



2025
2026

IMPACT REPORT

MASSACHUSETTS BLACK LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

BRIDGING LEGACY AND VISION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02.	LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT	
04.	BRIDGING LEGACY AND VISION	
05.	ABOUT THE MBLA	
	MISSION	05
	HISTORY OF THE MBLA	06
07.	STUDENT IMPACT	
	STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP	08
10.	BUILDING THE LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
	INVESTMENT, ACCESS, SUSTAINABILITY	11
12.	PROGRAMS AND IMPACT	
	JUDICIAL ACADEMY	12
	FINANCIAL LITERACY	14
15.	NEW INITIATIVE: BLACK ATTORNEYS LEADING IN THE LAW (B.A.L.L.)	
16.	MBLA RECOGNITION & HONORS	
17.	BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION & HONORS	
	AWARDS	17
	JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS	18
19.	BOARD OF DIRECTORS & LEADERSHIP	
22.	PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS	
23.	WAYS TO GET INVOLVED	

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year was defined by continuity, growth, and sustainability. We focused on strengthening our infrastructure and programming, deepening initiatives launched in prior years, and positioning our work for long-term impact.

Expanding our reach and positioning our work for continued growth and impact.

By continuing two inaugural programs introduced in the prior program year, we built on early momentum. Our Judicial Academy remained an important pillar of our work. In its second year, the Judicial Academy continued to grow and received award recognition, affirming both its impact and the dedication of those who make it possible.

We also returned to law schools across the state during the year, continuing direct engagement with law students through school-based outreach and tabling. By maintaining a consistent presence, we were able to reach all nine law schools statewide, reinforcing relationships between the MBLA, students, and school communities.

In addition to strengthening existing initiatives, we were pleased to reintroduce MBLA Reads, a program we launched several years ago in which volunteers dedicate their time to reading with elementary school students. Reviving this program reflects our commitment to meaningful engagement with students and reinforces our long-standing focus on building the pipeline and investing in the next generation.

We also re-engaged with a long-time partner, the Boston Debate League, where our volunteers served as judges in debate tournaments for middle school and high school students. In addition, we forged new partnerships with METCO, Inc. to collaborate on efforts to reach elementary, middle, and high school students.

We were proud to support the Ms. JD “Determined to Rise” program for a second year, a one-day academy designed to inspire students in grades 6-8 to explore future careers in the law. We also supported the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys Juvenile Justice Youth Symposium, which engages diverse high school students interested in the legal profession and features mock trials and networking opportunities with judges and lawyers. In addition, we partnered with the Lex Fellowship, an international program for undergraduate students, through which volunteers participated in a panel discussion focused on the law.

By creating opportunities for students to see and engage with role models firsthand, these efforts help demonstrate that a future pathway in the legal field is not only possible, but attainable.

The continued support of our community is essential to advancing this work. During the program year, we raised over \$99,000 in net proceeds to support our programs, initiatives, and operations. This support also played an important role in advancing our scholarship fund. Contributions to the scholarship fund helped move us closer to our long-term goal of sustainably increasing scholarship levels while continuing to meet the evolving needs of law students.

More broadly, this work was advanced through collaboration and shared commitment. Our progress over the past year reflects the dedication of our board, committee members, advisory members, volunteers, partners, and supporters who continue to invest their time, expertise, resources, and trust in the MBLA.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on the opportunities before us. With your support and engagement, we will continue to build on this foundation, strengthen our impact, and grow with intention while creating meaningful and lasting change.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. We move forward grounded in what we have learned and energized by what comes next.

With gratitude,

Jameel Moore

Jameel Moore, Esq.
2025 - 2026 President
Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association



BRIDGING LEGACY AND VISION

**Purpose drives us. Legacy guides us.
Vision connects us.**

As the MBLA entered its 53rd year, this theme served as a guiding framework for the year. It reflects our commitment to honoring the foundation built over five decades while continuing to evolve in response to emerging needs and future opportunities.

Throughout the year, this perspective informed how we strengthened long-standing programs, revived meaningful initiatives, and invested thoughtfully in what comes next.

OUR WORK DURING THE YEAR WAS GUIDED BY A COMMITMENT TO:

- Building strong relationships and networks**
- Reconnecting with and reflecting on our past**
- Investing in future generations**
- Deepening our impact**
- Growing our community**
- Engaging our members**

Together, these principles shaped decisions across programs and initiatives, reinforcing an approach that honors our legacy while advancing a clear vision for the future.

