

In The Spotlight with: Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown

By Kate Feeks

In July watch for the next episode of *Law Talk*, hosted by John Celebrezze. This episode features Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown. This show can be viewed on Wadsworth Cable (WCTV) Public Access, Channel 15, Brunswick Area Television (BAT) Public Access, Channel 21, and Armstrong Cable Access, Channel 37.

Justice Yvette McGee Brown, a native of Columbus, Ohio, is the first African-American woman to serve as a justice on the Supreme Court of Ohio. She was first elected to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas in 1992. She was inspired to become a judge in 1992 for many reasons. “When I was working for the Ohio Department of Youth Services I was their chief legal counsel. I didn't like representing the state against kids because it just didn't feel right to be on that side of the law where kids were concerned. I thought many of those children didn't need to be locked up had there had been appropriate intervention, so at the age of 32, I decided to run for judge.” Brown explained.

She served as a common pleas court judge until 2002. At that point she created the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The Center is a multi-disciplinary child abuse and family violence program that coordinates prevention, assessment, treatment, research and advocacy services for children and families. She served as its founder and president until early 2010, when she became a candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Ohio.

Her past experiences have prepared her well to handle her current position. “We deal with everything on the Ohio Supreme Court. Whether its criminal law, contracts, business matters, everything I have done in my career has really fit nicely with the work that I do now. I've been a trial lawyer, I've been a trial judge, I've ran my own non-profit business,(and) now while on the court I serve on large non-profit boards and public company boards. I have this broad array of experience that gives me insight into a lot of issues ...” said McGee Brown.

“Be open to opportunities” McGee Brown said. Being a lawyer for 27 years her career has turned out far differently than she ever imagined. She has worked very hard and has been open to taking risks. Justice McGee Brown has reached the top rung of the Ohio judicial ladder. Her advice to the next class of bar examinees as they enter the legal profession is to do what you love. “You always have to think about what makes your heart sing, what gets you out of bed in the morning, what makes you excited to go into the office. If you do what you love, then the financial rewards will follow.” Justice McGee Brown advised.

Justice McGee Brown graduated from Ohio University in 1982 with a degree in journalism/public relations. She continued her education at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, earning her Juris Doctorate in 1985.

Justice Brown is married to Tony Brown. They have three children and one grandchild.

To learn more about Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown, watch for her interview with John Celebrezze on *Law Talk* throughout the month of July on your local cable network and You Tube.