

From: Jaime Matthews
Sent: 5/26/2021 9:58:28 AM
To: "James Ferguson" <fergietwo@aol.com>, "Jenna Miller" <jmiller2@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Bio for Program

Mr. Ferguson,
Here is the bio I have, please send a final version with your edits, or just let me know what you would like changed:

Attorney James Ferguson, native of Asheville and graduate of Stephens-Lee High School and founding partner of the firm Ferguson Chambers and Sumter which is one of the most prominent civil rights litigation firms in NC and cooperating attorneys of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

James E. "Fergie" Ferguson II was born into the Jim Crow South in Asheville, NC in 1942. His civil rights career began early in life, when as a student at the all-black junior high school, he began meeting with students from the all-white junior high to discuss issues of race. The group became known as the Greater Asheville Interfaith Group. During that same year, Fergie and his student group formed the Asheville Student Committee on Racial Equality, which worked successfully to help desegregate lunch counters, libraries and other public facilities in Asheville.

After graduating from high school, Fergie enrolled in NC Central University, where he continued his civil rights work in the sit-ins and desegregation efforts in Durham, NC. He received his JD from Columbia University in 1967, after which he joined fellow lawyer Julius Chambers and two others to create North Carolina's first racially integrated law firm, one of the first in the South.

Just three years out of law school, Fergie prosecuted one of NC's most well-known criminal trials, which ultimately was the subject of a book and full-length movie "Blood Done Sign My Name." Three years later, he defended the Wilmington 10, and 40 years later he was successful in gaining pardons of innocence for each of them. In more recent years, Fergie has been successful in obtaining a reduction of the death sentences to life imprisonment for the only four people whose cases were decided under NC's Racial Justice Act, the only law of its kind in the nation. Throughout his career, Fergie has used his legal skills to desegregate schools, police departments and countless other public and private agencies. He has also successfully represented plaintiffs in a number of wrongful death, medical malpractice and other catastrophic injury cases.

In addition to the demands of his practice, he has taught as a lecturer at Harvard Law School and as an adjunct professor at North Carolina Central University Law School. He was further selected as an Honorary Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Santa Clara University Law School. He has served as president of both the NC Association of Black Lawyers and the NC Association of Trial Lawyers. He also served on the Board and National Executive Committee and as General Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union for 12 years. He is a member of the coveted Inner Circle, a group of 100 of the best plaintiff's lawyers in the country.

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