ABOUT THE MBLA

Our Mission

The MBLA is dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal field while advocating for systemic change to promote justice and equality in our communities. Through education, mentorship, and collaborative action, we strive to create a more inclusive and equitable legal industry while addressing the systemic challenges faced by Black individuals.



History of the MBLA

Founded on March 2, 1973, the MBLA proudly stands as the oldest affinity bar organization in Massachusetts. The MBLA was created to elevate the presence and influence of Black legal professionals in Massachusetts. As a beacon of advocacy and empowerment, we are committed to uplifting our members, amplifying their voices, and driving positive societal change for generations to come.

FOUNDED ON

March 2, 1973

Our founding board members include Clarence E. Dilday (President), Grover G. Jackson (Treasurer), Solomon B. Watson (Clerk), Richard A. Soden, Dennis R. Tourse, and Warren E. Wood.

The MBLA's founding members include Hon. Frederick L. Brown, Wayne Budd, Margret Burnham, James Dilday, Clarence Elam, Bruce Hubbard, Norman W. Huggins, Henry Owens, Salim Shakur, Helaine Simmonds, and Fletcher Wiley.

FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS

Clarence E. Dilday (President)
 Grover G. Jackson (Treasurer)
 Solomon B. Watson (Clerk)
 Richard A. Soden
 Dennis R. Tourse
 Warren E. Wood

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Hon. Frederick L. Brown
 Wayne Budd
 Margret Burnham
 James Dilday
 Clarence Elam
 Bruce Hubbard
 Norman W. Huggins
 Henry Owens
 Salim Shakur
 Helaine Simmonds
 Fletcher Wiley



Learn more about our history and founders by watching our short film:

[**MBLA 50th Anniversary Film**](#)

STUDENT IMPACT

Law students remained at the center of our work this year, guiding how we designed student programs and where we focused our engagement. Through outreach, leadership opportunities, and financial investment, we created multiple pathways for law students to connect, participate, and thrive.

Investing in students
at every stage



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

We continued direct engagement with law students through school-based outreach and tabling efforts, returning to all nine law schools across the state that we visited during the last program year. This consistency strengthened our relationships with our law school communities.

Building on this sustained presence in schools, our student liaison program grew significantly, expanding from one liaison to six. These students served as connectors between their peers and the MBLA, elevating student voices and helping shape programming.

In the coming year, we aim to expand the student liaisons to nine, representing each law school across the state. Student liaisons serve as ambassadors not only for the MBLA, but also for the broader community students can build here as they progress through their education and prepare to enter the legal profession.

BY THE NUMBERS



9

**LAW SCHOOLS
ENGAGED**



6

**LAW STUDENT
LIAISONS**



9

**LAW STUDENT
LIAISONS
GOAL FOR NEXT YEAR**

LAW SCHOOL TABLINGS

MBLA ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS ACROSS LAW SCHOOLS
THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM YEAR.



BUILDING THE LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Each year, the MBLA awards scholarships to law students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to service.

Currently, our Honorable Chief Justice Roderick L. Ireland Leadership and Juvenile Advocacy Award, Honorable Reginald Lindsay Public Service Award, and Honorable Justice Geraldine S. Hines Civil Rights Award awards \$2,000 per scholarship, while our Fletcher “Flash” Wiley MBLA Legacy Award, awards up to \$5,000 per student, supporting up to two students annually.

These scholarships are a tangible investment in students’ futures and reflect our commitment to reducing barriers to opportunity. Sustaining an increased level of support will require ongoing donations and community investment in the years ahead.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2027: STRENGTHENING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Starting in 2027, we aim to increase student scholarship levels as part of our commitment to expanding access, opportunity, and long-term sustainability.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN ACTION

Community support for scholarships included the MBLA's annual wine tasting fundraiser, now in its third year. The event generated over \$5,000 in net proceeds, which were directed to the student scholarship fund in support of continued investment in students.

INVESTING IN SUSTAINABILITY

To support long-term continuity, we have been working to strengthen the sustainability of the scholarship fund. This year, we set a goal to further build the fund in support of increased scholarship levels, including the establishment of a \$100,000 fundraising goal. To date, we have secured more than 42% of this scholarship-designated goal and remain focused on ensuring the scholarship program can continue to meet the growing needs and costs facing today's law students while reducing barriers and investing in the next generation of lawyers and leaders.



SUSTAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

We are aiming to fund our student scholarships at increased levels. With over 42% of funding secured for our \$100,000 scholarship goal this year, continued philanthropic support will help complete this commitment and ensure long-term access and opportunity for students in the years ahead.

JUDICIAL ACADEMY

This year marked the second year of the Judicial Academy, continuing a program designed to support individuals seeking to advance to the bench. Building on the foundation established in its first year, the Judicial Academy focused on providing participants with direct access to practical insights, personalized guidance and mentorship, and hands-on experiences. The Judicial Academy continued to grow and was recognized with an external award, underscoring the strength of the academy's model and impact.

NOW NAMED THE **Honorable Leslie E. Harris**
Judicial Academy

During the year, the Judicial Academy was renamed the Honorable Leslie E. Harris Judicial Academy, in honor of Judge Harris. This naming reflects a legacy of service, leadership, and commitment that continues to shape the academy's mission.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening the Judicial Academy and ensuring it continues to provide meaningful and effective support to individuals seeking to secure a judicial nomination.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR JUDICIAL ACADEMY VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS

We are grateful to the organizations and individuals whose generous sponsorships continued to strengthen the Judicial Academy during its second year. Their support played a critical role in sustaining a welcoming and collaborative program environment, and helped ensure the Judicial Academy's continued growth and impact. We thank the following organizations and individuals for their ongoing commitment and partnership:



Boston Bar Association

Joseph Feaster, Dain, Torpy, Le Ray, Wiest & Garner PC

Goulston & Storrs, P.C.

Prince Lobel Tye LLP

Todd & Weld LLP

FINANCIAL LITERACY TASK FORCE

We continued to strengthen financial literacy by building on the foundation established through our Financial Literacy Task Force. Created during the prior program year, the task force addresses the financial challenges many members face after completing law school, particularly the burden of student loan debt.

During the year, we hosted three financial literacy programs focused on timely and practical topics. These included a program on generational wealth and asset protection, developed in partnership with the Black Finance and Accounting Professionals of Massachusetts (BFAM); a panel of women founders addressing branding, practice, profit and purpose; and a program focused on navigating student loan debt, including recent changes in the law.

Across these programs, attendees engaged with experienced professionals and subject-matter experts who provided practical guidance, tools, and insights to support informed financial decision-making. Together, these efforts reflect our continued commitment to equipping members with knowledge and resources that support long-term financial stability and success.

LOOKING AHEAD

In addition to strengthening these programs, this year also marked the launch of a new initiative designed to address evolving needs.

NEW INITIATIVE

BLACK ATTORNEYS LEADING IN LAW (B.A.L.L.)

Launched during this program year, B.A.L.L. was developed to support, develop, and advance Black men in the legal profession. The initiative is dedicated to providing mentorship and career development opportunities for law students and attorneys; fostering meaningful networking and collaboration among Black male lawyers; and promoting professional excellence through skill-building and knowledge-sharing. The committee also seeks to encourage wellness and resilience within the profession, engage and uplift the broader community through mentorship and pro bono education, and increase the representation, visibility, and leadership of Black men in the legal field.

During its inaugural year, this initiative focused on:

REPRESENTATION, WELLNESS & COMMUNITY IMPACT

NETWORKING & COLLABORATIVE GROWTH

MENTORSHIP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

While still in its early stages, B.A.L.L. represents an important step toward addressing challenges faced by Black male attorneys and students within and beyond the profession. These challenges include underrepresentation, bias, discrimination, barriers to advancement, workplace culture and isolation, mental health, resilience under stress, and broader systemic and social inequities.

MBLA RECOGNITION & HONORS

MASSACHUSETTS LAWYERS WEEKLY LEGAL EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION AWARD

In recognition of its impact and design, the Judicial Academy received an award from Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly for its Legal Excellence in Innovation Awards. This recognition affirms the strength of the Judicial Academy's model and the commitment of the volunteers, mentors, and leaders who make the program possible. The award was presented to President-Elect Theresa Wilson in recognition of her leadership and contributions to the development of the Judicial Academy and its impact.

BOSTON DEBATE LEAGUE OUTSTANDING RETURNING PARTNER AWARD

The MBLA was recently honored by the Boston Debate League with its Outstanding Returning Partner Award, recognizing the MBLA's commitment to service and meaningful community engagement. The Boston Debate League is a nonprofit that partners with Boston Public Schools to integrate academic debate, strengthening critical thinking, public speaking, and academic performance. The program supports policy debate teams in middle and high schools by hosting city-wide tournaments and helping build college and career readiness.

