Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr. to receive the 2020 Richard W. Pogue Award

Cleveland Legal Pioneer Receives Award for Excellence In Community Leadership and Engagement

CLEVELAND - December 9, 2019 - Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr. has built a long and distinguished career of opening doors and helping others to follow. The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation (CMBF) is honored to announce Judge Oliver as the recipient of our 2020 Richard W. Pogue Award for Excellence in Community Leadership and Engagement.

Judge Oliver was appointed to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio in 1994. In 2010, he became Chief Judge, a position he held for seven years. Judge Oliver continues to serve on the Court, where he has built a reputation for excellence, hard work and trailblazing.

Together with his five brothers and four sisters, Judge Oliver was raised in Bessemer, Alabama. As a student in the segregated public schools, Judge Oliver did not envision a future as a federal judge. “I grew up in the 50s and 60s, and society was segregated from top to bottom. During that time, there was no job I could have if there was a white person who wanted that job,” he recalls.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, Judge Oliver was determined to change his own life through education and the law. He earned a B.A. from the College of Wooster, an M.A. in political science from Case Western Reserve University, and finally a J.D. from New York University School of Law. After completing his formal education, he clerked for Judge William H. Hastie of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, and then returned to Cleveland where, prior to his appointment to the bench, he held a variety of positions including Assistant United States Attorney, as well as Professor of Law and Associate Dean of Faculty and Administration for Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

“Judge Oliver is widely respected by so many professionals in our community, for both his impeccable reputation on the bench, and also his service as a world-class mentor,” said Patrick J. Krebs, 2019-2020 CMBF President. “His work for our organization and this community has been truly outstanding.”

Judge Oliver’s many contributions include working with a variety of Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association programs funded by the CMBF, including several pipeline programs designed to connect students to mentors, resources and practical experiences that will help them succeed in achieving their education and career goals. Whether serving as a mentor to college students accepted to the CMBA’s Louis Stokes Scholars
Program or high school students enrolled in The 3Rs Program: Right Responsibilities Realities, and the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Summer Legal Academy, Judge Oliver freely shares his insights and inspires students to work hard in achieving their educational and professional goals.

Judge Oliver will receive the 2020 Richard W. Pogue Award on Saturday, February 8, 2020 at CMBF’s 15th annual Rock The Foundation gala. CMBF CEO Rebecca Ruppert McMahon noted, “The Pogue Award recognizes excellence in community leadership and engagement. Judge Oliver is a shining example of excellence within both our Bar and our region.”

For more information about CMBF’s Rock15 gala, visit clemetrobar.org.

The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation changes lives in the greater Cleveland community by funding award-winning pro bono legal services and educational programs. In close partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA), both organizations leverage the legal talent of attorneys as well as the broader professional community in support of others in need. Together they deliver significant measurable and transformative outcomes to diverse groups, all of whom make Cleveland stronger. One Cleveland. One Mission. One Bar.

###