

Michigan Black Lawyers’ “Firsts”

COVER PHOTO KEY

1. Unidentified Photo

There were two black graduates from the University of Michigan in 1870 (the class had only one unnamed photo of a black man). Gabriel Franklin Hargo graduated from the Law Department and was Michigan’s first law graduate; second in the U.S., Hargo was admitted by degree to the State Bar of Michigan in 1870.

2. Thomas R. Crisup

Early law graduate (with Albert Burgess), University of Michigan, 1877; in private practice, 1877–1895.

3. David Augustus Straker

Appellate attorney in *Ferguson v Gies* (1890), a renowned civil rights case; Wayne County Circuit Court commissioner (judicial), 1892; legal scholar/writer of six books and numerous articles.

4. William W. Ferguson

Elected to the Michigan House of Representatives, 1892 and 1894; University of Michigan Law School, 1897; plaintiff in *Ferguson v Gies* (1890).

5. Francis M. Dent

President of the Wolverine Bar Association, 1937–1939; co-counsel (with Willis Graves), *Sipes v McGhee*, companion to landmark case *Shelley v Kraemer*, 334 US 631 (1948).

6. Judge Charles W. Jones

Appointed to the Detroit Recorder’s Court, July 29, 1950; Michigan’s first black judge.

7. Judge Wade H. McCree Jr.

Appointed to the Wayne County Circuit Court, 1954; elected 1955, reelected 1959; Federal District Court (ED Mich), 1961; U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit, 1966; solicitor general of the U.S., 1977.

8. Judge Victoria A. Roberts

President, State Bar of Michigan, 1996–1997 (first black female).

9. Judge Elvin L. Davenport

Appointed to the Detroit Common Pleas Court, 1956; elected 1957.

10. Professor Charles W. Quick

First black law professor in Michigan, Wayne State University, 1958.

11. Justice Otis M. Smith

Appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court, 1961; first black justice on a state supreme court since reconstruction; elected 1962; general counsel and vice president, General Motors, 1977.

12. Judge Geraldine Bledsoe Ford

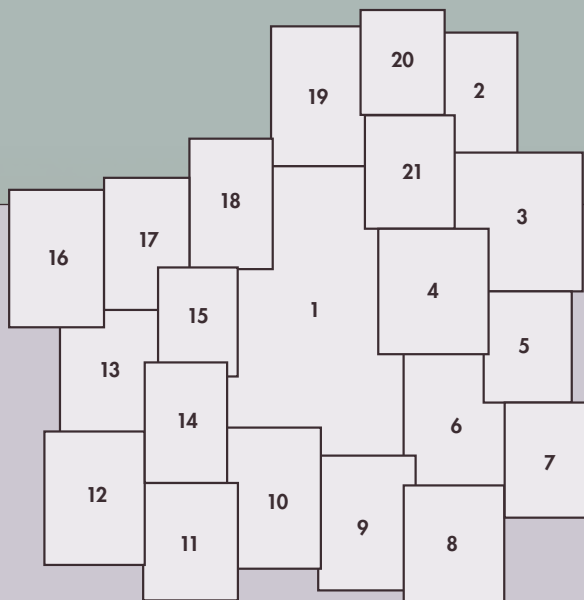
Elected to the Detroit Recorder’s Court, 1966; first black female elected judge in the U.S.; first black female lawyer, U.S. Department of Justice, and Detroit assistant corporate counsel, 1964; assistant U.S. attorney (ED Mich), 1962.

13. Hobart Taylor Jr.

Special counsel, President John F. Kennedy’s EEO Committee, 1961; associate counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964–1965; board member, U.S. Export-Import Bank, 1965–1968; partner, Dawson, Riddell, Taylor & Davis, 1968 (Washington, D.C.); first black editor, *Michigan Law Review*.

14. Barbara F. Keene

Law graduate, Detroit College of Law, 1922 (first black female).



15. Judge Lucille A. Watts

Elected judge of the Wayne County Circuit Court, 1980 (first black female).

16. Judge Myron H. Wahls

Appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals, 1982; elected to unexpired term, 1982.

17. Justice Dennis W. Archer

President, State Bar of Michigan, 1984–1985; president, American Bar Association, 2003–2004; chairman, Dickinson Wright, PLLC, 2002–2009.

18. Professor Edward J. Littlejohn

Professor, Detroit College of Law, 1970; law school associate dean, 1976 (Wayne State University); earned doctorate of law (SJD), 1982, Columbia University; director/founder, Damon J. Keith Law Collection, Wayne State University, 1993.

19. Judge Anna Diggs Taylor

Appointed to the U.S. District Court (ED Mich), 1979 (first black female); chief judge, 1997.

20. Justice Conrad L. Mallett Jr.

Chief justice, Michigan Supreme Court, 1997.

21. Judge/Congressman George W. Crockett Jr.

Partner at Goodman, Crockett, Eden & Robb, the first racially integrated law firm in the U.S., 1950.

Not pictured:

John C. McLeod—First black lawyer to practice in Michigan before 1870.

John T. Letts—First black judge elected in Kent County, Grand Rapids Municipal Court, 1959; elected to the Kent County Circuit Court, 1967.

Ollie B. Bivens Jr.—Appointed to the Genesee County Municipal Court, 1968; Genesee County Circuit Court, 1972.

Charles A. Pratt—Elected to the Kalamazoo District Court, 1968.

Credit: Professor Emeritus Edward J. Littlejohn