

# 2018 FLORIDA WOMEN LAWYERS OF COLOR SUMMIT

S U P E R  
W O M E N  
U N I T E

AUGUST  
24-26, 2018



FT. LAUDERDALE  
MARRIOTT HARBOR  
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# WELCOME LETTER

Greetings Sisters!

I am so thrilled that you are joining us for our 2nd Annual Women Lawyers of Color Summit! We have a great weekend in store for all of you. Our speakers are ready to delve into some deep topics. We will be honoring our sister judges who have blazed the trail for us to follow.

The theme this weekend is #SuperWomenUnite. You may not think you are a super woman - but you are! Think of all the things you balance daily. Whether it be work, family, or fighting for justice, we each go above and beyond in some way. It is not easy to be a woman of color in these troubled times. Although we may be struggling on the inside, we keep it together and persevere.

So this weekend, rest. Escape. Recharge. Learn, chat and network. My goal is for you to leave with the strength to re-engage with the challenges that our path brings. We must practice self-care in order to keep on keeping on.

In the words of Marian Wright Edelman, "You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying to do the best you can every day."

I look forward to being in fellowship with you this weekend — don't hesitate to share feedback or say hello!

In Solidarity,

**Melba V. Pearson**  
**President**  
**Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association**



# About Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association

The Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association (GSCBWLA) formerly the National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division Dade County Chapter—was formed in 1985. The association's mission is to address the concerns of women lawyers, and to address the legal, social, economic, and political needs of the Black community and the community-at-large.

For over thirty years, GSCBWLA has been a network of attorneys dedicated to community service and the professional development of its members. The association has placed a strong emphasis on community service through its community seminars, free neighborhood legal clinics and programs educating and empowering youth and the mentorship of law students. The association is also known for its support of its members' growth and development within the legal profession. With this support, our members have achieved many "firsts" within Florida as lawyers within law firms, corporations, government agencies and the judiciary.

In 2005, the association voted to be renamed in honor of community activist Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry, who was the first Black female attorney to practice in Dade County and the first Black female legislator in the State of Florida. Throughout the association's existence, it has grown and its reach has expanded.



## FRIDAY AUGUST 24TH

### Welcome Reception

**7:00PM - 9:00PM** **Welcome Reception**  
Honoring retiring Judge Teretha Lundy Thomas, Judge Catherine Brunson and Judge Ilona Holmes for their years of stellar public service.

## SATURDAY AUGUST 25TH

### Summit & CLE

**9:00AM - 10:00AM** Breakfast & Registration

**10:00AM - 10:15AM** **Welcome**  
**Melba Pearson**, President, GSCBWLA  
**Michelle Suskauer**, President, The Florida Bar

**10:15AM - 11:15AM** **How Do I Balance Being Woke and Working?**  
**Nancy Abudu**, Legal Director, ACLU of Florida  
**Kisha'sha Sharp**, President, Law Office of K.B. Sharp, P.A.  
**Jessica Goodwin Costello**, Assistant Statewide Prosecutor, Florida Attorney General's Office

Moderator: **Kadisha Phelps**, Associate, Sweetapple, Broeker and Varkas

- How do I support fellow women of color in the workplace?
- When should I speak up if I see a problem – and how?
- How do I deal with discrimination at work? What ethical obligations are involved?
- I have a First Amendment right to protest – but how far can I go? What ramifications can occur at work?



# SUMMIT SCHEDULE

**11:15AM - 12:15PM**

## **Your Inner Olivia Pope: You Too Can Be a Lobbyist!**

**Yolanda Cash Jackson**, Shareholder, Becker & Poliakoff

**Juliet Murphy Roulhac**, Regional Manager for Corporate External Affairs, Florida Power and Light

**Rep. Cynthia Stafford**, Florida State Representative

Moderator: **Carolyn Martin**, Assistant City Attorney, City of North Miami

- Why is diversity in the field of lobbying critical, especially now?
- Can I use my legal background to advocate around issues of concern?
- What ethical concerns are involved in advocacy and lobbying?
- What is the path to becoming a lobbyist?

