

Elaine O'Neal Bushfan

Class of 1980



Judge Elaine Mercia O'Neal Bushfan, daughter of Reuben and Nekoda O'Neal, was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina where she attended public schools graduating with honors from Hillside High School in 1980. From there Judge Bushfan attended North Carolina Central University receiving her Bachelor of Science in mathematics, Cum Laude, in 1984. Judge Bushfan started her professional career as a Staff Specialist at Duke University Medical center in 1984. In 1989 she was called to the Law and entered North Carolina Central University School of Law where she was awarded her Juris Doctorate in 1991.

Judge Bushfan operated a successful solo law practice from 1991 to 1994, but felt she could do more for her community if she could become part of the Bench. So in 1994 she successfully ran and was elected as a District Court Judge for the 14th Judicial District in Durham County, North Carolina in 1994 and has continued to serve in that capacity ever since. In 2002 she was appointed Chief District Court Judge for the 14th District in Durham County, North Carolina.

Judge Bushfan community involvement is extensive. She is a member of the Board of Directors Systems of Care, the Gang Assessment Oversight Committee. She is Co-Founder of the Restoration Institute for Leaders. She is a former member of the North Carolina Central University School of Law Board of Visitors, a former member of the Durham Nativity School Board of Directors, a former member of Families First Board of Directors, Former Member Durham County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. She was also a former commissioner on the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. A former member of the Women's Recovery House Board of Directors, a former member of the National Alumni Association of Hillside High School Board of Directors, and a former member of the YMCA Board of Directors.

Judge Bushfan was co-founder of Future Attorneys Challenging Elementary Students at NCCU School of law and was a former Co-Chair of the Legal Redress Committee of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People.

Judge Busfan is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and also a member of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. She is also a devout member of First Calvary Baptist Church.

Judge Bushfan has been awarded numerous honors including: the 2009 Durham City Human Relations Committee Justice Award, the 2009 Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. Woman of the Year – Southern Regional Conference, the 2009 Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. Lola M. Parker Woman of the Year Achievement Award, the Women of Color, Women of Excellence award, the NCCU School of Law Alumni Clifton E. Johnson Community Service Award, the Family and Children Services Founder's Award, the George H. White Bar Trail Blazer Award, the UDI/UDC Youth Build Award, the Progressive Sertoma Club Service to Mankind Award, the NAACP President's Award, the Lizzie S. Kee Community Service Award for Outstanding Service, the Liberty Baptist Church Service Award, the 1991 Woman of the Year NCCU School of Law Women's Caucus, and the Clifton Johnson Community Service Award NCCU School of Law.

Judge Bushfan Professional associations include the North Carolina Association of Chief District Court Judges, the North Carolina Association of District Court Judges, the North Carolina Bar Association, the Durham County Bar Association and the George White Bar.

Currently Judge Bushfan is seeking election to the Superior Court as a Superior Court Judge.

Judge Bushfan is married to Joseph M. Bushfan. She has one son, Kevin, 1 foster daughter, 2 grandsons, and 6 stepchildren.

The National Alumni Association of Hillside High School Salutes one of its own – Judge Elaine O'Neal Bushfan.