

James T. Giles | Of Counsel  
Business Litigation

One Logan Square  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
+1.215.569.5545  
[jgiles@blankrome.com](mailto:jgiles@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. At Blank Rome since January 2018, 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 also active in the Firm's pro bono projects and its diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Before he joined the federal 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 its first African American partner in 1975 in the labor and employment practice, representing management clients on labor negotiations, NLRB matters, injunctions, federal contract compliance and litigation of Title VII and ADEA complaints.

Nominated by President Jimmy Carter, Judge Giles was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in November 1979, began his judicial duties in January 1980, and was chief judge for seven years from 1999 until 2006. He handled 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, 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 related employment claims. He was a member of the diversity and inclusion committee.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

**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 Mile Stones: 1964–2014”; Co-Presenter, 2013, “History of Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

## **Outside The Firm**

Judge Giles and his late wife, Carol, have two children, one an entrepreneur, and the other an elementary school teacher, as well as three grandchildren of grade school age.

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

## **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 on the roster of the Commercial Arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association and is a member of its board of directors. He is also a member of the Center for Literacy's Executive Committee. He serves as secretary of the Independence Seaport Museum and as vice president of the Civil War Museum of Philadelphia. Judge Giles is also 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.