

# H. Wallace Parker

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has a considerable amount of funds in its budget for legal services. H. Wallace Parker is a life member of the NAACP and has been the general counsel of the Oakland County branch for over 30 years. The amount he has charged to the legal services line item of the budget is zero. Thirty years, zero. He has never accepted any fees from the organization; in fact, he contributes filing fees, service fees, and deposition fees for many NAACP cases. He performs many other services for the organization, working with other community groups, school districts, police agencies, and governmental units and agencies. Over 30 years is a long time to provide pro bono work to an active organization, but Mr. Parker states that to do otherwise would simply be immoral. His pro bono work for children and seniors, some of the most fragile persons in society, is also motivated by his moral values.

It is no wonder that Parker has received many awards from various groups for his extensive community service. The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists—Pontiac Charter awarded him its Community Service Award in 1992. Parker was instrumental in resolving problems the unions had obtaining work from the city of Pontiac, Oakland County, and the state of Michigan. For his exceptional work, the coalition also made him an honorary board member. Parker's law school fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, presented its Appreciation Award to Parker in 1994 for his volunteer work to the local branch over several years. For his many community service activities, he has received the Oakland Alternative Rehabilitation Community Service Award, the Delta Sigma Theta Minority Business Owner of the Year Award, and the National Association of Business and Professional Women Frederick Douglas Award.

Three particularly meaningful awards resulted from Parker's work toward creating a



*H. Wallace Parker in his office library*

society more accepting of diversity. In 1990, he received the NAACP Theophilus Jefferson Northcross Award, the highest award approved by the national office and given by the Oakland NAACP, named after a Michigan resident. The Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations—Detroit Chapter presented Parker with its Lifetime Achievement Award for his work with the FBI on hate crimes and in providing early alerts to persons who may be in harm's way from racial threats. The Waterford School District in 2004 gave him its Diversity Award for helping to train school administrators to deal with racially motivated student riots in which white students wore swastikas and

other hate paraphernalia. When the school district's principals told black students not to worry, and did nothing to quell the actions of the white students, Parker was called in to set up a diversity program. He did so in spite of resistance by some principals, two of whom walked out on his presentation.

H. Wallace Parker chuckles when he answers questions about an NAACP award named after him, given first to him and now annually to a person who accomplishes something significant in the law related to the advancement of minorities. He teases about not being asked to present the award each year, saying that "usually an award is named for an honoree posthumously, and if I am the presenter, it may disappoint recipients!"

Parker has been involved in many community and legal activities, from the American Judicature Society, the American Trial Lawyers Association where he chaired the Criminal Law Division, Oakland Circuit Court Mediator, the Oakland County Corrections Advisory Board, Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, and the American and National Bar Associations to the Oakland Alternative Rehabilitation Center, the Oakland County Criminal Advisory Board, North Oakland County Girl Scouts, Inc. (former board member), Pontiac Area Urban League (now defunct), St. John United Methodist Church (Board of Trustees for seven years), and the State of Michigan Economic Development Commission. He has served on the Corrections Advisory Board for Oakland

***"H. Wallace Parker is an experienced and accomplished attorney known for mentoring many young lawyers throughout their legal careers. You would have to look long and hard to find a lawyer who has donated more pro bono time within the greater Pontiac community."***

**— Oakland Circuit Court Judge Denise Langford Morris**

County, seeking alternatives to incarceration. The list is not exhaustive.

Mr. Parker has had an active legal practice for 32 years, acquiring 28 years of municipal and corporate experience. He has had extensive courtroom and litigation experience, both for private and municipal clients, and has practiced in all state and federal courts, including the appellate levels of those courts. In addition, the judges of the 50th District Court have retained him to represent the court with respect to various matters. He serves as general counsel and director of the Oakland Alternatives Rehabilitation Center Program in Pontiac. During his career, he had been general counsel for 28 years for the Charter Township of Royal Oak, and continues to handle its prosecutions.

Early in his career, Parker was employed as Pontiac deputy city attorney—the first minority deputy city attorney in Pontiac—where he worked on the Silverdome project and many others. He rose to the level of prosecutor and corporate counsel for the city. Parker presently is the president of Bloomfield Law Center, P.C., which specializes in criminal and corporate law. He balances his legal work and community service with devotion to his spouse, Patricia Parker, a retired registered nurse, and his daughter, Meriel Parker, managing director of compliance for Concentra Medical Corporation.

Parker is well-respected by his colleagues and the judiciary. Donald McGinnis, immediate past president of the Oakland County Bar Association, finds Mr. Parker to be one of the few lawyers that he would classify as a “handshake lawyer”—his word is his bond. Oakland Circuit Court Judge Denise Langford Morris states, “H. Wallace Parker is an experienced and accomplished attorney known for mentoring many young lawyers throughout their legal careers. You would have to look long and hard to find a lawyer who has donated more pro bono time within the greater Pontiac community. He has also reached out to the surrounding communities time and time again in an effort to promote peace, goodwill, and harmony, no matter what may have transpired.”

Hon. Fred M. Mester sings the praises of Mr. Parker loudly. “Wally Parker is the one individual who stands out as sensitive to

those he represents, and as important, to issues in the community. He not only discusses those issues, but is creative and committed toward resolving them. With his longstanding work with the NAACP, he has been at the forefront of the leadership that fulfills the historical mission of the organization to ensure a color-blind society, by addressing and resolving diversity issues, so that each member in our society can enjoy the fruits of our land of opportunity.”

Looking at Parker’s background, one sees that after he served in the United States Marine Corps, he was educated at several undergraduate and postgraduate institutions. His post-high school education began at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina, where he received a bachelor of science degree, with a concentration in history and minor in art. He was active in student government, Sunday School, and the School of Arts. He graduated from North Carolina Central University Law School with Dean’s List status. After passing the bar, he has

studied at UCLA, University of Wisconsin, University of North Carolina, and Wake Forest University.

A Korean teacher in Richard Wiley’s novel *Festival for Three Thousand Maidens*, states: “A strong man does not rely on outward evidences of success in order to form his opinion of himself, but on what he knows to be the true elements of his makeup.” H. Wallace Parker could rely on the many outward evidences of his success, but like Wiley’s character in *Festival*, Mr. Parker has a firm moral grounding reflected in his many services to the community and the profession, and upon that he is as successful as any man could be. ♦

*Francine Cullari practices real estate, estate planning, and business law in Grand Blanc. She serves on the State Bar of Michigan Board of Commissioners and is vice chairperson of the Publications and Website Advisory Committee, where she is responsible for the Michigan Bar Journal. She is the editor of Bar Beat, a local magazine for the legal profession.*