

## **Commission on the Status of Women honors Judge Carlton, former Judge Payne**

May 10, 2013

Judge Virginia Carlton of Jackson and former Judge Mary Libby Payne of Pearl were among outstanding women honored Thursday, May 9, by the Mississippi Commission on the Status of Women.

Judge Carlton, a member of the Mississippi Court of Appeals and a Colonel in the U. S. Army Reserves, was named Mississippi Woman of the Year in Military Service.

Judge Payne, who retired from the Court of Appeals in 2001, was honored as Woman of the Year in the legal and judicial field.

Chancery Judge Dorothy W. Colom of Columbus was among five other finalists nominated from the legal and judicial category. Other legal and judicial finalists included: Martha Bergmark of Jackson, founding president and CEO of the Mississippi Center for Justice; Patricia Ice of Jackson, Legal Project Director of the Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance; attorney Aleita M. Sullivan of Mendenhall; and attorney Jennifer Ingram Wilkinson of Hattiesburg.

"We have women of great distinction," Gloria Williamson of Philadelphia, chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, told the crowd during the luncheon presentation at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson.

Others named as Women of the Year in their respective fields include: Chief Phyllis Anderson of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, government; Jackson author Jill Connor Browne, performing arts and entertainment; lobbyist Beth Clay of Meridian, business and industry; pediatric HIV specialist Dr. Hannah Gay of Jackson, medical; Tougaloo College President Beverly Wade Hogan, education; and Virgi Lindsay of Jackson, executive director of the Greater Belhaven Neighborhood Foundation, community service.

Judge Carlton, a native of Columbia, has served as an Army JAG officer for 23 years. She is now assigned to the U.S. Army Reserves judiciary as a Reserve judge. She served on active duty in the U.S. Army 1990-1998.

Judge Carlton has served on the Mississippi Court of Appeals since January 2007. She served in the Mississippi House of Representatives 2004-2006. She previously served as a public defender and an assistant district attorney in the 15th Judicial District. She also worked with the Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center as a staff attorney and instructor.

She currently serves on the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice. She previously served on the state Drug Courts Advisory Committee, the study committee reviewing the Code of Judicial Conduct, and the study committee reviewing the state's domestic violence laws. She served as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law and at Belhaven University. She is a Fellow of the American Bar Association Foundation, and was recently inducted as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation.

Judge Carlton earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Mississippi and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law. She earned a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College.

Judge Payne was one of the original 10 members of the Mississippi Court of Appeals and the first woman to serve on that court. She served from January 1995 until her retirement in July 2001.

She served in all three branches of state government. She was a legislative draftsman, executive director of the Mississippi Judiciary Commission and assistant state attorney general. Prior to her election to the bench, she was a professor of law and founding dean of the Mississippi College School of Law.

A few of her many awards and honors include Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Mississippi Bar, the Mississippi Women Lawyers Association and the Christian Legal Society. She received the Susie Blue Buchanan Award from the Women in the Profession Committee of the Mississippi Bar. She was a recipient of the Governor's Medal of Service, and a Power of One Award winner from the Mississippi Governor's Conference. She was named Woman of the Year by the Mississippi Association for Women in Higher Education, a Medallion of Excellence recipient from Mississippi University for Women, Distinguished Jurist Award recipient from the Mississippi State University Pre-Law Society, and Mississippi College School of Law Alumni Association Lawyer of the Year.

She is a charter member of the Mississippi Women Lawyers Association, and helped establish the Task Force on Gender Fairness in the Courts. She was a founder and board member of Christian Conciliation Services of Central Mississippi, a member of the National Board of Directors of the Christian Legal Society, and a board member of the Mississippi Historical Society.

Judge Payne was born in Gulfport. She attended Mississippi University for Women, and earned Bachelor of Arts and law degrees from the University of Mississippi.

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