

# NEWSLETTER

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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>From the President</i>	1, 2
<i>JFB @ the NBA Convention</i>	3
<i>New Admittees Reception</i>	4
<i>Foreclosures Looming Large</i>	4
<i>New Admittees Reception Photos</i>	5
<i>Chambers of Chief Judge Missouri</i>	6
<i>Election Judges Needed</i>	7
<i>In Memoriam Leonard L. McCants, Esq.</i>	7
<i>Membership</i>	7

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Judge Hassan El-Amin

**Even if he does not win** the general election for President of the United States (a prospect that seems increasingly unlikely), Democratic Party presidential nominee **Senator Barack Obama** has accomplished

more during the relatively short span of his national candidacy than any African-American politician in history.

With his deep understanding of the essence of the "American Dream," Senator Obama has given this country and the entire world something many of us have been without for the past 40 years: OPTIMISM and HOPE. No wonder 200,000 Germans gathered to hear him in Berlin! No wonder almost 40,000,000 Americans tuned in to watch his speech at the conclusion of the Democratic National Convention! Here is a man who ignites the spirit that underlies the very promise of this great experiment in representative democracy known as the United States of America, who gives expression to our collective longing for America to move towards "a more perfect union."

Obama has stirred the patriotic fervor of the Democratic Party faithful more than any candidate since the late John F. Kennedy. I can make this claim confidently because I was a politically active 10th grader (and vice president of my sophomore class) in 1963 when JFK's life was abruptly

snuffed out by an assassin's bullet. But JFK's light continued to shine, at least for a while. "Camelot" was gone but President Lyndon B. Johnson, extraordinarily skilled at passing legislation, took hold of Kennedy's torchlight and ran with it, leading Congress to enact the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And we can't forget that LBJ appointed **Thurgood Marshall** to the United States Supreme Court.

But after the assassination of its most celebrated champion, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, the "Dream" pretty much died. Buildings were burning, bullets flying, fists clenching as the visions of the "New Frontier" and the "Great Society" were quickly supplanted by calls for "law and order." Black Panthers and other activists were shouting "All power to the people!" but they were being arrested in droves, their organizations infiltrated and derailed into insignificance. Lock-ups, casualty reports and body counts became the news of the day as the industrial-military complex achieved supremacy and reaped profits from the hated war in Vietnam.

As for the U.S Presidents after Kennedy and Johnson: Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, George H. W. Bush the father, Clinton and George W. Bush the son—only one, Ronald Reagan, has come close to tapping into the ideological well-spring of the American creed that inspired us in the Kennedy days. The problem with Reagan's vision, though, from my

### JFB Board of Directors

**Judge Hassan Ali El-Amin**  
*President*

**Sharon Christmas DeBerry**  
*President-Elect*

**Tiffany Alston**  
*Treasurer*

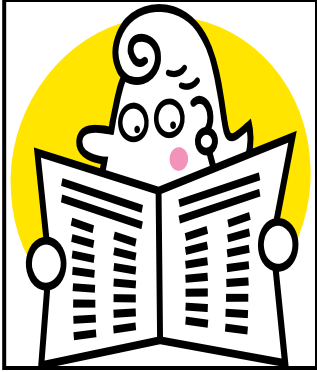
**Traci Scudder**  
*Recording Secretary*

**Letoria G. Knight**  
*Corresponding Secretary*

**Abigale Bruce Watson**  
*Immediate Past President*

**Holly Reed**  
*Executive Officer*

**Michael Pearson**  
*Executive Officer*



## 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 **Joel Braithwaite**. (See above.)

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

standpoint, was that it EXCLUDED ME, a black American. President Reagan evinced absolutely no consciousness of the disenfranchised and disillusioned. He inspired in his followers a nostalgia for the time when the founding fathers were in charge of America, but he never acknowledged their inability to reconcile the evils of slavery and Jim Crow with the great principles of human worth and freedom on which the Nation is based. Reagan's was not a pluralistic society, but a "pure American" society with economically successful white men in charge of everything. "Civil rights and all that stuff are too complicated and unpleasant; just let us go back to the fundamentals and we'll take care of everyone because we know what's best for everyone." That was good ol' Ronny's social message. OK, so stretch it a bit and give Reagan credit for somehow engineering the collapse of Communism. But white supremacy/racism, not Communism, has historically been the chief enemy of African-Americans.

And so, until Obama, the "Dream" of King and Kennedy had been lost. Consigned to some state of hibernation. Buried. Buried under the cynicism of laissez-faire and "trickle down" economics and the under the weight of materialism, cybernetics and now information overload. It was spoken of every Black history month and every Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and on occasion when we needed to pay tribute to a fallen civil rights warrior. But there was no living embodiment of the Dream, no champion. Our black leaders and self-appointed spokesmen have been powerless against the onslaught of a destructive cultural surge featuring gangster rap, outrageous videos, and bizarre behavior by ersatz sports and entertainment heroes.

