

Judge Robert L. Carter – Biography

Robert Carter was born in Careyville, Florida, but his family moved to New Jersey shortly after his birth. After receiving his law degrees, but before embarking on his professional career as an attorney, Judge Carter served in the United States Army Air Corps as a Second Lieutenant from 1941 to 1944. In 1944, he was hired as a Legal Assistant for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the "NAACP"). In 1945, Judge Carter became the Assistant Special Counsel for the NAACP, and later, its General Counsel in 1956.

While counsel for the NAACP from the years 1944 to 1968, Judge Carter argued and won twenty-one of twenty-two cases in the United States Supreme Court including a number of cases of enormous social significance. Among those cases was *Brown v. Board of Education*, the celebrated case outlawing segregation in the nation's public schools. Significantly, in that case, Judge Carter secured the pivotal involvement of social scientists who provided evidence on segregation's devastating effects on the psyches of black children. Judge Carter's other cases of note include *NAACP v. Alabama* and *NAACP v. Button* which accorded first amendment protection (freedom of association and freedom of political advocacy) to civil rights groups; and *South Carolina Electric & Gas v. Fleming*, which outlawed segregation in intrastate transportation.

While on leave from the NAACP, Judge Carter served as the Director of Veteran Affairs for the American Veterans Committee (1948-1949). Also, in 1962, he served as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

In 1968, Judge Carter resigned as NAACP General Counsel and became a Fellow in Urban Studies at Columbia University. In 1969, he joined the law firm of Poletti, Freidin, Prashker, Feldman & Gartner as a senior partner, specializing in the representation of management in labor disputes and other commercial legal problems. Thereafter, in 1972, Judge Carter was appointed to the United States Court for the Southern District of New York.

Throughout his legal career, Judge Carter has been involved in a wide variety of public, scholarly and community activities. He has served as an Adjunct Professor at New York University Law School, Yale University and University of Michigan Law School; Regents Lecturer at the University of California (Los Angeles) in 1969, and as a member of the United States delegation to the United Nation's Conference on Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Stockholm, Sweden in 1965. In addition, Judge Carter was a delegate to the World Assembly on Human Rights in Montreal in 1968; a member of the American delegation to UNESCO Conference in Addis Abba in 1971; a member of the New York State Special Commission on Attica which investigated the causes of the prison riots in the state's prison from 1971 to 1972; a member of the New York City Mayor's Judiciary Committee; an Urban Fellow at Columbia University; and a Shikes Fellow at Harvard University in 1991. In light of his many achievements, Judge Carter received the Alumni Award for Distinguished Postgraduate Achievement from Howard University. He holds honorary degrees from a number of prestigious institutions

including Harvard University, Columbia University, Yale University, Northeastern University, College of the Holy Cross, and Howard University School of Law. In 1995, he was awarded the Federal Bar Council's Emory Bucknor Medal for Outstanding Public Service. And in 2004, he received the Spingarn Medal for outstanding achievement by a Black American.

Judge Carter has lectured in Europe, Africa and the U.S., and his writings have been published in the Harvard, New York University, University of Michigan and Washington University Law Reviews, Humanist, Saturday Review and the Op Ed page of the Washington Post, among other publications. Judge Carter has also served on the boards of a wide variety of social organizations such as the Northside Center for Child Development, National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, and American Civil Liberties Union, to name just a few.

Source: Just the Beginning Foundation, <http://www.jtbf.org>