

In Memoriam: Judge Nathaniel R.
Jones | Of Counsel
Business Litigation

1700 PNC Center
Cincinnati, OH 45202
+1.513.362.8772
jones-n@blankrome.com



It is with great sadness that we share the news that our beloved colleague and friend Judge Nathaniel R. Jones passed away on Sunday, January 26, at age 93. Judge Jones joined Blank Rome in 2002 and served as our first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. He was integral in helping to foster and promote our rich culture of inclusion throughout the Firm, and selfless in sharing his time and unmatched perspective with so many of us who are better people for having known him. In 2013, we developed the Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones Diversity and Inclusion Award, which is presented annually to a Blank Rome attorney or professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting diversity and inclusion. We are grateful to have the opportunity to honor and remember Judge Jones through this important award that will forever bear his name. While we have lost one of the brightest legal minds and civil rights advocates of our time, his groundbreaking work, steadfast compassion, and inspirational life and legacy will surely live on through the countless lives he has touched—both at Blank Rome and around the world.

Judge Jones' full In Memoriam can be found [here](#).

Judge Nathaniel Jones, a retired judge with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, has substantial experience in litigation, appeals, and dispute resolution. He serves a wide range of clients in matters such as:

- commercial and general litigation
- appellate litigation
- alternate dispute resolution
- employment, benefits and labor

On February 20, 2003, in recognition of his outstanding career as a jurist and civil rights leader, Congress passed H.J. Res. 2 naming the Nathaniel R. Jones Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio.

In May 2016, Nathaniel's memoir, *Answering The Call: An Autobiography of the Modern Struggle to End Racial Discrimination in America* was published by The New Press.

Nathaniel served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio and as Assistant General Counsel to President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission. He held the position of general counsel of the National Association of Advancement for Colored People (NAACP) from 1969 to 1979. He was a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from 1979 to 2002.

An internationally renowned civil rights activist, Nathaniel played an important role in furthering the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. The drafters of South Africa's new constitution and laws consulted him, and he conferred with Nelson Mandela upon Mandela's release from 27 years of imprisonment.

Among numerous other honors and awards, Nathaniel has been selected to receive the NAACP's highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, to be presented in July 2016. He received the International Freedom Conductor Award from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in 2016, the Federal Bar Association's Pillar of Justice Award in 2014 and the Nathaniel R. Jones American Inn of Court was chartered in Youngstown, Ohio in 2014. He received the Children's Defense Fund's Changing the Odds Award in 2012, the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit from the Washington Bar Association in 2011, induction into the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2010, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.'s Laurel Wreath Award in 2009, The American Lawyer's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007, the Just The Beginning Foundation's Trailblazer Award in 2006, the Annual Fellows Award from the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division in 2005, the Award of Excellence from the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund in 2004, the Ohio Bar Medal Award from the Ohio State Bar Association in 2003, and he was inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2011. He was named a "Great Living Cincinnati" in 1997.

Nathaniel taught trial advocacy at Harvard Law School and is now an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. He is the holder of 19 honorary degrees. He has authored numerous articles and papers.

Select Engagements

- Serves as adviser to corporations' executive officers of on diversity issues.
- Served as defense counsel for a class-action discrimination lawsuit against national retailer alleging racial profiling.
- Served as defense counsel for class-action discrimination lawsuit against Fortune 100 company alleging racial discrimination.

- Mediated a class-action discrimination lawsuit alleging racial discrimination.
- Mediated an employment dispute between corporation and former employee.
- Represented corporation responding to inquiry by N.Y. Attorney General's Office.

Admissions

- Ohio

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- 2012 World Choir Games
- ABA Coalition on Racial and Ethnic Justice
- American Inns of Court
- Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati
- BRIDGES for a Just Community
- CBA/BLAC Round Table
- Cincinnati Bar Association
- Cincinnati Youth Collaborative
- CPR International Institute for Conflict Prevention & Resolution
- Federal Bar Association
- KnowledgeWorks Foundation
- Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati
- Marvin Lewis Community Fund
- National Bar Association
- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
- Ohio State Bar Association
- Soteni International
- Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America, Inc.
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- Urban Morgan International Human Rights Institute

Education

- Youngstown State University, BA
- Youngstown State University Law School, LLB

Professional Activities

Nathaniel is a member of more than two dozen civic and community organizations, including the Board of Directors of KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the Marvin Lewis Community Fund, the Metropolitan Club, the Advisory Board of Soteni International, and the Advisory Board of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights. He is honorary co-chair and board member of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and board member of the Cincinnati Museum Center

Foundation. He was a member of the Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America, Inc. Diversity Advisory Board from 2002 to 2014.

Nathaniel serves as a member of Blank Rome's Diversity & Inclusion Committee.