



Magnolia Bar Association, Inc.

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PRESS RELEASE

May 23, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Magnolia Bar Association supports the nomination of United States District Judge Carlton Reeves to chair the United States Sentencing Commission

On May 11, 2022, President Joseph Biden nominated United States District Judge Carlton Reeves to serve as Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission. If confirmed, Judge Reeves would become the first African-American to chair the seven-member commission.

The United States Sentencing Commission was created by Congress in 1984 as an independent agency of the judiciary. The Sentencing Commission, comprised of six voting members and the Attorney General, studies and implements policies to reduce disparities in federal sentencing. The Commission serves as a resource to Congress, the executive branch, and the general public for information regarding federal criminal justice and sentencing practices. Most notably, the Commission promulgates and adopts amendments to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which are designed to ensure that sentences are proportional to the offenses for which defendants are convicted. Each member of the Commission is appointed to a six-year term.

Judge Reeves is a native of Yazoo City, Mississippi and a graduate of Jackson State University. Earning his law degree from the University of Virginia Law School in 1989, Judge Reeves has dedicated the majority of his career to public service. From 1995 to 2001, Judge Reeves served as Chief of the Civil Division of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi. He is also a member and former president of the Magnolia Bar Association, and he has served on various boards and commissions for impactful public interest groups.

In 2010, President Barack Obama nominated Judge Reeves to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, making Judge Reeves the second black federal judge in Mississippi history following his confirmation. Since taking the bench, Judge Reeves has captivated jurists, legal scholars, and the public at large with his piercing, yet poignant and pragmatic, legal opinions. For example, Judge Reeves made national headlines for delivering a moving speech during the sentencing of three white men found guilty of a brutal, racially motivated murder against James Craig Anderson in 2011. More recently, in 2020, Judge Reeves authored a timely and critical opinion dissecting the doctrine of qualified immunity in the context of police misconduct.

Given his genuine, unwavering commitment to equal justice for all, Judge Reeves will certainly be an invaluable asset to the Sentencing Commission. The Magnolia Bar Association wholeheartedly supports his nomination.

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The Magnolia Bar Association

About the Magnolia Bar Association

The Magnolia Bar Association was organized in the fall of 1955 in the law office of the late Attorney Jack H. Young, Sr. in the Redmond Building at 115- ½ North Farish St., Jackson, MS. The founders of the Magnolia Bar Association were Attorneys James A. Burnes, Meridian, MS; Mayor Benjamin T. Green, Mound Bayou, MS; Emette Perkins, Natchez, MS; Onette Johnson, Prentiss, MS; Jack H. Young, Sr., Jackson, MS; Carsie A. Hall, Jackson, MS; and R. Jess Brown, Vicksburg, MS. These eight lawyers constituted practically the entire Black bar of Mississippi. The founders yet surviving are Attorneys Carsie A. Hall, Onette Johnson and R. Jess Brown. Members of the Magnolia Bar Association, having been organized shortly after the Brown vs. Board of Education decision outlawing segregation in public schools, were confronted with various issues involving the law as it pertained to conflicts between the races arising out of the demand of Blacks for first class citizenship in Mississippi.