

James T. Giles | Of Counsel
Business Litigation

One Logan Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103
+1.215.569.5545
james.giles@blankrome.com



James T. Giles, former chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (EDPA), having served on the bench for almost 29 years. Judge Giles focuses principally on alternative dispute resolution matters; assists with pretrial, trial, and appellate work chiefly related to employment matters; and participates in advocacy training, moot arguments, and CLE programs. He is active in the firm's pro bono projects and its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. He is also a board member of two Philadelphia non-profit organizations engaged programmatically in combatting illiteracy and readying teenagers and adults for vocational and college based career paths.

Before joining the bench in January 1980, Judge Giles practiced at an Am Law 100 firm in Philadelphia, where he was its first African American lawyer in 1968 and became its first African American partner in 1975 in the labor and employment practice, representing management clients in labor negotiations, NLRB matters, labor injunction litigation, federal contract compliance, and Title VII and ADEA trials and appeals.

Nominated by President Jimmy Carter, Judge Giles was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in November 1979. He served as chief judge for seven years from 1999 until 2006. He was assigned a large civil and criminal docket typical of large federal judicial districts. He was appointed by the MDL Panel to manage, for trial readiness and settlement efforts, significant consolidated cases, including class action asbestos products liability cases, personal injury claims by industrial workers, property damage claims by public schools, and death actions arising from commercial airline disasters over international waters. Between 2005 and 2008, he was the monitoring judge in *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Int'l Union, Operating Engineers, Local 542*, involving claims of exclusion based on race and

sex in membership, apprenticeship, training facility opportunities, and hiring hall referrals. He was regularly specially designated by chief judges of the Third Circuit to preside as a visiting judge for the District Court of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which had persistent civil and criminal docket backlogs due to unfilled judicial vacancies. In 2000, he received the Philadelphia Bar Association's prestigious Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. Distinguished Jurist Award.

He retired from the bench in October 2008 and returned to his prior Am Law 100 firm as of counsel for almost 10 years where, in addition to pursuing an alternative dispute resolution practice, he assisted litigation defense in areas of antitrust, pharmaceutical class action settlements, newspaper libel, FLSA collective actions, Title VII, and other employment-related claims. He was also a member of that firm's diversity and inclusion committee.

PRESENTATIONS:

American Bar Association—Co-Presenter. 2021, 14th Annual Arbitration Training Institute, "Awards and Post Awards."

Blank Rome—Co-Presenter, 2019, Annual Labor & Employment Briefing: "Ethical Conundrums of Employment Law"; Co-Presenter, 2018, Annual Labor & Employment Briefing: "Judging Employment Law Ethics: A Judicial Roundtable"; "Best Practices in Mediation: Lessons from the Masters"; and "Emerging Litigation and Employment Issues for In-House Counsel."

Pennsylvania Bar Institute—Co-Presenter, 2018, Mandatory Arbitration Agreements for *Epic System Corp. v. Lewis*; Co-Presenter, 2017, "Internet and Social Media Searches of Jurors.... Ethical, Trial Advocacy and Judicial Concerns"; Co-Presenter, 2017, "Whistleblowers.... The Challenges, Risks, Rewards and Protections"; Co-Presenter, "Title VII Milestones: 1964–2014"; Co-Presenter, 2013, "History of Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Outside The Firm

Judge Giles has two children, one an entrepreneur and the other an elementary school teacher.

Judge Giles enjoys theater and golf. He is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Alpha Boule.

Admissions

- Pennsylvania
- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Education

- Amherst College, BA
- Yale Law School, LLB

Recognitions

- 2019, "Distinguished Advocate," by the Support Center for Child Advocates
- 2019, "Influencer of Law: Lifetime Achievement," by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*
- 2010, "A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award," by the National Diversity Council, in recognition of dedication to the legal profession and the minority community through civil, community, and legal service
- 2000, "Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. Distinguished Jurist Award," by the Philadelphia Bar Association

Professional Activities

Judge Giles is a Fellow of the College of Commercial Arbitrators and a former Executive Committee member of the American Arbitration Association. He is an Executive Committee member of the Center for Literacy, secretary of the Independence Seaport Museum, vice president of the Civil War Museum of Philadelphia, a Master in the Temple American Inn of Court, and a member of the Historical Society of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.