**12:15PM - 12:30PM**

Comfort Break

**12:30PM - 1:30PM**

## **Lunch Keynote: Looking Back to Leap Forward**

- Presentation of Lifetime Achievement Award to Florida Supreme Court Justice **Peggy Quince**

**1:30PM - 2:30PM**

## **Building Wealth to Leave a Legacy**

**Shani Curry-St. Vil**, CEO, Purse Empowerment  
**Lisa McGill**, CEO/Founder, Executive One Consulting

**Sherylle Francis**, Agent, New York Life

Moderator: **Camielle Green**, Associate General Counsel, OPKO Health

- What is the importance of retirement planning and philanthropy?
- How can we use philanthropy to improve communities of color?
- How can I ensure I do not run out of money in retirement?
- How can I make my philanthropic dollars more effective?

# SUMMIT SCHEDULE

**2:30PM -  
3:00PM**

## **Medical Marijuana: The Next Frontier**

**Roz McCarthy**, Minorities for Medical Marijuana

- Legislative updates regarding legalization in Florida
- What is next for marijuana in Florida – decriminalization? Full legalization?
- What impact will this have on communities of color?
- What proactive actions can we take as attorneys of color?

**3:00PM -  
4:00PM**

Networking Cocktail

(Sponsored by Minorities for Medical Marijuana)

**4:00PM -  
8:00PM**

Spa/Reflection Time

**8:00PM -  
11:00PM**

Dine-Around in Downtown Ft. Lauderdale (On Your Own)

## **SUNDAY AUGUST 26TH**

### **Self-Care Sunday**

**9:00AM -  
9:30AM**

Breakfast is Served

**9:30AM -  
9:35AM**

Welcome

**Melba Pearson**, President, GSCBWLA

**Dawn Mangham**, Self-Care Sunday Host

**9:35AM -  
9:45AM**

Zen Meditational Practice 101



# SUMMIT SCHEDULE

**9:45AM - 10:05AM**

**Self-Reflection:** A Survivor's Story with **Nexcy De La Rosa-Monroe**, De La Rosa-Monroe Law Firm

**A Cautionary Tale:** Black Women & Cervical Cancer, **Cheryl Linton Robinson**, Linton Robinson Law Firm

**10:05AM - 10:15AM**

Mid-Morning Shopping Intermission: Black Girl Magic Expo

**10:15AM - 11:30AM**

**Lifestyle Choices from the Experts Panel**

Vegan Lifestyle on the Go: **Satin Seedie Fye**, Soulie Delight

Juicing as a Way of Life: **Fathiyyah Doster**, Juice Defined

Fitness: **Khadija Williams-Frazier**, Khadija's Wholistic Fitness

**11:30AM - 11:45AM**

Get Up & Move Challenge

**11:45AM - 12:00PM**

Black Girl Magic Expo

**12:00PM - 1:00PM**

Brain Love with **Dr. Delvena Thomas, MD**  
 "Taking Time for Yourself without Losing Yourself"

**SUMMIT ENDS (SPA DAY)**



## Justice Peggy Quince

Justice Peggy A. Quince was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1948. She graduated in 1970 from Howard University with a B.S. Degree in Zoology; she received her J.D. Degree from the Catholic University of America in 1975.

Justice Peggy Quince practiced general civil law in Virginia and Florida from 1975 to 1980. She practiced in the areas of domestic relations, real estate, and criminal law. In 1980 she began her 13 year tenure in the Criminal Division of the Florida Attorney General's office. She served as the Tampa Bureau Chief for five years and handled death penalty appeals and postconviction matters exclusively for three years. She argued numerous cases before the Virginia Supreme Court, the Florida Second District Court of Appeal, the Florida Supreme Court and the Federal Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1993, Justice Quince was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeals making her the first African American woman to serve on a Florida appellate court. She was appointed by Governor Chiles and Governor-elect Jed Bush to the Florida Supreme Court in 1998. She became the first African American woman to head any branch of Florida government when she became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida in 2008.

