

Judge Milton Wharton



Justice Milton S. Wharton is a graduate of East St. Louis, IL Lincoln Sr. High School, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, and De Paul University School of Law (class of 1974). He is a life-member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Justice Wharton was appointed an associate circuit judge for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit in 1976 and elected a circuit judge in 1988. He served as the presiding judge of the St. Clair County Juvenile and Criminal Courts, and in 2012 retired after 36 years on the bench. In 2019 he was assigned as an appellate court justice by the Illinois Supreme Court, becoming the first African American to serve on the Fifth District Appellate Court.

Justice Wharton is a founder of the Court Appointed Special Advocate program (CASA) of Southwestern Illinois, which protects the rights of abused and neglected children, and Racial Harmony which is dedicated to community diversity and cooperation. He was elected to the Illinois State Bar Association Assembly, served on the Illinois Bar Foundation Board, and was the first African American President of the St. Clair County, IL Bar Association. He participated for many years in the American Bar Association Judicial Intern Opportunity Program providing opportunities to those “traditionally underrepresented in the profession.”

Justice Wharton’s contributions and service have been recognized by numerous awards and accolades including the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Service Award of the Boy Scouts of America, Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice from (Saint) Pope John Paul II, Service Pro Christo from the National Black Catholic Conference, Alumnus of the Year-SIUE, East St. Louis Branch-NAACP Award, Legend in the legal community- St. Louis Argus, and the prestigious Legal Luminary award from the Illinois Bar Foundation and Illinois Judges Foundation.

He is married to retired attorney Patricia Wharton and they have one daughter, Bernadette Wharton-Hawthorne, MD.

