

FBA and Norman S. Minor Bar Association African American History Seminar: A Conversation with Local Legend James R. Willis, Esq.

Friday, March 3, 2023

Carl B. Stokes U.S. Court House
801 West Superior Avenue, Cleveland OH

On March 3, 2023, as part of the FBA's African American History observance, Northeast Ohio attorney James R. Willis will share his experiences and insights from a lifetime of public service spanning both a military and legal career. Mr. Willis will discuss his experiences as a criminal defense litigator including two arguments before the United States Supreme Court. This CLE is being hosted in conjunction with the Norman S. Minor Bar Association.

CLE AGENDA

2:45 Registration

3:00 Welcome
Judge Polster
U.S. District Court, ND Ohio

3:05 Moderated discussion with Attorney James R. Willis
Attorney Jacqueline A. Johnson

Ms. Johnson will lead a moderated discussion with Mr. Willis exploring his lifetime of public service, his experiences as a criminal defense litigator, and his experience litigating six cases which were granted certiorari by the Supreme Court of the United States, two of which he personally argued before the court.

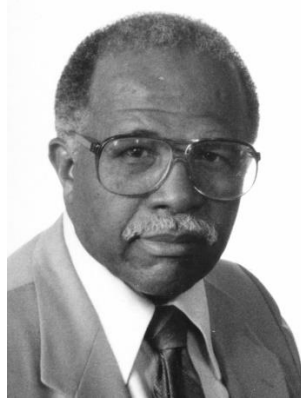
3:50 Audience question and answer session

Following the moderated discussion, audience members will be able to participate in a question-and-answer session with Mr. Willis.

4:05 End of CLE

4:05 Reception

Speaker Biography



Mr. James R. Willis, Esq.

James R. Willis earned his Bachelors of Science from West Virginia State university and his LL.B from Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University). He was admitted to practice in Ohio in 1953 and has spent his career as a criminal defense litigator with particular focus on capital cases and appellate law. Mr. Willis is also admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio and the Eastern District of North Carolina, as well as the United States Court of Appeals Sixth and Eleventh Circuits. He has argued two cases before the Supreme Court of the United States and has litigated six cases that have been granted certiorari by the Court. Mr. Willis is a civil rights activist and has served as the first African American President of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (1974-1975) and as an advisor to the NAACP's local and national chapters. Mr. Willis is a Senior Partner at Willis & Watson Law in Cleveland, Ohio. In addition to his public service as a criminal defense attorney, Mr. Willis is also an United States Marine Corps veteran having served in the first all-Black regiment formed at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina.