

# **CNN and the Honorable Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson to Receive Lawyers' Committee's Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award**

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**CONTACT:**

Stacie B. Royster

202-662-8317, office

202-445-6101, mobile

[sroyster@lawyerscommittee.org](mailto:sroyster@lawyerscommittee.org)

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 21, 2010 - The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law will bestow upon CNN and the Honorable Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson its Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award at a reception hosted in conjunction with the National Bar Association's 85th Annual Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. During the event, hosted at the Marriott New Orleans on Wednesday, August 11, 2010, 4 - 6 p.m., CNN and Justice Johnson will be recognized for stellar civil rights achievements and efforts to champion the cause of equal justice.



"We are delighted to honor CNN and Soledad O'Brien, who will formally accept the award, for their outstanding commitment to coverage of minority and underserved communities," said Lawyers' Committee Executive Director Barbara Arnwine. "Ms. O'Brien's groundbreaking "Black in America" and "Latino in America" series were remarkable. Also, as the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina approaches, it is an added privilege to recognize CNN's unwavering and excellent coverage of the Gulf Coast during and following the most devastating natural disaster in U.S. history, which continues to adversely affect minority and low-income communities."

Said O'Brien, "I am delighted to be accepting the Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award on behalf of CNN. We work hard to live up to our diversity mission "We Are What We Air" always seeking to bring all voices to the forefront in our reporting. We are pleased to be recognized by the Lawyers' Committee for our role in shedding light on people and communities impacted by the important civil rights issues of our day."

In keeping with the Lawyers' Committee's annual tradition of recognizing a champion of equal justice from the local community during the reception, the Lawyers' Committee is also deeply pleased to pay tribute to the Honorable Bernette Johnson, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice. "Her extraordinary legacy as a public servant, advocate on behalf of poor and disenfranchised persons and mentor and role model for women and youth has impacted countless lives," Ms. Arnwine added.



Justice Johnson's judicial career began in 1984, when she was elected to the Civil District Court of New Orleans, the first woman to hold that office. For much of her life, Justice Johnson has worked as an advocate for social justice, civil rights, and community organizing. Concerned about Louisiana's overcrowded prisons and high rate of recidivism, Justice Johnson remains committed to rehabilitation programs, especially for women.

An example of her compassion is evidenced through her work with the warden of the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women where she has worked with re-entry projects and educational endeavors to help inmates to return as fully-functional members of society.

"I am thrilled to receive this award from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights," said Justice Johnson. "Your organization has always been on the front lines, fighting for equal justice for all Americans. I could not ask for a better gift than to receive this award in my hometown, at the 85th Annual Meeting of the National Bar Association."

Since 2001, the Lawyers' Committee has co-hosted this special reception with the NBA to recognize the achievements of civil rights icons whose courage and brilliance have helped to forge the path for equal justice. Past recipients of the Lawyers' Committee's Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award include Honorable Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial, Honorable U.S. District Court Judge Thelton E. Henderson and former Chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission Mary Frances Berry.

#### About the Lawyers' Committee

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice under law, particularly in the areas of fair housing and fair lending, community development, employment discrimination, voting, education and environmental justice. For more information about the LCCRUL, visit [www.lawyerscommittee.org](http://www.lawyerscommittee.org).

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