

# NEWSLETTER

COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF LEGAL EXCELLENCE, COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND  
INCREASED MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW

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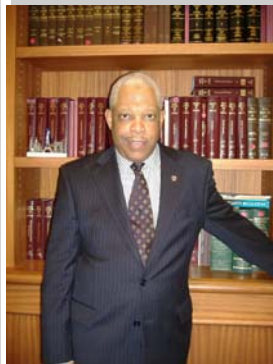
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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



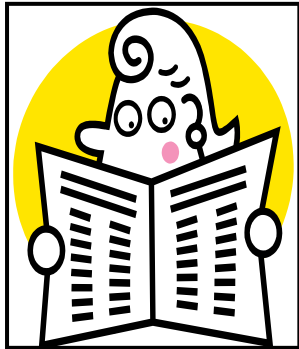
**Judge Hassan El-Amin**

### Coming Soon (God Willing): The Bourne Pages™

The idea of a lawyer referral service featuring members of the JFB has been kicking around for years. For good reasons, our members who are practicing attorneys have wanted an efficient way to attract new clients. Several stabs have been made at providing a means of linking prospective clients up with JFB member attorneys.

Ideally, it was thought, we would come up with a "live" referral service that would resemble that of the Prince George's County Bar Association (PGCBA). We would contract with an answering or administrative service that would screen calls the way the administrative staff of the PGCBA does (or did), and then refer serious prospective clients to participating attorneys. Those attorneys would remit all or a portion of their initial consultation fee back to the referral service administrator to defray the expense of maintaining the service. Hopefully, we would get enough calls, and have enough participating attorneys, to make some profit. Our attorneys would at last be able to tap into the vast pool of "ready, willing and able" clients from the large African-American population of in Prince George's County.

As promising as it first seemed, however, this approach had some severe drawbacks. For starters, JFB administration could get a handle on the tremendous amount of planning and oversight needed to implement, let alone maintain this plan. With no central office, no telephone, no permanent staff, and with officers changing positions every year, handling such a program seemed impractical. Then there was the issue of malpractice insurance requirements for participating attorneys. Was JFB prepared to require all participating attorneys to have at least a million dollar malpractice policy, as did the PGCBA? Were we prepared to screen participating attorneys and deal with disciplinary matters or fee disputes? Another problem was that many JFB leaders were also directors or leaders of the PGCBA, creating apparent and real conflicts of interest. If those JFB leaders divulged "confidential" inner workings of the PGCBA Lawyer Referral Service to JFB execs, wouldn't they be breaching their fiduciary duties to the PGCBA? Wouldn't they get in trouble if JFB started siphoning off clients and money from client base of the PGCBA's referral service? Finally, there were credible rumblings that the once highly touted PGCBA Lawyer Referral Service was itself struggling to stay afloat. Those rumors certainly did little to encourage us to start a full-fledged referral service.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK (Cont.)

A more realistic, and certainly cheaper, alternative was to publish a comprehensive directory of our members' practices, complete with names, addresses, telephone numbers and areas of concentration or specialty. Certainly this looked a lot less cumbersome than a full-fledged referral service. But the problems with these publications were manifold: first, by the time the directories were compiled, many entries were already out of date. Second, no effective way was ever found to distribute them—to get them into the hands of people who needed or could use them. Add to that printing costs, and what we got was expensive detailed membership lists that a relatively few members used to look up or call each other. Many of us still have these directories on our shelves, or in our libraries—they make good keepsakes for historic reference.

Enter the age of the computer. The Bourne Pages™ we are now proposing is an initiative based on worldwide web presence and web technology. The only limitation is the requirement of computer access—which, happily, is constantly expanding. In concept, think of the Bourne Pages™ as an electronic version of the Yellow Pages<sup>7</sup> exclusively for paid-up members of the JFB. Here's a little of how it will work: Participating attorneys, either on their own or in consultation with our contracted web page designer, advertise their practice by name, geographic area, and/or specialty. Each participating attorney or law firm has its own custom designed page(s), complete with graphics, logos and all contact information. Instead of an administrator, all that is needed is a Webmaster, to keep the pages updated. There is no middleman or referral, because under this concept, the ultimate consumer—the client—is in direct and immediate contact with the attorney who will provide the professional service. How much malpractice insurance you carry is up to you. You need pay only an

enrollment fee and a modest annual maintenance charge, and you're on your own. While we hope and expect all participating firms and individual attorneys will provide excellent service, JFB disclaims any responsibility for your performance, because it is the customer him or herself, not JFB, who makes the connection with you, the participating attorney. We simply provide a means for you to advertise your services. We provide search engine priority listings, and arrange to have the Pages circulated and advertised (at least initially) in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, and possibly D.C. and Northern Virginia, given their proximity. In other words, we use our collective resources to help you market your services.

