



Arkansas Bar Commission on Diversity & Inclusion

Presents:

Black History Month Spotlight,
featuring Attorney Wiley A. Branton, Sr.
And Celebrating
Presidents and Daisy Gatson Bates' Day

*Let's Keep Making Positive Advancements for All
American Citizens, Particularly Those Who Have Been
Historically Marginalized.*

- **Kandice Bell, ABCDI Chair**

February 22, 2022

Arkansas Bar Commission on Diversity and Inclusion

- ABCDI honors Black History Month with a spotlight on one of our very own, Attorney Wiley A. Branton, Sr. of Pine Bluff, the Association's first African American member. Per the historical records, Branton's admission into the Association was in 1952.
- ABCDI honors Presidents' Day by selecting three American presidents whose service is approximately 20 years apart, but their most notable legislation has in common the legal authority of bringing marginalized people into the full scope of our democracy.
- ABCDI honors the rule of law that historically bends towards justice.
- ABCDI honors Daisy Gatson Bates' Day by telling her story and featuring her courageous public service to Little Rock, Arkansas, and our nation. She was a journalist, civil rights activist, mentor, wife, and mother.



ABCDI: Black History Month Spotlight

WILEY A. BRANTON, SR.,
Attorney at Law

ABCDI: Attorney Wiley A. Branton, Sr.

Born on December 13, 1923, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Branton became the first African American attorney to become a member of the Arkansas Bar Association in 1952. Branton passed the bar before graduating law school. In 1953, Branton was the third African American to graduate from the University of Arkansas School of Law. Most notably, Branton served as co-counsel to Thurgood Marshall, who later became an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Branton had a prominent role in arguing *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, a landmark decision overturning the doctrine of separate but equal and holding that segregated public schools violate the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. 347 U.S., 483 (1954). The Brown decision led to the legal integration of Arkansas schools, including Central High School in Little Rock in 1957. Recommended by President Lyndon B. Johnson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders, Branton led the Voter Education Project in 1962. In just three years, he registered almost 700,000 African American voters. In 1978, Branton became the eighth dean of Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. After serving as dean, Branton returned to private practice in the Washington law office of Sidley & Austin up until his death on December 15, 1988.

ABCDI: Spotlight on Presidents' Day

Abraham Lincoln- 16th

U.S. President

- March 4, 1861-April 15, 1865

Lyndon Johnson-36th

U.S. President

- November 22, 1963 – January 20, 1969

Barack Obama-44th

U.S. President

- January 20, 2009-January 20, 2017

ABCDI: Presidents' Day

Rule of Law

President Abraham Lincoln
**Emancipation Proclamation; codified at
U.S. Const. amend. XIII.
(ratified in 1865).**

ABCDI: Presidents' Day

Rule of Law

President Lyndon Baines Johnson

**Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241
(1964).**

ABCDI: Presidents' Day

Rule of Law

President Barack Hussein Obama
**The Patient Protection and Affordable
Care Act, Pub.L 111-148, 124 Stat. 119,
(2010).**



ABCDI: Daisy Gatson Bates' Day

DAISY GATSON BATES

- Journalist
- Civil Rights Activist
- Mentor

When Daisy Bates was three years old her mother was killed by three white men. Although Bates, was just a child, her biological mother's death made an emotional and mental imprint on her. The unfortunate death forced Bates to confront racism at an early age and pushed her to dedicate her life to ending racial injustice.

Daisy Bates was born in Huttig, Arkansas in 1914 and raised in a foster home. When she was fifteen, she met her future husband and began travelling with him throughout the South. The couple settled in Little Rock, Arkansas and started their own newspaper, The Arkansas Weekly.

Naturally, Bates also worked with local Civil Rights organizations. For many years, she served as the President of the Arkansas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Her work with the NAACP not only transformed the Civil Rights Movement but it also made Bates a household name.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled segregated schools unconstitutional. After the ruling Bates began gathering African American students to enroll at all white schools. Often the white schools refused to let black students attend. Bates used her newspaper to publicize the schools who did follow the federal mandate.

When the national NAACP office started to focus on Arkansas' schools, they looked to Bates to plan the strategy. She took the reins and organized the Little Rock Nine. Bates selected nine students to integrate Central High School in Little Rock in 1957. She regularly drove the students to school and worked tirelessly to ensure they were protected from violent crowds.

In 1962, she published her memoirs, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. Eventually, the book would win an American Book Award. Bates died on November 4th, 1999. For her work, the state of Arkansas proclaimed the third Monday in February, Daisy Gatson Bates Day. She was posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1999.

Arkansas Bar Commission on Diversity and Inclusion



ARKANSAS BAR COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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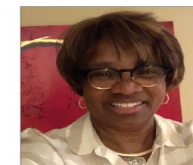
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The Arkansas Bar Association announced its Commission on Diversity and Inclusion (ABCDI) last bar year. The commission's goals are to protect the rule of law, to aid in perfecting an imperfect Union, to ensure our representative democracy casts a wide tent, and to ensure that government metes out equal justice under law.

THE ASSOCIATION'S DIVERSITY STATEMENT

(as approved by the Board of Governors in 2014)
In order to better implement its stated purposes, the Arkansas Bar Association is committed to fostering diversity among the bar and bench. Diversity is an inclusive concept and encompasses, without limitation, race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, age, disability and marital and parental status. A more diverse bar enables greater innovation and more civility in the legal profession by exposing its members to a wide variety of backgrounds, perspectives, life experiences, and talents. By mirroring the diverse population of Arkansas, a diverse bar and bench would provide greater understanding and access to justice to all its citizens. The Arkansas Bar Association through its leadership directly and by its Commission on Diversity seeks to achieve a greater understanding of diversity issues and greater diversity of the bar itself.

Arkansas Bar Association

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