

Theme Introduction

Blacks in the Law II

By Hon. Terrance A. Keith

The June 1985 Blacks in the Law edition of the *Michigan Bar Journal* brought attention to some of the many contributions of black lawyers in the pursuit of equal opportunity and equal justice under law. At the time, I had just been admitted to the bar and was so taken with the articles that I looked forward to being among the impressive array of lawyers using the law as an arsenal to break down racial barriers.

As the president of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan, I asked the *Bar Journal* staff if the results achieved from 30 years of pursuing equal opportunity and justice could be examined.

This sequel edition provides a historical perspective to the current discussion of the effect of the prior characterization of a race on the creation, implementation, and enforcement of the law toward blacks and other people of color. The articles suggest that, despite extraordinary efforts of many talented and inspired lawyers, deep-seated characterizations of a race—once so insidiously engrained—cannot be overcome even if one becomes president of the United States; that race, in all its colors, remains the bellwether issue concerning who and what we are as a nation and will forever be America's greatest dilemma.

This theme issue should also remind the legal profession to fix the moral compass for the nation on the arch of justice, forever seeking equal opportunity and justice under law. It should also remind us, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., that, “even though we [continue to] face the difficulties of [race] today and tomorrow, [we] still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. [We] have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.’”¹ ■



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ENDNOTE

1. Martin Luther King Jr., address at the Lincoln Memorial: I Have a Dream (August 28, 1963).