Assigned to this priority project are board members and private practitioners Holly Reed and Tiffany Alston, along with Newsletter Editor Joel Braithwaite. Preliminary research has already been done and the Executive Board should have completed reviewing proposals by the end of next month. As president, I will be seeking authorization to expend up to \$7,000 for the implementation of this service, which—if properly launched, will have paid for itself within a year of operation. Thanks to Joel, the domain name, [www.bournepages.com](http://www.bournepages.com), has already been reserved. It will of course be linked to our main website, [www.bournebar.org](http://www.bournebar.org). Don't visit it yet—but if you are interested in serving on the task force, or in being among the first to give your name and your practice the exposure you've been looking for, hurry and e-mail Holly Reed at [hreedlaw@msn.com](mailto:hreedlaw@msn.com). Remember: this is a project meant to put clients in your waiting room and retainers in your checking account! We'll be sure to keep you posted.

**Regards,**  
**Hon. Hassan Ali El-Amin**  
**President**  
**J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association**

### JFB Newsletter Committee

**Newsletter Editor**  
**Emeritus**  
**Lloyd A. Johnson**

**Newsletter Editor**  
**Joel Braithwaite**  
 (202) 276-4902  
 E-mail:  
[joel.braithwaite@gmail.com](mailto:joel.braithwaite@gmail.com)

The **JFB Newsletter Committee** strives to insure that the *JFB Newsletter* provides a valuable resource to its members. But we need your help. The *Newsletter Committee* invites your participation as a Committee member or as a contributor. We welcome articles and information on topics of interest to JFB members. For further information, please contact the **editor**.

## *JUDGE BEARD'S RETIREMENT*

Judge DeLawrence "Larry" Beard, a founding member of the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, Inc. and the first African American judge on the District and Circuit Courts for Montgomery County, was given a sendoff worthy of royalty at his January 17, 2008 retirement party at the North Bethesda Marriott and Conference Center. Try as it might, the snowy forces of Mother Nature could not keep family, friends and members of the bar from showing up at this sold out event to wish Judge Beard a happy retirement.



The air was filled with a festive, yet melancholy, atmosphere. The air was festive because we could not honor a more deserving man. As the testimonies from members of his family, friends, the bench, the bar, and the legislative branches of government attested, Judge Beard was and is a person of intelligence, modesty, gentleness, and good humor. The air was melancholy because the attendees were all too aware that we were witnessing the end of an era. Judge Beard is such an icon that his loss to the bench can never be replaced.



Judge Eric M. Johnson, a member of JFB and the second African American judge on the District and Circuit Courts for Montgomery County, served as Master of Ceremonies in a performance worthy of consideration as a host of the "Oscars." Among his many well-timed jokes, vignettes, one-liners, Judge Johnson wondered out loud how Judge Beard could leave him as the only African American on the Circuit Court for Montgomery County. Judge Johnson then noted with feigned seriousness that Judge Beard was "the first judge in Montgomery County to drive an orange Corvette, the first African-American judge in Montgomery County to drive an orange Corvette, and the last African-American judge in Montgomery County to drive an orange Corvette."



The attendees of the Retirement Party showed the depth and breadth of those that Judge Beard touched in his career. In attendance were Chief Judge Robert M. Bell, Court of Appeals, Retired Judge Andrew L. Sonner, Court of Special Appeals, Samuel C. Hamilton, a JFB founding member, JFB President Judge Hassan El-Amin, Past Presidents, Judge Larnzell Martin, Jr., Judge Michelle D. Hotten, Sharon V. Burrell, Andrea Green, George E. Simms, III, and William A. Snoddy, United States Magistrate Judge Charles B. Day, Judge Eugene Wolfe, Montgomery County Executive Isiah "Ike" Leggett, State Senator Jennie M. Forehand, and Delegate Susan C. Lee. Former Virginia Governor and the current Richmond, Virginia Mayor L. Douglas Wilder conveyed his well wishes via video.



Also in attendance were 19 high school students who were euphemistically referred to as "Larry's Leaders." The latter is a group of student volunteers who perform community service activities. A rousing testament to Judge Beard was given by Malcolm Foley, a senior at Blair High School, who received a standing ovation from the audience.



Kudos to George E. Simms, III, Vera White, and Isaac H. Marks, who served on the Retirement Committee that did such a great job organizing the party. The Seafood Buffet was fabulous, the speakers were wonderful, and the video of Judge Beard's lip sync of Louis Armstrong's "What A Wonderful World" was not to be missed. We thank the Retirement Committee in advance for their plan to donate a DVD of Judge Beard's Retirement Party to the Bourne library. The DVD will be treasured by our members.



