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Black Law Students Association

5-25-2016

Donning of the Kente

Seton Hall Law Black Law Students Association

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DONNING *of the* KENTE



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*May 25, 2016
6:00 pm
Seton Hall Law School
Newark, New Jersey*

History of the Donning of the Kente

The ceremony celebrates the current accomplishments of graduating black students as well as the history of black student achievements. Kente cloth has its origin with the Ashanti Kingdom, and was adopted by people in Ghana and many other West African counties. It is an Ashanti royal and sacred cloth worn only in times of extreme importance and was the cloth of kings. The first Donning of the Kente ceremony took place at Pennsylvania's West Chester University in 1993. Since the inception of the ceremony, it has become a rite of passage for many students of color, and colleges throughout the country have incorporated it into their Commencement activities. For the past several years, Seton Hall University School of Law has incorporated the Ceremony into their graduation festivities.



Program

Welcome and Introduction to the Ceremony

Kristin Johnson
Professor of Law

Musical Selection

Valisha Desir '17

Introduction of Michellene Davis. Esq.

Marquis Whitney
Immediate Past President, Black Law Students' Association

Keynote Address

Michellene Davis, Esq.
Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer for RWJBarnabas Health

Presentation of Kente Stoles

Introduction of Judge Michael A. Shipp

Chané Jones
President Elect

Keynote Address

Honorable Michael A. Shipp
United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey

Presentation of Gifts

Closing Remark

Kristin Johnson
Professor of Law

Benediction

Rev. Tiffany Williams
Assistant Professor of Legal Practice

Champagne Toast

Dinner Served

Atrium



MICHELLENE DAVIS, ESQ.

Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer

Having joined Barnabas Health in 2009, Michellene Davis made history in 2013 when she became the first woman named Executive Vice President at Barnabas Health. She now serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer for RWJBarnabas Health, the state's largest integrated health system. Ms. Davis strengthens the system's position with local, state and federal elected officials and agencies and helps to direct the policy decisions of the system. She oversees the areas of strategic marketing and messaging, community partnerships, external affairs, governmental affairs, healthy living and community and employee wellness, the institute for internship and the women's leadership alliance.

Ranked as the state's top lobbyist in the healthcare industry and repeatedly named to the NJBIZ's Healthcare Power 50 list and as one of the state's most politically powerful people, Ms. Davis has served The State of New Jersey under three Governors as Chief Policy Counsel, Appointments Counsel and Acting State Treasurer, Chief Executive of the \$2.4 billion New Jersey Lottery and Senior Policy Advisor in the New Jersey Department of Health. She was the first African American to serve as Chief Policy Counsel and Acting State Treasurer and the youngest person to oversee the New Jersey Lottery in state history.

She began her legal career as a trial litigator in Newark, is an honors graduate of Seton Hall University and holds a Juris Doctorate from Seton Hall Law School.

She is President-elect of Executive Women of New Jersey, Chair of Academic Affairs for the Rutgers- Rowan University Board of Governors, and Secretary of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus Foundation.

Ms. Davis has been widely recognized by a variety of industry, political, and civic organizations including being named as one of the Top 25 Black Women in Business. Recently, she also received the "Evangelina Trailblazer Award" from U.S. Senator Robert Menendez and the 2016 Corporate Sector Award from the New Jersey Women Lawyers Association.



Honorable Michael A. Shipp

United States District Judge
District of New Jersey

Judge Michael A. Shipp was nominated to the federal bench to serve as a United States District Court Judge for the District of New Jersey by President Barack Obama in January 2012. He was confirmed by the Senate and appointed in July 2012. Prior to his elevation to the District Court, Judge Shipp served as a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey, Newark, from October 2007 through July 2012.

Prior to his appointment to the federal bench, Judge Shipp served in several different capacities in both government and private practice. He began his legal career with a clerkship for the Hon. James H. Coleman, Jr., Supreme Court of New Jersey. Thereafter, he spent eight years with the law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. At Skadden, Judge Shipp handled complex commercial litigation, labor and employment, products liability, and contract disputes.

In September 2003, Judge Shipp joined the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety as the Assistant Attorney General in-charge-of the State's Consumer Protection Practice Group. As an Assistant Attorney General, he managed and assisted counsel in the litigation of large institutional investor class actions and individual lawsuits, served as the primary point person on Consumer Protection enforcement issues, and reviewed and commented on proposed legislation and policy issues. In February 2007, Judge Shipp was named Counsel to the Attorney General, where he served as a top advisor on a variety of sensitive legal issues relating to ethics, appointments and other matters requiring personal involvement by the Attorney General. He also assisted in managing day-to-day issues and advised and strategized with attorneys, directors, commissioners and other government officials on significant litigation matters.

Judge Shipp is an adjunct professor at Seton Hall University School of Law. He is a graduate of Rutgers University and Seton Hall University School of Law.