This recognition reflects our ongoing partnership with the Boston Debate League and the collective efforts of our volunteers and leaders who, over the years, have dedicated their time and expertise to supporting youth and expanding opportunities within the community.

BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION & HONORS

We are proud to acknowledge the accomplishments and recognition of MBLA board members, who were honored with prestigious awards during the year. These accomplishments are a testament to their leadership, expertise, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

THERESA WILSON

President-Elect

2026 Justice Geraldine Hines Racial Justice Award

*Boston College Public Interest Law
Foundation*

2025 Women Lawyers Division Hidden Figure Award

National Bar Association

JANEAL HOYTE

Secretary

2026 Up & Coming Lawyer Award

Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly

RAQUEL WEBSTER

Director

2025 Ida B. Wells Award

Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys

2025 Women Lawyers Division Hidden Figure Award

National Bar Association

AZIZAH YASIN

Director

2025 Legal Luminary

Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS



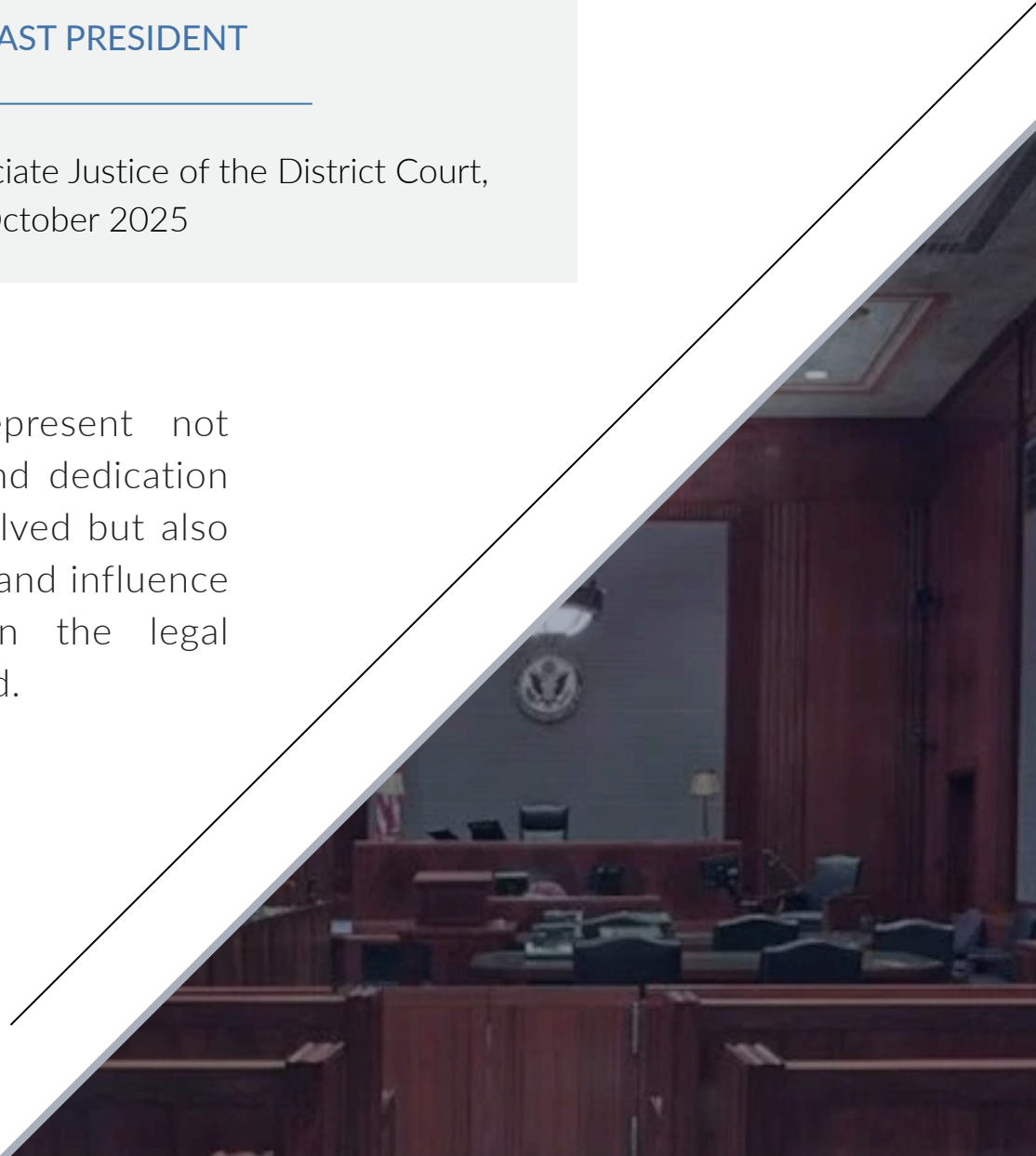
We also take this opportunity to recognize new judicial appointments.