## 7TH ANNUAL ORATORICAL BI-COUNTY CONTEST

In observance of Black History Month, the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association will hold its seventh **Annual Bi-County Oratorical Contest** on Saturday, February 23, 2008. The topic for this year's contest is **"Who Should the Next U.S. President Be and Why?"**

Eleventh and Twelfth grade students in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties will present their orations on this topic and compete for \$1,750 in college scholarships and other prizes donated by various sponsors. The contest will be held on

Saturday, February 23, 2008 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm in the Prince George's County Administration Building, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. In the event of inclement weather, the competition will be held at the same location on Saturday, March 1, 2008. The event is free to the public.

For further information, please contact Ibrahim Moiz at [ibrahim.moiz@mdcourts.gov](mailto:ibrahim.moiz@mdcourts.gov), or Lyndsey Kuykendall at [lyndsey.kuykendall@mdcourts.gov](mailto:lyndsey.kuykendall@mdcourts.gov).

## DISTRICT COURT JUDGES ELEVATED

CONGRATULATIONS! Governor O'Malley has appointed District Court Judge Crystal Dixon Mittelstaedt, and District Court Judge Beverly Woodard, two JFB members, to the Prince George's County Circuit Court.

Judge Mittelstaedt has been a District Court judge in Prince George's County since 2005. Before her appointment to the bench, Judge Mittelstaedt served as an Associate Prince George's County Attorney, in both the government operations and litigation divisions. She was appointed by the Court of Appeals of Maryland to be a member of the Character Committee of the Fourth Appellate Circuit of Maryland, where she served for 12 years before becoming a judge. Judge Mittelstaedt received a certificate of achievement from the Black Women's Bar Association of Suburban Maryland in

2006 and an award for outstanding and dedicated service to the Prince George's County Office of Law in 2005.

Judge Woodard has been a Judge in the District Court for Prince George's County since 1998. Before her appointment to the bench, she was a prosecutor in the State's Attorney's Office for Prince George's County for 12 years, where she tried murder, sexual assault, arson, and other felony cases and served as Deputy State's Attorney. Judge Woodard began her legal career as a staff attorney at the Neighborhood Legal Services Program in Washington, DC, where she represented indigent clients. For over 20 years, Judge Woodard has been an attorney, coach and judge in mock trial programs.

## JFB STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

The JFB Planning Retreat took place at home of Judge and Martha El-Amin, January 12, 2007. About 25 members attended, representing all but one of our functioning committees (Membership, where were you?). Award for the "best represented firm" goes to the firm of Williams & Worthy, LLC, all of whose lawyers attended. Each committee formulated and discussed its plans for the upcoming year. Also discussed were possible guests speakers for the banquet, and the President's major goals and objectives for 2008. This planning, no doubt, allows JFB to remain relevant to the mission, members and community we serve.



## ***BOYCOTT PRISONS INITIATIVE***

In carrying out his platform to "Build Up the Schools and Boycott the Prisons!", and at the suggestion of immediate past president Abigale Bruce-Watson, Judge El-Amin attended a kick-off meeting of the "Pen or Pencil" program at Central High School on Saturday, January 19, 2008. "Pen or Pencil" stands for the paths the students choose, the path to the "Pen" (penitentiary) or the path of the Pencil, i.e., scholastic achievement and success. About 20 students and several community leaders were present. The event featured role-playing by a former DC Department of Corrections officer and Department of Probation officer, and speeches by former Prince George's Councilwoman Dorothy Bailey, Seat Pleasant Mayor Eugene Grant, and Judge El-Amin.

A follow-up meeting at Central High on Thursday afternoon, January 24, was attended by JFB member C.T. Wilson, a member of the State's Attorney's Community Prosecution Team. ASA Wilson, along with ASA Ada Clarke-Edwards, will be participating with this new branch of "Pen or Pencil" on a regular basis.

If you want to get involved, please contact Abigale Bruce-Watson of the Partners in Education Committee.

Pictured are some of the participants with Judge El-Amin, notably former councilwoman Dorothy Bailey, who convened the meeting and Barbara Spencer Dunn, membership director of ASALH, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. Ms. Dunn will be presenting at the JOINT JFB-PGCBA MEETING on February 5, 2008, at the Federal Courthouse in Greenbelt.



## ***DISTRICT COURT VACANCIES***

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Trial Courts Judicial Nominating Commission  
for Commission District 13

District Court for Prince George's County

The Honorable Crystal Dixon Mittelstaedt and the Honorable Beverly Jean Woodard were elevated to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County effective December 3, 2007, thereby creating two vacancies on the District Court for Prince George's County. These vacancies are to be filled by appointment of Governor O'Malley.