Graduates



"And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.' Matthew 17:20

Name: Diane A. Lopez, President (2015-2016)
Hometown/State: New York City, NY
Undergraduate School: Middlebury College
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Political Science
Post Graduate Employment: Law Clerk to the Honorable Magali M. François, J.S.C., Superior Court, Bergen County Vicinage

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved" Psalm 46:5

Name: Antoinette Solomon, President (2013-2014)
Hometown/State: Asbury Park, NJ
Undergraduate School: Saint Peter's University
Undergraduate Degree: Bachelor of Arts in Education/Psychology
Post Graduate Employment: Associate at Day Pitney LLP in Parsippany, NJ



"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29:11

Name: Jamera R. Sirmans, Vice President (2013-2015)
Hometown/State: New Brunswick, NJ
Undergraduate School: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. History
Post Graduate Employment: Law Clerk to The Honorable James P. Wilson in Union County



"She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future." - Proverbs 31:25

Name: Natasha G. Beckford
Hometown/State: Stamford, Connecticut
Undergraduate School: Stony Brook University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. in Political Science & Psychology
Graduate School: Stony Brook University
Graduate Degree: M.A. Public Policy
Post Graduate Employment: Associate Corporate Counsel (In-House) at RMF LLC.

"Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never has and it never will. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing the ground, they want the rain without thunder and lightning, they want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters." - Frederick Douglass

Name: Stephanie A. Brown
Hometown/State: West Orange, New Jersey
Undergraduate School: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Undergraduate Degree: B.S. Planning and Public Policy; B.A. Political Science
Post Graduate Employment: Jersey City Corporation Counsel



"In the warriors code there's no surrender. Though his body says stop, his spirit cries - never! Deep in our soul, a quiet ember. Know it's you against you. It's the paradox that drives us on. It's a battle of wills. In the heat of attack, it's the passion that kills. The victory is yours alone."

Name: Katheryn Pereyra-Caldwell
Hometown/State: Lawrence, Massachusetts
Undergraduate School: Fordham University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Political Science & Philosophy
Post Graduate Employment: Associate at Kaye Scholer, in New York

"Don't Worry Be Yoncè"

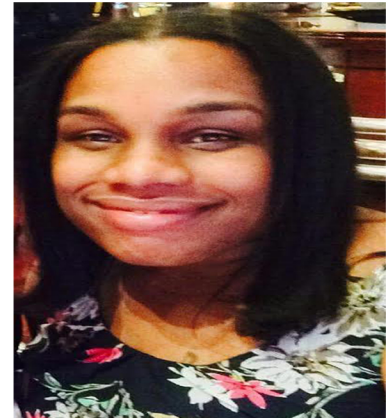
Name: Simisola Durosomo
Hometown/State: Miramar, Florida
Undergraduate School: University of Central Florida
Undergraduate Degree: Political Science, B.A.





".....you cannot value dreams according to the odds of their coming true. The real value is in stirring within us the will to aspire." - Justice Sonia Sotomayor, My Beloved World.

Name: Leidy J. Gutierrez
Hometown/State: Englewood, New Jersey
Undergraduate School: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Criminal Justice, Magna Cum Laude
Post Graduate Employment: Law Clerk to the Honorable Bonnie J. Mizdol, Assignment Judge Superior Court, Bergen County Vicinage



Name: Danielle King
Hometown/State: Queens, New York
Undergraduate School: Michigan State University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. English
Graduate School: City University of New York - Queens College
Graduate Degree: M.A. Urban Affairs

"Carpe Diem"

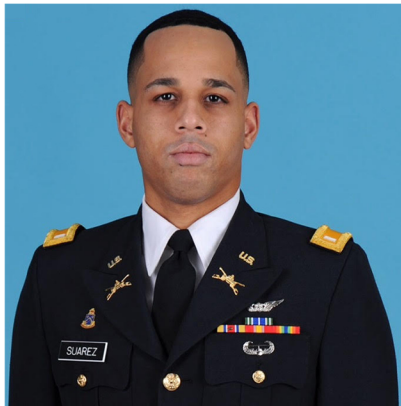


Name: Jessica M. Maxwell
Hometown/State: Englewood, NJ
Undergraduate School: Seton Hall University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. English
Post Graduate Employment: Law Clerk to Judge Bruno Mongiardo-Passaic County Civil Division

"It matters not how strait the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." - Invictus by William Ernest Henley.

Name: Milissa Ralph
Hometown/State: Westchester, New York
Undergraduate School: New York University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Economics
Post Graduate Employment: Law Clerk to the Honorable Candido Rodriquez, Jr. in Union County





“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure”

Name: Sergio Luis Suarez
Hometown/State: Newark, New Jersey
Undergraduate School: Seton Hall University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Political Science
Graduate School: New Jersey City University
Graduate Degree: Master of Science in National Security Studies

Name: Latecia Thomas
Hometown/State: Brooklyn, NY
Undergraduate School: Pennsylvania State University
Undergraduate Degree: Bachelor of Science in Accounting



“For I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” -Jeremiah 29:11

Name: Sabrina Worthy
Hometown/State: Lakewood, New Jersey
Undergraduate School: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. Political Science & Psychology
Post Graduate Employment: Littler Mendelson

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.”

Name: Marcus Whitaker
Hometown/State: New Jersey
Undergraduate School: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Undergraduate Degree: B.A. History
Post Graduate Employment: GroundUp Basketball LLC

2015-2016 Executive Board



Happy Retirement!



**PROFESSOR
BERNARD FREAMON**

**PROFESSOR
WILFREDO
CARABALLO**



CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE *Class of 2016*

SPECIAL THANKS

Dean Kathleen Boozung

Dean Cara Foerst

Professor Kristin Johnson

Rev. Tiffany Williams

Chané Jones, President Elect

Gina Fondetto