As one of the seven justices serving on the State Supreme Court, Justice Quince has many responsibilities that ultimately affect the lives of over 16 million Floridians. As a justice she must review final judgments imposing sentences of death, cases involving the constitutionality of laws passed by the Florida Legislature, and other matters as delineated in the Florida Constitution. She also lectures on various legal topics including the need for a fair and impartial court system, search and seizure, probation and parole, use of peremptory challenges, postconviction relief, professionalism and ethics, and the independence of the judiciary.

### She has received numerous awards and honors including:

- 2017 Indiction into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame
- 2017 Women Lawyers Division Jurist of the Year Award
- 2017 Sharon Press Excellence in ADR Award
- 2016 Induction into the Stetson University College of Law Hall of Fame
- Lifetime Achievement Award by The Florida Bar's Government Lawyer Section; Florida Commission on the Status of Women
- 2007 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Award
- 2006 Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award



# **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**



## **Nancy Abudu**

**Legal Director, ACLU of Florida**

Nancy Abudu joined the ACLU of Florida as the Legal Director in 2013. Prior to becoming Legal Director, Nancy served as senior staff counsel with the ACLU's Voting Rights Project, litigating civil rights cases in federal and state courts.

Ms. Abudu's professional experience includes serving as an International Election Observer for the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe and testifying on behalf of environmental justice groups before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Prior to moving to Miami, she was the Chair of the Georgia Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and served on the advisory board for Re-Entry Connection, Inc. She was also co-chair of the Political Action Committee for the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys and served as a state legislative coordinator for Amnesty International USA. She currently serves on the ABA's Advisory Commission to the Standing Committee on Election Law and is a Senior Fellow with the Environmental Leadership Program based in Washington, D.C.



## **Yolanda Cash Jackson**

**Shareholder, Becker & Poliakoff**

Yolanda Cash Jackson is an experienced Government Law attorney who has established a strong reputation in the community for her leadership and commitment to civic, charitable and professional organizations. She concentrates her practice in the area of Governmental Relations and has developed a proficiency in state government funding and appropriations. Ms. Jackson has excellent working relationships with several of the state's leading elected officials and policymakers. Ms. Jackson was elected to Becker's Management Committee in 2010.

Ms. Jackson is a current appointee to The Florida Bar's new standing committee on Governmental and Public Policy Advocacy. She acts as moderator on certain key panels and speaker on various television and radio talk shows pertaining to governmental and lobbying issues.



## **Jessica G. Costello**

### **Assistant Statewide Attorney, Florida Attorney General Office of Statewide Prosecution**

Jessica G. Costello is an Assistant Statewide Prosecutor with the Florida Attorney General's Office. She manages local, state and federal law enforcement teams in the prosecution of organized crime throughout the state with a focus on gangs, human and drug trafficking and fraud. Jessica serves as Statewide Prosecution liaison to Florida's Counterterrorism Task Force. She also works with community leaders and nongovernmental organizations to engage and inform the public about issues related to crime and our community. Named Florida's Gang Prosecutor of the Year in 2015, Jessica has been named a Top Government Attorney by Florida Trend since 2014 and was named Tampa Bay Business Journal's Up and Comers Hall of Fame in 2016. She was named a Woman of Color Leading Change by the YWCA of Tampa Bay in 2017, and received the University of Florida's Outstanding Young Alumni award in 2018. Outside of her practice, she has dedicated herself to being meaningfully involved in the Tampa community.



## **Shani Curry-St. Vil**

### **CEO, Purse Empowerment**

Shani Curry-St. Vil is a finance expert and author. Her company, Purse Empowerment, is one that cares about your holistic well-being. She strives to help women manage their lives through every day proven techniques. Purse Empowerment helps its clients budget, manage debt, tackle credit issues, invest in real property, save for future goals, and learn the art of investing.





## **Nexcy De La Rosa-Monroe**

**Owner, De La Rosa-Monroe Law Firm**

Attorney Nexcy De La Rosa-Monroe attained her bachelor's degree in Social Sciences and English from Florida State University and her J.D. from Nova Southeastern University. She is the owner of a family law firm in Miami Lakes, where she represents children as a guardian ad litem and clients in divorces, child support, and other domestic matters.