What is this "Dream?" It is the belief that one day people actually will be judged "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

It is belief that one day the Nation as a whole will acknowledge in deed and in fact that "all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...", and that the Freedom we love to sing about will be allowed to ring out from each person in America as each person is unmistakably afforded the opportunity to unleash the God-given potential inside him or her.

So Barack is helping us to get beyond race, as no one has done in the history of this country. His candidacy is so profound, on so many levels...a fusion of King and Kennedy, it seems. As speaker after speaker took his/her turn during the DNC to declare their support of presidential candidate Obama and the Democratic ticket, many of us were awestruck. Our assessment is difficult to put into words. Here are some of the attempted descriptions: historic... unparalleled... unimaginable... astounding... amazing... miraculous... redemptive... cathartic... surreal... healing... providential... requisitioned... transformative... implausible... incredible... watershed... epochal... The list goes on and on.

But back to earth—what Barack's ascension says to us, who share the special commonalities with him of being African-American and attorneys, is that there is no goal we cannot achieve, no obstacles insurmountable save those we impose on ourselves through lack of vision, faith, or effort. And as we witness the awesome power of a unified Democratic National Party behind this tall skinny brown-skinned kid with big ears and a funny sounding name, we CAN see, and we DO believe in "the Promised Land" of "America the Beautiful" and we KNOW, like Dr. King, that we WILL get there someday.

**Hon. Hassan Ali El-Amin, President**

## JFB AT THE NATIONAL BAR ANNUAL CONVENTION

Having just returned from the National Bar Association Annual Convention in Houston, TX, I feel a renewed a dedication to the mission of JFB, as well as the purposes of the National Bar Association: to “advance the science of jurisprudence; improve the administration of justice; preserve the independence of the judiciary; uphold the honor and integrity of the legal profession; promote professional and social intercourse among the bar; promote legislation that will improve the economic condition of all citizens in their efforts to secure the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution; and protect the civil and political rights of citizens.”



Thanks to our President, the Honorable **Hassan El-Amin**, for allowing me to attend in his stead. It was truly a great experience and wonderful to see so many African American attorneys assembled together in furtherance of the NBA goals; to learn, network, reminisce and relax. As a first time attendee, my name tag boasted such, which entitled me to the traditional hugs and cordial exchanges from those who have previously attended. It was a pleasure to see some of our members, but clearly the number of Bourne attendees was a small portion of our membership. It was particularly a pleasure to run into the Honorable **Robert M. Bell**, Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, as I caught up on office work in the hotel lobby at 1:00 a.m.—it was the only place I could find a “hot spot.”

The convention offered a wealth of information. Approximately 53 seminars were held on various legal topics. In particular, there were several seminars on the very hot topic of foreclosures, as well as seminars relating to patents, entertainment law, family law matters, politics, and arbitration and mediation. For those of you certified or interested in mediation and arbitration, you should be aware that the NBA and the American Arbitration Association have entered into a three year Memorandum of Understanding in which the American Arbitration Association has pledged its commitment to appointing members of the NBA as panel attorneys. The doors to such opportunities have, for the most part, been closed for years to African American Attorneys and this initiative is an opportunity that should not be missed. The seminars, as well as the many receptions and banquets, offered an opportunity to network and establish working, as well as friendly, relationships.



There was an awards ceremony at which various awards were presented to members and affiliate chapters of the NBA. There was an award for “Affiliate Chapter of the Year” and “Affiliate Chapter Program of the Year”. As I listened to the accomplishments of the winners, I could not help but think that our Association could have easily been a recipient. Unfortunately, due to inaccurate information of record for the Association, we did not receive the application to be a nominee. This Association does a lot in the legal and local communities, and I believe its time for us to become a more visible affiliate of the NBA. It has come to my attention that as one of the largest affiliates of the NBA, we have no link from the NBA’s website to ours. I have contacted the NBA to ensure that this is done.



The NBA Board as well as its members seem eager to have the involvement of its members and affiliate chapters. I believe this Association could be a strong force in the Association. To further that end, I have been asked to consider co-chairing the bankruptcy section of the NBA, with my partner, **ShaRon Kelsey**. I have agreed to accept the challenge, pending approval by the NBA Board. I urge each of you to join the NBA and become active in an area that interests you, and I hope JFB becomes a more active affiliate. **Sharon Christmas-DeBerry, President-Elect.**

## ***NEW ADMITTEES RECEPTION A SUCCESS***

On July 26, 2008, the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association hosted its annual New Admittees Reception at the home of the **Honorable and Mrs. Alexander Williams, Jr.** Featuring a spectacular lakeside view of the golf course at Woodmore, the Williams' beautiful home was an inspiration itself. More than 30 members from Prince George's and Montgomery County attended, and some 13 new admittees were congratulated and welcomed to the Bar by the membership.

