



## Winner of the 2016 NBSN Sam Ethridge Award

**Henry L. Marsh, III**, an honors graduate of Maggie L. Walker High School, received a B. A. degree from Virginia Union University, Cum Laude, in 1956 and earned his law degree at Howard University in 1959. He was a member of the Virginia Bar (senior status 2012) and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Supreme Court of the United States, the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia.

Marsh began his legal career in 1961, working with noted civil rights attorneys Oliver W. Hill, Sr. and Samuel W. Tucker, becoming partner in 1966 and forming the firm Hill, Tucker and Marsh. Upon joining the firm in 1961, he immediately enlisted in the fight against the policy of “Massive Resistance”, Virginia’s response to the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Over the next two decades, Marsh handled more than 50 cases against school boards across the state involving desegregation. He became one of the leading cooperating attorneys for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and in addition, became a member of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. The case of *Brewer v. School Bd. of City of Norfolk* set the standard of requirements for school districts to formulate adequate desegregation plans as well as provide free transportation for students. Marsh litigated more than twenty-five school cases including *Walston v. City Sch. Bd. of Nansmond County, Va.*, and *Giles v. Franklin County*, where he fought against discrimination in the employment, retention, and promotion of African American teachers.

Additionally, Marsh has been involved in some of the most important civil rights cases in Virginia and the United States for more than forty years. Under his lead, *Quarles v. Philip Morris* was the first case in the country litigated on the merits of race discrimination in employment and it set the legal precedent for outlawing departmental seniority systems and requiring equal pay for comparable work under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Subsequent to *Quarles*, Marsh successfully litigated over 20 employment discrimination cases, most of which were class-action cases, representing thousands of African American and female litigants. After serving as lead counsel at the trial level, he argued *Patterson v. American Tobacco Company* before the Supreme Court of the United States. Marsh was also counsel in *Gravelly v. Robb*, which resulted in single-member districts for the General Assembly of Virginia. Throughout his legal career from which he retired in December 2011, Marsh was considered one of the leading trial and appellate attorneys in Virginia and has received numerous honorary degrees and awards including the highest honor bestowed by the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, “The Distinguished Service Award” in 2009.

Henry Marsh served on the Richmond City Council from 1966 to 1991. The respect he earned from his colleagues and the public was demonstrated by his election as Vice-Mayor in 1970, and in 1977 by his election as Richmond’s first African-American Mayor.

In 1991, Marsh was elected Senator of the 16<sup>th</sup> VA Senate District. He served six terms in the Senate, retiring in 2014. While in the Senate, Marsh served as Co-Chair of the Courts of Justice Committee, and also served on the Finance, Transportation, and Local Government Committees. He was the first African-American to serve as Chair of the Courts of Justice Committee (2008 - 2011). Marsh also served on numerous state commissions and committees.

Marsh served as Chairman of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission and lead statewide activities to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. Under his leadership, plaques are permanently displayed at the State Capitol honoring African American Members of the 1867-1868 Virginia Constitutional Convention and of the Senate of Virginia and House of Delegates 1869-1890.

In 2011, Senator Marsh was the recipient of the VEA Fitz Turner Award for Human and Civil Rights and the NEA Martin Luther King, Jr. Award.

Marsh is married to Dr. Diane Harris Marsh and they have two daughters, Nadine Marsh Carter and Sonya Craft and one son, Dwayne Marsh. He is the proud grandfather of six grandchildren.