

**SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER**  
**Post Office Box 9294**  
**Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813-9294**

Office of Publications and Electronic Media  
[225] 771-5815  
FAX [225] 771-6257

*News from the Southern University Law Center*

**March 21, 2011**  
**For immediate release**

**Contact: Rachel L. Emanuel**  
**Director**

**Four to Be Inducted into the 2011 SU Law Center Hall of Fame, April 8**  
***Four Distinguished Alumni Also To Be Recognized, April 7***

Three judges and the first female to be appointed U.S. Attorney in the state will be inducted into the Southern University Law Center (SULC) 2011 Hall of Fame at a 7:30 p.m. banquet, Friday, April 8, at Boudreaux's.

SULC alumni U.S. Attorney Stephanie A. Finley, Class of '91, of Lafayette, Louisiana; Judge John Robin Free, Class of '89, of Plaquemine, Louisiana; Judge Toni M. Higginbotham, Class of '85, of Baton Rouge; and Judge Fred L. Tinsley, Jr., Class of '72, of Dallas, Texas, will receive this Law Center honor as part of the three-day annual SULC Alumni Round-Up, April 7-9.

Other alumni will be recognized for their career distinctions at an opening night welcome reception for the annual Round-Up event to be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 7, at the River Terrace of the Shaw Center for the Arts. They are Jody Amedee, Class of '96, and Andre' Gauthier, Class of '91, founding partners, Gauthier & Amedee PLC, of Gonzales, Louisiana; Chauntis Jenkins, Class of '98, partner, Porteous, Hainkel & Johnson, LLP, of New Orleans; and Todd Manuel, Class of '98, partner, Taylor, Porter, Brooks, and Phillips, LLP., Baton Rouge.

**U.S. Attorney Finley** was sworn in on June 2, 2010, to serve the Western District of Louisiana. Finley's formal ceremony was held on November 22, 2010, and was attended by Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. As U.S. attorney, she is the chief law enforcement officer for 42 of the 64 parishes in the state and is charged with the prosecution of criminal cases brought by the Federal government and the prosecution and defense of civil cases in which the United States is a party.

Prior to her appointment, she served as the senior litigation counsel for the district as well as the deputy criminal chief for the Lafayette office. In her fifteen years with the Department of Justice, Finley has prosecuted cases involving white-collar crimes, violent crimes, environmental crimes, drug trafficking, public corruption, and tax evasion. She was also responsible for the training and mentoring program in the district.

In addition, Finley is a lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force. As a judge advocate in the Air Force, she is assigned to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, where she serves as an assistant staff judge advocate and the senior individual mobilization augmentee.

**Judge Free** serves West Baton Rouge, Iberville, and Pointe Coupee parishes of the 18th Judicial District Court. The Iberville Parish native and longtime resident of West Baton Rouge Parish was the youngest candidate when he ran for the 18<sup>th</sup> JDC bench at the age of 34. He began serving in 1997.

Formerly Judge Free was employed as a law clerk for the 18th Judicial District Court from 1987 until 1991. He served as counsel for the West Baton Rouge Parish Police Jury and later as city prosecutor for the Port Allen City Court. He was employed as an assistant district attorney under the leadership of Richard Ward, Jr. and began his

solo practice from 1991 until his election to the judiciary in 1996.

**Judge Higginbotham** was elected to the Court of Appeal, First Circuit, State of Louisiana, in 2010. Higginbotham formerly served as judge of the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court for fourteen years. Prior to that she served as counsel to the Police Jury Association of Louisiana (1995-1996) and vice president of the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (1992-1995). From 1985 to 1992, she maintained a private law practice primarily doing insurance defense, business litigation, and administrative law.

Judge Higginbotham currently serves on the National Judicial-Child Support Task Force, is vice president of the American Judges Association, and is past president of the American Judges Foundation. She serves on the Pro Bono Committee and the Bench Bar Committee for the Baton Rouge Bar Association and is a past president of the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She has been appointed to the Executive Committee of the Louisiana District Judges Association and as chair of the Family Law Section. Currently she is serving as co-chair of the Family Law Best Practices Committee for Louisiana and chair of the Louisiana Family Court Rules Committee.

**Judge Tinsley** serves on the bench of the 195th Judicial District Court of Dallas County, Texas, a seat he previously held in the late '80s. A native of Detroit, Michigan, and former resident of Delhi, Louisiana, Tinsley is a board-certified specialist in criminal law and before taking the bench handled state and federal criminal trials and appeals. He has also served as an associate judge in Dallas Municipal Court.

Judge Tinsley worked on the research staff of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention in 1973 before moving to Dallas, Texas, where he became a trial attorney for the United States Securities and Exchange Commission in Fort Worth, Texas.

In addition to the Thursday Welcome Reception and Friday Hall of Fame Banquet, the Alumni Round-up will include a free CLE, Chancellor's Scramble Golf Tournament, Reunion Crawfish Boil, Chancellor's Circle Reception, and Judicial Wall of Fame Unveiling Ceremony.

To sign up for any of these events, to register a team in the Chancellor's Scramble, and to purchase tickets for the Alumni Hall of Fame Banquet, call April Brumfield, Annual Fund Coordinator, (225) 771-5044.

Photos attached.

#####