

Justice Robert Benham, a life-long resident of Georgia, was born September 25, 1946, to Jesse Knox Benham and Clarence Benham in Cartersville, Georgia. He graduated from Summer Hill High School in Cartersville in 1963, and Tuskegee University (B. S. Political Science) in 1967; attended Harvard University; and graduated from the University of Georgia, Lumpkin School of Law (J. D. Degree) in 1970; University of Virginia (LL. M. Degree) in 1989.

After completing law school, Justice Benham served in the U. S. Army Reserve, attaining the rank of Captain. He then served briefly as a trial attorney for Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc., later returning to Cartersville, where he engaged in the private practice of law, served as Special Assistant Attorney General, and served two terms as President of the Bartow County Bar Association.

On April 3, 1984, Justice Benham was appointed to the Court of Appeals by Governor Joe Frank Harris. He won the statewide election and served on the Court of Appeals for five years. In December 1989, Justice Benham was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia by Governor Joe Frank Harris. He won the statewide election to a full term on the Supreme Court on July 17, 1990.

He is married to the former Nell Dodson of Cartersville and they have two sons, Corey Brevard Benham and Austin Tyler Benham. Nell is a graduate of Albany State College, and she is employed by the Department of Labor in Cartersville, Georgia. An avid woodworker, Justice Benham spends his leisure time with his sons, making wooden toys and music boxes.

Justice Benham holds membership in numerous professional organizations, including eight national, state, and local bar associations, the American Judicature Society, the Lawyers' Club of Atlanta, the National Criminal Justice Association, the Georgia Bar Foundation, the Georgia Legal History Foundation (Trustee), and Scribes - The American Society of Writers on Legal Subjects. He is a former vice president of the Georgia Conference of Black Lawyers, a former board member of the Federal Lawyers Association and of the Georgia Association of Trial Lawyers. He is the former chairman of the Governor's Commission on Drug Awareness & Prevention, a member of the State Bar Task Force on the Involvement of Women & Minorities in the Profession, the Georgia Commission on Children & Youth, the National Association of Court Management, and a member of the National Conference of Chief Justices, a member of the Federal-State Jurisdiction Committee, Pres. of the Society for Alternative Dispute Resolution, Chairman of the Judicial Council, Chairman of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. and a member of the Governors Southern Business Institute.

BENHAM

THE DAVENPORT-BENHAM CHAPTER OF THE BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SCHOOL OF LAW

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ROBERT BENHAM

Robert Benham is the second African-American graduate of the University of Georgia School of Law and the first African-American to serve on Georgia's Supreme Court. Justice Benham is a life-long resident of Georgia, and was born to Jesse Knox Benham and Clarence Benham in Cartersville, Georgia. He graduated from Summer Hill High School in Cartersville in 1963, and Tuskegee University with a B.S. in Political Science in 1967, attended Harvard University, graduated from the

University of Georgia, Lumpkin School of Law with a J.D. in 1970, and received his L.L.M. from the University of Virginia in 1989.

After completing law school, Justice Benham served in the U.S. Army Reserve, attaining the rank of Captain. He then served briefly as a trial attorney for Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc., later returning to Cartersville, where he engaged in the private practice of law, served as Special Assistant Attorney General, and served two terms as President of the Bartow County Bar Association. Justice Benham became the first African American to establish a law practice in Bartow County.

In 1984, Justice Benham was appointed by Governor Joe Frank Harris to the Court of Appeals, where he served for five years following his statewide election to the court, distinguishing himself as the first African American to win statewide election in Georgia since reconstruction. In 1989, Justice Benham was further distinguished as the first African American to serve on the Georgia Supreme Court, following his appointment by Governor Harris. He won the statewide election to a full term on the Supreme Court in 1990, where he continues in his capacity as Chief Justice.

Justice Benham holds membership in numerous professional organizations, including eight national, state, and local bar associations, the American Judicature Society, the Lawyers' Club of Atlanta, the National Criminal Justice Association, the Georgia Bar Foundation, the Georgia Legal History Foundation (Trustee), and Scribes - The American Society of Writers on Legal Subjects. He is a former vice president of the Georgia Conference of Black Lawyers, a former board member of the Federal Lawyers Association and of the Georgia Association of Trial Lawyers. He is the former chairman of the Governor's Commission on Drug Awareness & Prevention, a member of the State Bar Task Force on the Involvement of Women & Minorities in the Profession, the Georgia Commission on Children & Youth, the National Association of Court Management, and a member of the National Conference of Chief Justices, a member of the Federal-State Jurisdiction Committee, President of the Society for Alternative Dispute Resolution, Chairman of the Judicial Council, Chairman of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, and a member of the Governor's Southern Business Institute.

The Davenport-Benham Chapter of the Black Law Students Association at the University of Georgia School of Law
Athens, GA 30602



Last updated 06/21/2004



**SIXTH ANNUAL JUSTICE ROBERT BENHAM AWARDS
FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE**

"The outstanding contributions of lawyers to their local communities often go unrecognized by their peers and the public. This award is designed to recognize those lawyers, who in addition to practicing law, also deserve recognition for their valuable contributions to their communities."

**Robert Benham, Justice
Supreme Court of Georgia**

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Community Service Awards Selection Committee and the State Bar of Georgia invite nominations for the Sixth Annual Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service.

NOMINATING GUIDELINES

To be eligible a nominee must: 1) be a member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia; 2) have carried out outstanding work in community service; 3) not be a member of the Selection Committee; and 4) not be engaged in a contested judicial or political contest in calendar year 2004.

