



YLS Presents Hon. Bernice B. Donald with 2016 Diversity Award

“We are at a challenging time in our profession, especially in the area of diversity,” Judge Donald said. “Laws are not self-executed—they depend on all of you to give meaning to those laws.”

The CBA-YLS held its Tenth Diversity Award Dinner on October 26 at Amaranthe’s Sea Cliff in New Haven. The honor was presented to the Honorable Bernice B. Donald of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Sixth Circuit for her outstanding efforts on behalf of diversity.

The YLS Diversity Award is presented each year to a distinguished legal professional who has shown both a personal and professional commitment to the elimination of bias in the legal profession as well as the principle that all people should have full and equal protection in the justice system.

“Diversity and promotion of justice are two of the primary objectives for the CBA’s Young Lawyers Section, and we are so privileged to honor Judge Donald with our



(L to R) CBA-YLS Chair Dana Hrelc, award winner The Honorable Bernice B. Donald, and CBA President Monte E. Frank.

cuit by President Obama, marking her as the first African American woman to serve on that court.

the CBA’s inaugural Diversity Summit just prior to the awards, stated, “Judge Donald and I share the belief that we in the legal profession have a special obligation to improve, promote, and embrace diversity. I applaud her as a champion for doing the tough work, day in and day out over so many years, to bring these ideals to reality.”



CBA-YLS Chair Dana Hrelc presents the Diversity Award to The Honorable Bernice B. Donald.

2016 Diversity Award,” said Dana Hrelc, section chair for the Young Lawyers Section. “Judge Donald’s tremendous career is an inspiring example of commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion, education, fairness, and equality.”

With an impressive career spanning decades, Judge Donald has achieved many firsts as an African American female, most recently being nominated to the Sixth Cir-

In accepting her award, Judge Donald shared moving accounts of growing up in Olive Branch, Mississippi, during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, when young activist lawyers from northern states stayed in her family’s home. Her experiences during these times along with lessons from her mother set her on her

path to working to overcome bias in the legal system.

“We are at a challenging time in our profession, especially in the area of diversity,” Judge Donald said. “Laws are not self-executed—they depend on all of you to give meaning to those laws.”

CBA President Monte E. Frank, honored that Judge Donald was a special guest at

Judge Donald said she feels great joy in seeing how today’s young lawyers are using their own “strong shoulders” to support future generations, just as they stand on the shoulders of those before them. “Young people have always had this wonderful notion that they can change things. And when the reality doesn’t meet the rhetoric, young people demand change. I believe our future is one of inclusion, of diversity, of commitment,” Judge Donald noted.

Turn to page 34 to read more about this event from YLS chair and Diversity Award Dinner organizer Dana Hrelc. CL