JUDGE TONOMEY COLEMAN

MBLA PAST PRESIDENT

Appointed as an Associate Justice of the District Court,
October 2025

These milestones represent not only the hard work and dedication of the individuals involved but also the continued growth and influence of the MBLA within the legal community and beyond.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



JAMEEL MOORE

President



THERESA WILSON

President-Elect



SANIA S. SANTOS

Vice President



MORENIKE E. ADAMS

Treasurer



JANEAL HOYTE

Secretary



**AVANA EPPERSON-
TEMPLE**

Immediate Past President



EVAN COLEMAN

Director



**CHRISTELLE J.
JEAN-FELIX**

Director



TASHA MARSHALL

Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ODETTE MARTINS

Director



OBIOMA OKONKWO

Director



BETHANY N. SEROTA

Director



RAQUEL WEBSTER

Director



AZIZAH YASIN

Director

LEADERSHIP TEAM



JAIY DICKSON

Chief of Staff



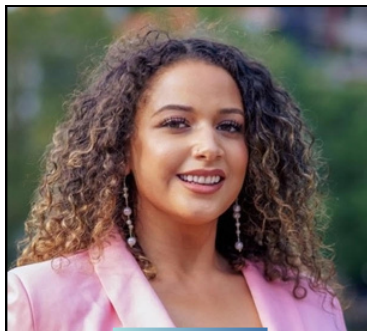
JADA YOUNG

Student Affairs Liaison Co-Chair
Boston University School of Law



EDSON'N PIERRE

Student Affairs Liaison Co-Chair
New England Law Boston



LUCILIA BARBOSA

Student Liaison
Boston College Law School



GAELE NELFISE

Student Liaison
Suffolk University Law School



CHANEL PALMER

Student Liaison
Northeastern University School of Law



JOEL WESONGA

Student Liaison
Western New England Law School

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous sponsors for their unwavering support throughout this program year. Their contributions, including funding, provision of meeting space, and other resources, have been essential in enabling us to deliver impactful programs and events.



Holland & Knight



Boston Bar Association

Goodwin

Holland & Knight

Massachusetts National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

Massachusetts Bar Association

Nixon Peabody

O'Hagan Meyer

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

**Volunteer • Join as a Member • Donate
• Partner • Spread the Word**

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

01

We rely on the dedication and expertise of volunteers to bring our programs and events to life. By volunteering, you will have the opportunity to directly contribute to our mission and make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Whether it is mentoring, event planning, or helping behind the scenes, your time and talents can have a lasting impact.

JOIN AS A MEMBER

02

Becoming a member is an opportunity to engage more deeply with the MBLA, connect with a community committed to service and leadership, and support programs that expand access and opportunity for lawyers, law students and future leaders.

DONATE

03

Financial support is crucial in allowing us to continue and expand our programs. Your donation can help fund our Building the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Every contribution, no matter the size, moves us closer to creating lasting change.

PARTNER WITH US

04

We welcome partnerships with individuals, businesses, and organizations that share our vision. From co-hosting events to providing in-kind donations, partnerships play a vital role in our success.

SPREAD THE WORD

05

Help us amplify our impact by sharing our mission and work within your network. Whether it is through social media, word-of-mouth, or connecting us with potential supporters, your advocacy helps raise awareness and increase the reach of our efforts.

Learn more about ways to get involved,
including membership and committee opportunities, at

<https://mablacklawyers.org/>



[MABlackLawyers](https://www.facebook.com/MABlackLawyers)



[mablacklawyers](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mablacklawyers)



[massblacklawyers](https://www.instagram.com/massblacklawyers)

Massachusetts Black
Lawyers Association
16 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY.

Together, we continue to expand access,
opportunity, and impact.