Nomination should include:

- I. Nominator:** Name (contact person for law firm, corporate counsel or other legal organization), address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- II. Nominee:** Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address. Nominee's resume or description of nominee's background and relevant activities should be included.
- III. Nomination Narrative:** Explain how the nominee meets the following criteria:

These awards recognize judges and lawyers who have combined a professional career with outstanding service and dedication to their communities through voluntary participation in community organizations, government sponsored activities or humanitarian work outside of their professional practice. These judges' and lawyers' contributions may be made in any field, including but not limited to: social service, education, faith-based efforts, sports, recreation, the arts, or politics. Continuous activity over a period is an asset.

Specify the nature of the contribution and identify those who have benefitted.

- IV. Letters of Support:** Include two (2) letters of support from individuals and organizations in the community that are aware of the nominee's work.

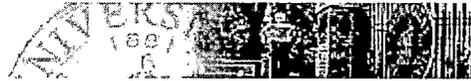
Awards will be presented at a special ceremony in Atlanta in January.

SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS

Send Nomination materials to:

Mary McAfee, Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, Suite 620, 104 Marietta Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, (404) 225-5040

Nominations must be postmarked by November 1, 2004.

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Justice Robert Benham

Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham is the first Black to establish a law practice in Bartow County Georgia and the first Black to win a statewide election in Georgia since reconstruction when voters chose him for the Georgia Court of Appeals.

In December 1989, Governor Joe Frank Harris appointed Benham to the Supreme Court of Georgia in 1989, when he yet again became the first - the first African American to serve on the state's highest court. Since his statewide election to the court in 1990, Benham has served as one of the seven justices.

The 1967 Tuskegee University political science graduate went on to attend Harvard University and graduated from the University of Georgia, Lumpkin School of Law and the University of Virginia.



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ETOWAH VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Justice Robert Benham

Lawyer, Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice



Born: 9-25-1946, Cartersville, GA

Married: Nell Dodson

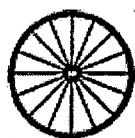
Parents: Jesse Knox and Clarence Benham

After entering the bar in 1970, Benham became the first African American to establish a law practice in Bartow County. In 1984 Benham was appointed by Governor Joe Frank Harris to the Georgia Court of Appeals, where he served for five years following his statewide election to the court, distinguishing himself as the first African American to win statewide election in Georgia since reconstruction. In 1989, Benham was further distinguished as the first African American to serve on the Georgia Supreme Court, following his appointment by Governor Harris. Benham won election to the Court in 1990, where he continues in his capacity as Chief Justice.

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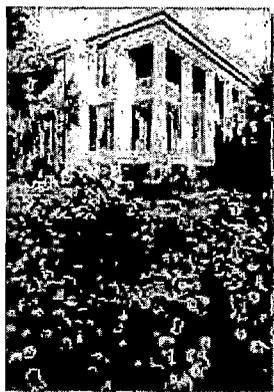
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Westville Benefit to Honor Robert Benham Georgia Supreme Court Justice

Westville will pay tribute to **Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham** at a black-tie event to be held in Columbus on February 20, 2004. The event will be held at the Country Club of Columbus. Tickets are \$125 per person. All proceeds will benefit Westville Village, "Georgia's Working 1850s Town" located in Lumpkin, Georgia.



Justice Robert Benham is the immediate past Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. He began his judicial career on the Georgia Court of Appeals, where he served for six years. He was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court in 1989, becoming the Presiding Justice in 1994. In 1995, he became the Chief Justice, which position he held until 2001.

Justice Benham was educated at Tuskegee University, University of Georgia, and the University of Virginia. He engaged in the active practice of law for fifteen years before he entering the judiciary.

Justice Benham is a former member of the American Trial Lawyers Association, Georgia Trial Lawyers Association and Georgia Conference of Black Lawyers. He served on the Board of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices; served as Chief Justice Rhenquist's appointee to the Federal-State Jurisdiction Committee of the United States; and serves on the Board of Directors of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association.

Justice Benham became a member of the Westville Board of Trustees following a working session of the Georgia Supreme Court held at Westville's Chattahoochee County Courthouse. A strong and active advocate of Westville, he is the lead speaker in the museum's History Alive Drive Campaign video. In addition, Justice Benham has provided his personal

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endorsement for the village, which appears on the cover of Westville's new membership brochure. Justice Benham claims, "When you have living history, as we have at Westville, the children understand the roles that people play in the community...Those are lessons in life that cannot be taught in a classroom."

Showing how seriously he takes the lessons of Westville's mission, Justice Benham requires new law clerks to visit the Village as an orientation to the State Supreme Court. He does this because the law is based on tradition. Justice Benham's staunch support of historic preservation efforts at Westville is one expression of his life-long passion for history and education.

Justice Benham also serves on the Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society, the Board of Directors of The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, the Noble-Hill Wheeler Historical Society, and the Georgia Legal History Foundation.

The Special Events Committee, co- chaired by Pamela Moye and Nancy Burgin, are hard at work preparing for the event. Plans for the evening include a seated dinner, a stellar entertainment performance, as well as a silent auction.

Justice Benham agreed to participate in this program as a means of helping Westville to raise money for operations. Therefore, most of the price of the ticket will be tax deductible for the guests.

We hope that you will save the date of February 20, 2004 to help us honor Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham. To order tickets, please call 1-888-SEE-1850.

If you are interested in donating items for the silent auction please contact Andy Moye at (706) 653-9203.

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