Attorney De La Rosa-Monroe is active in her local and legal community as a board member of the Abundant Life Christian Learning Center. As part of The Florida Bar Family Law Section, she has participated in the children's and support issues committees. She has also served as a committee member for The Florida Bar Family Law Rules Committee.

Attorney De La Rosa-Monroe is currently the President of the Dominican American Bar Association, a board member of Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., serves on The Florida Bar Professionalism Committee, and is a Past President of the Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association.



## **Fathiyyah "Tia" Doster**

**CEO, JuiceDefined, LLC**

Fathiyyah Doster is the CEO of JuiceDefined, LLC. Fathiyyah obtained her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of South Florida and her Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling from Springfield College.

Enduring a near death childbirth on February 5, 2010, Fathiyyah was diagnosed with HELLP syndrome and preeclampsia. Fathiyyah subsequently became an advocate for preeclampsia through the Preeclampsia Foundation, fighting to raise awareness and to find a cure for the illness. For the past 7 years, Fathiyyah hosted Miami's Promise Walk for Preeclampsia raising over \$40,000 for education, research and policy initiatives. Fathiyyah has been featured in Essence magazine, highlighting the childbirth crisis prevalent in the Black community.

As a result of having kidney failure, in 2013, Fathiyyah started JuiceDefined, extracting natural juices from fresh fruit and vegetables, committing to providing access to healthier options within city limits and beyond. It is Fathiyyah's desire to heal our communities through improved nutrition creating the energy and atmosphere needed to cultivate social change that will last a lifetime.



## **Sherylle Francis**

### **Agent, New York Life**

Sherylle Francis is a registered representative with New York Life Insurance Company, where she provides insurance and retirement solutions to individuals, families and business owners.

Prior to joining New York Life, Sherylle worked for over 20 years as a litigator defending major manufacturers in commercial, premises liability, general civil and product liability matters, including multiparty mass tort litigation in state and federal courts.

Sherylle is also active in her local community. She is the past president of the Caribbean Bar Association and currently serves as a board member of Broward Legal Aid, the Women's Council of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Lynne Mitchell Foundation.

Sherylle received her J.D. from Wayne State University Law School and her B.A. in Political Science, with Honors, from Wayne State University. She is admitted to the Florida and Michigan Bars.



## **Satin Seedie Fye**

### **Founder/CEO, Soulie Delight, LLC**

Satin Fye is the Founder/CEO of The Colour Connection and CEO of plant based meal prep company Soulie Delight.

Soulie Delight is more than just a name, it's a connection through food and fellowship. I wanted my clients to have a soulful connection, not only to my food, but to the ancestral dishes we grew up eating and loving but without the meat products.

Our diet is one of the most impactful parts of our lives. It determines whether we're going to end up with certain diseases, which businesses make money off of us, and it's a statement of how conscious we are.

The Soulie Delight customer has a spiritual bond, great taste palette and most importantly, a special kind of internal healing, love. It's a love that cannot, should not and will not be explained. "Soulies know they will be in each other's life forever." The same for our dishes.





## **Camielle Green**

### **Associate General Counsel, OPKO Health, Inc.**

Camielle Green is the Associate General Counsel of OPKO Health, Inc., a public, health-care company. A corporate lawyer by training, Camielle was previously an associate for K&L Gates, where she represented early stage companies, private equity and venture capital firms. Camielle also has a background in securities law and represents clients in mergers and acquisitions and securities. Prior to K&L Gates, Camielle worked as an associate for Edwards Wildman Palmer in West Palm Beach where she represented entrepreneurs in early stage and startup enterprises with respect to organization, structure and capitalization of companies and investors.

Camielle received her Bachelor of Arts from Kenyon College and her Juris Doctor from Vanderbilt University School of Law, where she had the privilege of interning for the Office of the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Den Hague. A native of Jamaica and former New Yorker, Camielle loves all things Caribbean and travel-related.