The turnout from the bench was impressive, with every level of the Maryland judiciary represented. Although we missed the perennial company of Chief Judge Robert Bell (who was in Alaska), **the Maryland Court of Appeals** was present in the person of the **Honorable Clayton Greene, Jr. Judge Arrie Davis** was present from the **Court of Special Appeals**. From the **7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit** were **Chief and Administrative Judge William D. Missouri, Judge Larnzell Martin, Judge Sheila R. Tillerson-Adams, Judge Michele D. Hotten, Judge Toni Clarke, Judge Herman Dawson, Sr., Judge Dwight Jackson and Judge Beverly Woodard**. From the District Court for Prince George's County were **Judges Hassan El-Amin and Krystal Alves**. From the Federal bench were **U.S. District Court Judge Alexander Williams**, of course, along with **Magistrate Judge Charles Day. Judge Vicki Ivory-Orem** from the Orphans Court graced the event with her presence, as did **States Attorney for Prince George's County, the Honorable Glenn Ivey**. JFB extends a heartfelt thanks to this year's sponsors, all attorney/members of the Association: **Abigale Bruce-Watson, Maurene Epps-Webb, Joseph Gibson, Isaac Marks, and Gregory Wells**. Their generous contributions help assure the success of this outstanding event.

Each new admittee introduced herself/himself to those assembled. The membership did an excellent job of educating the new admittees on the benefits of networking and joining JFB, as well as offering lot of good advice for new practitioners. **Judges Green, Davis, Missouri, Tillerson-Adams, El-Amin and Day** shared the benefit of their perspectives with the new admittees, who reciprocated with expressions of thanks and appreciation. Congratulations again to **Judge Tillerson-Adams and Wennesa Bell Snoddy**, for coordinating a first-class event!

## ***FORCLOSURES LOOMING LARGE — LAYWER'S CALL TO ACTION***

In the face of the ever increasing number of foreclosures around the country, and in particular, in Prince George's County, JFB members responded to a call from County Executive Jack Johnson to assist our citizens in the fight to keep their homes. In that regard, almost a dozen JFB members were among over 200 attorneys who attended a **"Nuts & Bolts Foreclosure Training Seminar"** at the Colony South Hotel on Monday, July 28, 2008, sponsored by the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, and Civil Justice Inc. in conjunction with MICPEL. The seminar was part of a broader initiative entitled the "Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Project." Under this initiative, the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland and other organizations hope to recruit and train 500 volunteer lawyers to serve in one of three ways -- by representing a homeowner in a foreclosure defense action, serving as counsel to a non-profit housing counseling agency, and/or volunteering at a foreclosure solutions workshop for homeowners. Thanks to recent emergency legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly that modified the foreclosure process with new notice requirements, extended time periods for fixing problems and additional defenses, there are more opportunities for lawyers to help those at risk, and JFB members have already become involved. **Abigale Bruce-Watson, Immediate Past President.**



***NEW ADMITTEES RECEPTION PHOTOS***



***FROM THE CHAMBERS OF WILLIAM D. MISSOURI, CHIEF JUDGE*****IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**

On July 22, 2008 the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedures submitted its 159th Report and recommended "that the Court of Appeals adopt, on an emergency basis, the proposed amendments to Rules 2-122, 14-201, 14-203, 14-204, and 14-205". The proposed amendments are designed primarily to conform the rules relating to the foreclosure of mortgages and Deeds of Trust against residential real property to legislation enacted in the 2008 session of the General Assembly. Principally, 2008 Maryland Laws Chapter 2, (HB365), took effect as an emergency Bill on April 4, 2008 (Rules Committee transmittal letter). That action by the Court of Appeals' Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure convinces this court that concomitant action is required of it regarding an overview and, where necessary, amendments to the court's present procedures regarding the docketing and processing of foreclosure of residential real property cases.

As is generally known in the legal community, and to a lesser extent in the non-legal community, Prince George's County has experienced, and will continue to experience, a dramatic increase in the docketing of foreclosure of residential real property cases. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Chief/Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court to prepare the court for the influx of an unusually high number of foreclosure of residential real property cases. To that end, the court will appoint a committee that will be charged with making a thorough review of the present procedures employed in the docketing and processing of foreclosure of residential real property cases. After completing the review, the committee is authorized to make recommendations to the Chief/Administrative Judge as to amendments to the procedures presently used by the court.