Any lawyer interested in appointment to these vacancies should request a personal data questionnaire from Deborah A. Unitus or Linda Etzold, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maryland Judicial Center, 580 Taylor Avenue, A-2, Annapolis, Maryland, 21401, tel: (410) 260-1291, Maryland Relay Service (TTY/Voice) 1-800-735-2258. The personal data questionnaire is also available as a downloadable document on the Judiciary's website at [www.mdcourts.gov](http://www.mdcourts.gov). Any applicant who reapplies to a commission with whom they have filed a personal data questionnaire within the past twenty-four months need not file a new questionnaire. The candidate may submit a letter stating that he or she is reapplying and submit any changes that have occurred since the submission of the earlier questionnaire.

The completed personal data questionnaire and two writing samples (at least 16 copies – see questionnaire as to additional copies) must be received by Deborah A. Unitus or Linda Etzold in the Administrative Office of the Courts by the **close of business at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. Late applications will not be accepted.**

**J. FRANKLYN BOURNE BAR ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 1121

Upper Marlboro, MD 20773-1121

***Important Dates to Remember***

**Feb. 5, 2008.** Joint Prince George's County Bar Assn and JFB Meeting at the Greenbelt Federal Courthouse

**DR. CARTER G. WOODSON AND THE ORIGINS OF MULTICULTURALISM**

The 75th Anniversary of the Publication of The Mis-Education of the Negro  
All members are urged to attend. (\$30 per person)

**Feb. 23, 2008.** Annual Bi-County High School Oratorical Contest at the Prince George's County Administration Building

**SAVE THE DATE(S)**

**Feb. 19, 2008.** PGCBA Board Of Directors Meeting

**Feb. 28, 2008.** PGCBA Law Practice 101 Courthouse, Room M 2402, 4:30 PM, Free

**Mar. 18, 2008.** PGCBA Board Of Directors Meeting Courthouse, Room M 0421, 6:00 PM

**March, 2008.** JFB Legislative Reception. TBA

**Mar. 20, 2008. JFB General Meeting CoCo Cabana Restaurant and Club, Langley Park Buffet Dinner Included! Don't Miss Our New Meeting Format!**

**Mar. 29, 2008.** PGCBA Alan Goldstein Seminar

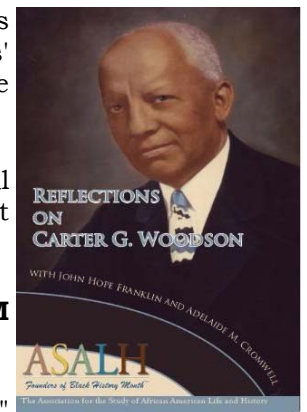
***BLACK HISTORY MONTH JOINT MEETING***

On behalf of the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association and the Prince George's County Bar Association, you are cordially invited to the Joint Bar Associations' Black History Month meeting Tuesday, February 5, 2008 at the Federal Courthouse in Greenbelt, Maryland.

The joint meeting begins at 6:00 with a reception and then dinner. The formal program will not begin until 7:00, but members are welcome to come for dinner at 6:30 or a little earlier. This year's presentation is titled:

**DR. CARTER G. WOODSON AND THE ORIGINS OF MULTICULTURALISM  
The 75th Anniversary of the Publication of The Mis-Education of the Negro**

We look forward especially to learning about the origins of "Black History Month" and the remedies prescribed by Dr. Woodson for the current crises among African American and other ethnic youngsters, especially males. We are looking forward to seeing all members on February 5!



***MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION — PLEASE MAIL 2008 DUES TODAY***



**JFB** is committed to legal excellence, community service, and the advancement of African-American minorities in the legal profession. Our membership consists primarily of African-American attorneys who live and/or work in Montgomery and Prince George's

Counties.

Membership classes are:

**Active:** Licensed to practice law in Maryland. Dues: admitted to the Bar for less than 5 years — \$25; all others — \$50.

**Associate:** Licensed in *any other jurisdiction*, who lives in Montgomery or Prince George's County.

Dues: admitted to the Bar for less than 5 years — \$25; all others — \$50.

**Student:** Matriculated at a Washington metropolitan area law school *or* lives in Montgomery or Prince George's County and matriculated in any law school. Dues: \$5.

**New Admittees:** Admitted to practice in Maryland in the last 12 months. Dues waived.

Due checks should be made payable to J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, Inc. and mailed to P.O. Box 1121, Upper Marlboro, MD 20773.

For membership applications, please visit our website, [www.bournebar.org](http://www.bournebar.org), or contact Janelle Jordan & Judge Herman C. Dawson.