## **Dawn T. Mangham**

### **Owner/CEO, The Dreaded Indie**

Dawn T. Mangham started her journey in Coconut Grove, Florida when she discovered a love for music and the gift of song. Upon graduating from Coral Gables Senior High, Dawn attended Tuskegee University; however, after losing her mother at the end of her sophomore year, Dawn left Tuskegee without her degree to pursue her passion, music.

Dawn subsequently worked with the bands Irbs & Spices and Phase II Connection, which specialized in Funk, R&B, Light Rock and Jazz. She also recorded original material with legends like bassist, Victor Bailey. She has previously used her voice as a co-host for several Internet radio shows. Dawn is a freelance writer/editor, creativity broker, and public relations consultant; and currently holds a Bachelors in Marketing from University of Phoenix, a Masters of Science in Entertainment Business and Masters of Arts in Public Relations from Full Sail University.

Dawn is the visionary behind her company The Dreaded Indie, which consults fledgling companies on branding and marketing.



## **Carolyn Martin**

### **Assistant City Attorney, City of North Miami**

A former state prosecutor in Miami-Dade County, Carolyn Martin is now one of 3 Assistant City Attorneys serving the City of North Miami. She is part of a team whose goal is to provide quality legal representation to the City Council, the City Manager and the various departments, divisions, and boards, rendering sound legal advice based solely on the law applied to the facts, free from undue influence from any source.



## **Roz McCarthy**

### **Founder/CEO Minorities for Medical Marijuana**

Rosalind “Roz” McCarthy, a proud Florida State University graduate, is a marketing, business development, social media strategist, trainer and speaker located in Orlando, Florida. With over 22 years of experience Roz is a constant creator of promotional campaigns and business development strategies.

As the Founder/CEO of Minorities for Medical Marijuana, Inc. (M4MM), she is responsible for the day to day operation and is the chief strategist involved in developing advocacy, education, and marketing campaigns to promote awareness, information, and education about the efficacy of medical marijuana.

M4MM is a nonprofit organization focused on advocacy, education, and outreach as it relates to the social, medical, business, and public policy aspects of the cannabis industry. M4MM is a membership based organization that ensures people of color have a true quantifiable opportunity to participate in this marketplace and are afforded adequate access to care despite economic situations. M4MM currently has presence in 15 states throughout the country.



## **Lisa McGill**

### **CEO/Founder, Executive One Consulting**

Lisa N. McGill, President/CEO/Founder, of Executive One Consulting Solutions, is experienced in the areas of Business and Social Enterprise organizational development, determinative process building, regeneration and leadership. Lisa has over ten years of public community board leadership service. Most recently as the Immediate Past Board President at The YWCA of Greater Miami-Dade County, Lisa oversaw its strategic direction, sustainability and advancement. A former banking officer specializing in Treasury Management Services, Lisa developed business solutions that managed the firm's liquidity and mitigated its operational, financial and reputational risk. Lisa works comprehensively from the inside out, to expand business strategy and performance for social enterprise and small business companies, aggregating sustainability and growth. An Executive MBA graduate from the Chapman School of Business at FIU, Lisa completed the EMBA Consortium for Global Business Innovation at The University of Stellenbosch in Capetown, South Africa.



## **Kadisha Phelps**

### **Commercial Litigation Associate, Sweetapple, Broeker and Varkas**

Kadisha Phelps is an associate of the Miami office of Sweetapple, Broeker & Varkas, P.L. Kadisha is a graduate of Washington and Lee School of Law, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in History with minors in Black Studies and Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University. While at Washington and Lee, Kadisha participated in the Virginia Commonwealth Clearing House, where she assisted court-appointed attorneys in defending capital cases. She also served as a legal intern at the New York Stock Exchange's Enforcement Division.

In Tallahassee, Kadisha interned with then U.S. Senator Bob Graham and Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth, as well as leading lobbyist firm, RBBO Public Relations LLC.

Kadisha successfully litigates in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, handling both plaintiff and defense matters for business owners, south Florida developers, and representing former NFL players in various complex business and investment disputes. Kadisha's primary practice area is General Commercial Litigation.





