

## 2018 American Bar Foundation Fellows Outstanding Service Award



### **Hon. Ernestine Steward Gray, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court**

Ernestine Steward Gray was first elected to the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, Section "A", on November 6, 1984 where she has served with distinction for 33 years.

A native of South Carolina, Judge Gray received her early education in the public schools of Orangeburg, South Carolina. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Louisiana State University School of Law where she received her Juris Doctorate degree in 1976. Judge Gray was admitted to the Louisiana Bar on October 2, 1976.

Before Judge Gray's election to the bench, she was engaged in the private practice of law. She also worked with the Baton Rouge Legal Aid Society where she handled hundreds of family law cases. In November, 1977 she was hired by the Louisiana Attorney General, William J. Guste, Jr., to work in the Anti-trust Unit. In December, 1979 she became a trial attorney with the

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a position which she held until she resigned to become a candidate for judge.

She is the Past President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National CASA, the local YWCA, YMCA and Volunteers of America Boards of Directors.

Judge Gray has received national recognition for her work and is in great demand as a presenter and speaker on the local, state, and national levels. She regularly appears before the State Legislature to speak and provide information on issues relating to youth in both the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems. As well, she has been invited to speak before committees of the United States Congress. She is the recipient of many awards, included among them: 2013 CityBusiness Leadership in Law Award; 2011 Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorney's Trailblazer Award, for steadfast leadership and dedication to blazing new trails in Louisiana legal community; 2008 Honorary Membership, Louisiana Chapter of the Order of the Coif; 2004 Recipient of Spirit of Crazy Horse Award Reclaiming Youth International; 2002 Albert Elias Award for Advancement of Compassionate Care of Troubled Youth, National Council on Crime and Delinquency; 2000 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, recognition for Achievements that have made the future safer and brighter for children and families in America's communities; and the 1995 American Bar Association Franklin D. Flaschner Judicial Award.

Judge Gray is married to James A. Gray II. They have two children, Attorney Cheryl Gray Evans and James A. Gray III, a chemical engineer and attorney. She has four grandchildren: Morgan Gray, Moriah Gray, James A. Gray IV and Emory Steward Evans.