The committee is also charged with making appropriate recommendations to the Bench, as a whole, regarding the Bench's obligations pursuant to Md. Code Ann. Cts. & Jud. Proc. §2-102 (2006 rep. vol.) and Rule 2-543. Those two (2) provisions address the Bench's authority to appoint a Standing Auditor and to establish procedures that govern the performance of the Auditor, as well as the establishment of the compensation that may be paid to the Auditor.

The Chief/Administrative Judge, for his part, will take whatever appropriate action the committee recommends regarding the procedural handling of all foreclosure of residential real property cases that are docketed within the Prince George's County Circuit Court. But the efficiency of docketing and processing of foreclosure of real property cases within the county may also require that the Bench review the role of the auditor in the processing of such cases. A review of the auditing process may result in the Bench's decision to engage a number of auditors with each sharing equally in the duties and compensation involved with providing auditing services for foreclosure of real property cases. **More available at [www.bournebar.org](http://www.bournebar.org),**

**Re: Settlement of ADR cases** Date: July 9, 2008

Please be advised that attorneys engaging in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) before the Prince George's County Circuit Court are required to notify the court if an ADR case settles prior to the date and time it is scheduled to be heard by a retired/ADR judge. Failure to notify the court of a case settlement may result in the issuance of a show cause order and a subsequent hearing on the issue of reimbursement for the retired judges' non-productive time.

**Re: Pre-trial statements pursuant to Rule 2-504.2(a)** Date: July 9, 2008

All are advised that the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, through the issuance of a scheduling order pursuant to Rule 2-504, has determined that pre-trial conferences will be scheduled for most civil cases on the court's docket. The scheduling of a civil case requires, pursuant to Rule 2-504.2(a), that "each party shall file not later than five days before the conference a written statement addressing the matters listed in section B of the rule." The court, over the years, relaxed the requirement that a pre-trial statement be filed five days prior to the pre-trial conference, but that relaxed practice will cease effective September 1, 2008. Effective September 1, 2008, all parties must comply with Rule 2-504.2(a) or be subject to sanctions by the court. The mandatory filing of a pre-trial statement will be enforced by all judges who are scheduled to hear pre-trial conferences in the Prince George's County Circuit Court.

## J. FRANKLYN BOURNE BAR ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 1121

Upper Marlboro, MD 20773-1121

We welcome Prince George's County District Court Judges Lawrence Hill, Tiffany Hanna Anderson, and G. Richard Collins. | Congratulations to the Hon. Leo Greene Jr. on being elevated to the Circuit Court. | Congratulations also to Judge Michele D. Hotten, on being nominated for the Leadership in Law Award. | Congratulations to Marylin Pierre for being selected as a member of the 2009 Class of Leadership Montgomery.

## ELECTION JUDGES NEEDED

The Montgomery County Board of Elections is seeking about 4,000 people to serve as election judges in nearly 250 voting precincts for the Nov. 4 general election. Judges must be registered Maryland voters; be able to speak, read and write English; and must not hold, or be a candidate for, public or party office.

The board especially needs registered Republicans, independents and unaffiliated voters. The board also seeks judges bilingual in Spanish, election judge alternates and part-time "closer judges" to assist with the closing of polling locations on election night. Training will be provided, and a \$180 stipend is paid to most judges.

To apply or for more information, call the Board of Elections at 240-777-8533, e-mail [electionjudge@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:electionjudge@montgomerycountymd.gov) or visit <http://www.777vote.org>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thurs. Sept. 18, 2008. JFB General Meeting**  
CoCo Cabana Bar and Grill 2031 A University Blvd,  
Hyattsville, MD 20783, 301-431-1882.  
CLE coordinated by **Hon. Michele Hotten**,  
Cross-Examination of Witnesses, featuring  
**Billy Murphy, Jr., Esq.**

## SAVE THE DATE

**Thurs. Nov. 6, 2008**  
**Annual JFB Scholarship Awards Banquet**

## IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of **LEONARD L. MCCANTS**, Esquire, a **co-founder of JFB**, on Monday, September 1, 2008, after a courageous battle with cancer. The Late Mr. McCants' office was located in Silver Spring, Maryland. He received his undergraduate degree from Howard University and his law degree from the University of Virginia. He was a member of the Bar Association of Montgomery County, Maryland Executive Committee from 1989 to 1991.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Bourne Scholarship Fund may be made in Mr. McCants' memory. Donations can be mailed to The J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 1121, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20773. Expressions of sympathy may be forwarded to the family c/o Mrs. Laurana G. McCants, 3117 Birch Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20015.

## 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**.