## **Juliet Murphy Roulhac**

### **Regional Manager for Corporate External Affairs, Florida Power and Light**

Ms. Juliet Murphy Roulhac is Senior Attorney at Florida Power & Light Company. Ms. Roulhac practices in the area of complex tort and electrical litigation for Florida Power & Light. Ms. Roulhac has been a Trustee at University of Florida since May 6, 2011. She serves as a Director of Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company. She serves on the Florida Bar's Board of Governors and is an Emeritus Member of the UF Law Association Board of Trustees. Ms. Roulhac received a bachelor's degree and her law degree from University of Florida.



## **Kisha'sha B. Sharp**

### **President, Law Office of K.B. Sharp, P.A.**

Kisha'sha B. Sharp is the founder of the law office of K.B. Sharp, P.A., a full service law firm that provides solutions to its clients' legal challenges. K.B. Sharp, P.A. provides estate planning guidance, financial counseling, and helps clients navigate through the purchase and sale of property.

Ms. Sharp is a past president of Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association and a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Dade County Alumnae Chapter. She is a mentor for Teen Court and Women of Tomorrow, and serves as legal counsel for the Miami-Dade Chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. Ms. Sharp also sits on the Board of Trustees for New Birth Baptist Church Cathedral of Faith International.

Ms. Sharp earned both a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Masters in Business Administration from Florida Mechanical and Agricultural University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law.



## **Rep. Cynthia Stafford**

### **Florida State Representative, District 109**

Representative Cynthia A. Stafford represents Florida's 109th Legislative District. Elected to the Florida House in 2010 and subsequently re-elected to a fourth term in 2016, Rep. Stafford is currently the House Minority Policy Chair and serves on the Appropriations, Judiciary, Rules & Policy, and Civil Justice & Claims Committees and Subcommittee.

In the 2017, Rep. Stafford sponsored and the Governor signed into law, the Witness Protection Bill, which creates a public records exemption for criminal intelligence or criminal investigative information that reveals the personal identifying information of a witness to a murder for two years after the date on which the murder was observed. Rep. Stafford has also sponsored legislation to repeal the controversial Stand Your Ground law, as well as legislation to increase the minimum wage.

Rep. Stafford is a native Miamian, born and raised in Liberty City, who has served the community for more than 25 years. Rep. Stafford earned a BA in Communication Arts from St. Thomas University and a Juris Doctor from St. Thomas University School of Law.



## **Dr. Delvena Thomas**

Delvena Thomas is a mother, an American soldier, a scientist, and a physician who advocates for healthy living to strengthen individuals, families, communities, and workplaces worldwide.

Trained in medicine and psychiatry at the University of Maryland Medical Systems in Baltimore, she is board-certified in psychiatry and neurology, and maintains a private practice in psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, and forensic psychiatry. Dr. Thomas is a consulting psychiatrist for the National Football League and maintains hospital privileges at Aventura, Palmetto General, and Broward Health North Hospitals.

Dr. Thomas is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves and a veteran of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom who has completed three tours of duty — to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait — to provide mental health care for soldiers needing stress reduction and therapy, family connectedness and spiritual well-being. In 2018, Dr. Thomas founded The DRT Brain Love Foundation, with a mission of providing a culturally sensitive and holistic approach to mental and behavioral health for disadvantaged individuals by encompassing awareness, education, prevention, and treatment modalities to improve the quality of life.



## **Khadija Williams-Frazier**

**CEO/Founder, Khadija's Wholistic Fitness, LLC and Sisters of Sankofa Inc.**

Khadija Williams-Frazier is a Certified Personal Trainer, Holistic Health Coach, and Fitness Nutrition Specialist. She believes in nurturing the whole person through mind, body, and spirituality. Her holistic approach to fitness transforms the lives of her clients in a positive way. She is the CEO and founder of Khadija's Wholistic Fitness, LLC and Sisters of Sankofa, Inc., where she transforms lives through fitness, nutrition, and introspection.



# Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry

Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry was born in Miami, Florida in 1923. She was a woman of many firsts. She was the first Black woman law student to attend the University of Miami. She was the first Black woman to practice law in Dade County, Florida. She was one of the first nine attorneys who initially served at Legal Services of Greater Miami in 1966. In 1970, she was elected as a state representative, becoming the first Black woman to serve as a legislator for the State of Florida. While in the State House of Representative, she introduced the Equal Rights Amendment, the Martin Luther King, Jr. state holiday and other legislation. She was elected to four terms and served until 1979.

