



JUSTICE BERNETTE JOSHUA JOHNSON

Bernette Joshua Johnson was elected Associate Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1994. She was the first woman elected to the Civil District Court in New Orleans, where she grew up. Elected to the Civil District Court in 1984, she was reelected without opposition in 1990 and elected Chief Judge by her colleagues in 1994. Justice Johnson attended Spelman College in Atlanta on an academic scholarship, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree. One of the first African-American women to attend the Law School at Louisiana State University, she received her Juris Doctorate degree in 1969.

Prior to her election to the bench, Justice Johnson spent most of her legal career working in the public sector. She has been a legal services attorney, and a Deputy City Attorney for the City of New Orleans. During the 1960s, Justice Johnson worked as a law intern with the U.S. Justice Department, Civil Rights Division, and as a community organizer with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in New York City. During the 1970s, she helped to organize household workers to receive social security benefits and a minimum wage.

Justice Johnson received her Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Spelman College. In 1996, Justice Johnson's portrait was unveiled and she was inducted into the LSU Law Center Hall of Fame. Justice Johnson is the recipient of numerous awards including the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award in 1998. She was the recipient of the first Ernest N. Morial Award given by the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation and the A.P. Tureaud Citizenship Award given by the Louisiana State Conference, NAACP. Justice Johnson now serves on the Board of Directors of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and is also a Member of Trustee Board of the Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church. She is an active member of Omicron Nu Zeta Chapter, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and the New Orleans Chapter of Links, Inc. Both are service organizations.