thompson, Allegheny Vice Chair
Meyer Unkovic & Scott LLP
Oliver Bldg
535 Smithfield St Ste 1300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2304
(412) 456-2874
Fax: (412) 456-4571
tjt@muslaw.com

Mission Statement
The mission of the Minority Bar Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association is to assure full and equal participation of minorities in the PBA, the legal profession and the justice system in general.