During her lifetime, her other accomplishments included, but were not limited to, chairing both the Minority Affairs Committee for Democratic National Convention and the National Women's Political Caucus in 1972, serving as legal counsel for the Miami Chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) and co-authoring Portraits of Color with Pauline Willis and Ruby Thomas.

Ms. Cherry was also an active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and served on numerous boards and organizations. She worked with many to remove the barriers to equal opportunities for women and persons of color.

In February 1979, she died in a car accident in Tallahassee, Florida. Former state governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham delivered her eulogy and called her "a champion for the rights of all people and a voice of reason and concern." As a result of her lifetime achievements, she was honored posthumously in the State of Florida's Women's Hall of Fame in 1986. On June 5, 2008, the FAMU College of Law, in Orlando, Florida, announced the dedication of the Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry, Esquire Lecture Hall, which will be used for classrooms and practices for mock trial competitions.



# SPONSORS

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## **FOUNDING MEMBERS**

Dianne Saulney Gaines  
Carolyn Y. Howard  
Greer E. Davis  
Latricia C. Donley  
Vera E. Gilford  
Melvia Bailey Green  
Marilyn J. Holifield  
Cynthia Johnson-Stacks  
Knovack Gramby Jones  
Leah A. Simms  
Jan A. Templeman  
Valeria Bland Thomas

## **PAST PRESIDENTS**

|           |                           |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1985-1987 | Dianne Saulney Smith      |
| 1987-1989 | Cynthia Johnson           |
| 1989-1991 | Cynthia A. Everett        |
| 1991-1992 | Carolyn Y. Howard         |
| 1992-1994 | Lisa B. Hogan             |
| 1994-1996 | Latricia C. Donley        |
| 1996-1997 | Candace Duff              |
| 1997-1999 | Knovack Gramby Jones      |
| 1999-2001 | Darlene Y. Bell-Alexander |
| 2001-2003 | Shirlyon McWhorter        |
| 2003-2004 | Marvelle McIntrye-Hall    |
| 2004-2005 | Detra Shaw-Wilder         |
| 2005-2006 | S. Nicky Mitchell-Pope    |
| 2006-2007 | Erica N. Wright           |
| 2007-2008 | Kisha'sha B. Sharp        |
| 2008-2009 | Marva L. Wiley            |
| 2009-2010 | Flora Jackson-Holmes      |
| 2010-2011 | Cheryl D. Linton Robinson |
| 2011-2012 | Kymberlee Curry Smith     |
| 2012-2013 | Olanike Adebayo           |
| 2013-2014 | Nexcy De La Rosa-Monroe   |
| 2014-2015 | Cynthia Henry Duval       |
| 2015-2017 | Loreal A. Arscott         |
| 2017-2018 | Nikki Lewis Simon         |

## 2018-2019 OFFICERS

Melba V. Pearson  
**President**

Danelle Bernten  
**Treasurer**

Brendalyn V.A. Edwards  
**President-Elect**

Loreal A. Arscott  
**Historian**

Sheena Benjamin-Wise  
**Vice President**

Nikki Lewis Simon  
**Immediate Past President**

Michelle A. Prescott  
**Secretary**

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Sophia N.S. Blair  
Hilary Creary  
Cynthia Henry Duval  
Camielle Green  
Janeen N. Lofton  
Julie Harris Nelson  
Kadisha D. Phelps  
Nakia Ruffin  
Sherria D. Williams

## 2018 SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Loreal Arscott  
Sheena Benjamin-Wise  
Nexcy De La Rosa-Monroe  
Brendalyn Edwards  
Camielle Green  
Melba Pearson  
Kadisha Phelps  
Nikki Lewis Simon



# 2018 FLORIDA WOMEN LAWYERS OF COLOR SUMMIT

## THANK YOU!

Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association  
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W W W . G S C B W L A . O R G