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THE HONORABLE BILLY G. MILLS



"The wonderful advantage of the legal profession," says the Honorable Billy G. Mills, "is its diversity. No other training exposes the student to so many different subjects. And, in no other profession is there the large range of choices." Judge Mills, supervising judge of family law for the Superior Court of Los Angeles, epitomizes the very diversity to which he refers.

Judge Mills attended UCLA Law School after spending two years at Compton Community College where he quarterbacked the varsity football team, and two years at UCLA, where he received Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and Political Science. Not only did Judge Mills enter UCLA Law School with the first class to finish the school's full three-year term, but he also was the first black to receive a Juris Doctorate at UCLA. Six years passed before another black graduated from UCLA Law School.

Prior to becoming a judge, Mills worked as a private practitioner for over fifteen years. During that time, he practiced in many different areas of law. After passing the bar exam, Judge Mills was drafted into the army where he served in the Department of Adjutant General. While stationed in the Far East, he defended enlisted men in court-martials and he helped to establish a law firm to defend these soldiers.

After the service, Mills became a solo practitioner with a general law practice. At the same time, he worked as a probation officer in a juvenile detention facility. Later, Mills joined with the influential black Los Angeles attorney, Herman English. The two men formed a business law firm which thrived until 1966. Mills recalls his years with English as his best training. He describes English, who is now deceased, as a "brilliant attorney. . .and a great teacher." In 1969, Judge Mills helped establish the Los Angeles firm, Mink, Mills and Neiman. In the years immediately prior to his nomination to the bench, Mills returned to solo practice. During this time, he primarily did consulting in the area of government relations.

In addition to his law practice, Judge Mills was a member of the Los Angeles City Council. In 1963, as the city's representative to the Economic Opportunity Agency, Mills was instrumental in instituting the War on Poverty doctrine in Los Angeles. In this capacity, he was responsible for the distribution of federal funds to programs within the poor, predominantly black, community. He found himself representing "the Establishment" in the midst of the controversial Kennedy-Johnson years, because he had to enforce many unpopular decisions by the agencies which distributed the federal funds. Mills refers to those years as "the most politically damaging of his career." He later served as chairman of the Personnel Committee for the city council.

Elevated to the Superior Court in 1974, Judge Mills has presided over criminal and family cases, and the law and motion department. Those who have appeared before him consider him to be an exceptional jurist. Judge Mills is recognized as patient, congenial, always prepared and supportive.

Utilizing the organizational skills for which he is renowned, Judge Mills has been able to accomplish a great deal throughout his career. In addition to

his demanding professional and civic commitments, Judge Mills writes legal articles, fulfills a schedule of speaking engagements, maintains a fitness program, and is an active alumnus of UCLA Law School. He has served as president of the UCLA Law Alumni Association, member of the UCLA Foundation Board of Trustees, and member of the Founders of the law school.

Judge Mills' sincere enthusiasm for the law has been inspirational to many. In 1984, he was honored as "Alumnus of the Year" by the Board of Directors of the UCLA Law Alumni Association. Previously, Judge Mills had been honored as "Judge of the Year" by the family law committee of the Beverly Hills Bar Association.

This year marks Judge Mills' eleventh year on the bench, and his fourteenth year of outstanding service as a member of the bar. As he discusses his career, it is clear that to Judge Mills the law is still a challenging and exciting endeavor. Though he exudes an abundance of satisfaction and pride in his past accomplishments, as far as Judge Mills is concerned, his career "is only beginning."

GINA L. CARROLL