

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
UDC RESOLUTION NO. 2017 - 34**

**SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSOR WILLIAM L. ROBINSON AS  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to D.C. Official Code 38-1202.06, the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the University of the District of Columbia (the “University”) has responsibility to generally determine, control, supervise, manage, and govern all affairs of the University, including oversight of faculty; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 8B DCMR § 1412.1, the title of Professor Emeritus may be conferred by the Board to a retired professor who has rendered distinguished service; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Academic Officer and the Dean of the David A. Clarke School of Law have recommended that emeritus status be conferred upon William L. Robinson in recognition of Professor Robinson’s range of contributions to the academic pursuits of the University, and to the community of the District; and

**WHEREAS**, Professor Robinson served for 10 years as the founding Dean of the District of Columbia School of Law and successfully led the effort to secure provisional accreditation; then, he managed the merger of the D.C. School of Law with the University of the District of Columbia; then, subsequently, again successfully led the effort to secure provisional ABA accreditation for the UDC School of Law. Thereafter, Professor Robinson served for another 19 years as a professor, teaching Employment Law, Race and the Law, Appellate Law, and other courses, and was elected to the Faculty Affairs Committee in which capacity he represented the faculty for a decade; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has received and reviewed Attachment A and agrees with the nomination of Professor Robinson for the reasons described therein, and commends Professor Robinson for his distinguished service and professional excellence.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board hereby confers upon Professor Robinson the title and position of Professor Emeritus, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities pertaining thereto.

Submitted by the Academic &  
Student Affairs Committee:

November 14, 2017

Approved by the Board of Trustees:

November 28, 2017



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Christopher Bell  
Chairperson of the Board

## ATTACHMENT A

Katherine S. Broderick, Dean and Joseph L. Rauh, Jr. Chair of Social Justice

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ronald Mason, President

FROM: Shelley Broderick, Dean



RE: William L. Robinson

DATE: September 11, 2017

I am recommending that William L. Robinson be awarded recognition as a University of the District of Columbia Professor Emeritus for his many years of distinguished service at the School of Law. My recommendation is enthusiastic and without qualification.

During more than fifty years as a member of the bar, Professor Robinson had many exceptional achievements. This memorandum is limited to a few of the more noteworthy accomplishments.

- Professor Robinson joined the District of Columbia School of Law as Dean and full professor with continuous tenure in October of 1988. As Dean, he fended off numerous attempts to abolish or defund the law school and successfully spearheaded the quest for accreditation by the American Bar Association (ABA) for the District of Columbia School of Law within three years so that the founding class was eligible to sit for the bar examination. He worked with leadership at the University to merge the law school into the University of the District of Columbia; and thereafter, led a second successful petition for ABA accreditation.
- In addition to serving as Dean, Professor has taught a variety of courses, including civil procedure, remedies, race and the law, and employment discrimination. He is best known for teaching civil rights courses, especially employment discrimination where he is renowned. The Board of the law school foundation designated him as the Olie W. Rauh Professor of Law and the Board of Trustees of the University voted to name him a Distinguished Professor of Law. In 2006 he received the University of the District of Columbia's coveted Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award.
- Before joining the law school, Professor Robinson had a highly distinguished career as a civil rights lawyer. As First Assistant Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense And Educational Fund, he over saw the Fund's employment discrimination cases and was a key member of the trial team that litigated the landmark Supreme Court cases on the disparate treatment and disparate impact theories of discrimination. He personally argued

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the first case to go before the Supreme Court involving Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As Associate General Counsel for the trial division at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, he had primary responsibility for the agency's litigation during the critical period immediately after the agency was given court enforcement authority. As Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Under Law, he spearheaded one of the country's most important civil rights advocacy groups and he personally argued a number of major cases.

A copy of Professor Robinson's resume and a biographical statement are appended.

In conclusion, I most enthusiastically recommend him and would be happy to answer any questions.

## WILLIAM L. ROBINSON

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### EDUCATION

Columbia University Law School, LLB 1966 (Dean's List)  
Oberlin College AB 1963

### EMPLOYMENT

September 1988-Present	Distinguished Professor of Law and The Olie Rauh Professor , District of Columbia School of Law  Dean, (1988-1998)
August 1999-August 2000	Visiting Professor of Law University of Maryland School of Law
September 1998-August 1999	Visiting Professor of Law: The Haywood Burns Professor of Civil Rights Law CUNY School of Law at Queens College
October 1979-September 1988	Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
December 1973-September 1979	Associate General Counsel Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
September 1967-November 1973	First Assistant Counsel NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund
1970-1971	Adjunct Professor University of Maryland Law School
July 1966-September 1967	National Director Law Students Civil Rights Research Council

### ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

<u>Mediation</u>	Member of Mediation Panel for D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals January 2001- Present
<u>Bar Admissions:</u>	Admitted – Ohio, 1966; District of Columbia, 1979

## American Bar Association

1998-2005	Board of Editors, ABA Journal
1997-1998	D.C. Bar Representative to House of Delegates
1997-1998	Nominating Committee
1997-2000	Commission on Women in the Profession
1991-1998	Executive Council, Government and Public Sector Lawyer's Division
1997-2000	Special Advisor to Standing Committee on Amicus Curiae Briefs
1991-1996	Standing Committee on Amicus Curiae Briefs (Chair, 1993-1997)
1989-1992	Standing Committee on Lawyers' Public Service Responsibility
1981-1992	Executive Council, Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities; Chair, 1987-1988; Section Delegate 1990-1992

## **BOARDS**

- ◆ Oberlin College
- ◆ Nordson Corporation
- ◆ Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- ◆ Leadership Conference Educational Fund
- ◆ Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
Under Law and Urban Affairs

## **OTHER MEMBERSHIPS**

- ◆ Fellow of the American Bar Foundation (1993-Present)
- ◆ Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, Inc. (1996-Present)  
Board of Governors (2000-2006)

## **AWARDS**

1986	The J. Parren Mitchell Award presented by the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense Fund
1997	African-American Alumni Hall of Fame presented by Oberlin College
1998	Allies for Justice Award presented by the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association
1999	Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year presented by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
1999	Distinguished Alumni of the Year, Oberlin College Alumni Assn, DC
1999	Segal-Tweed Founders Award, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
2006	University of the District of Columbia, Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award
2007	ABA Commission HIV-Aids, Founders Award

**William L. Robinson**  
**Olie W. Rauh Professor of Law**

A.B., Oberlin College, 1963; LL.B., Columbia University School of Law, 1966.

William L. Robinson, the Olie W. Rauh Professor of Law, founding Dean of the District of Columbia School of Law and the University of the District of Columbia School of Law, is an outstanding litigator, teacher, leader of the civil rights bar, and leader in the civil rights movement. In 2007, he was honored with the University of the District of Columbia's Distinguished Leadership Award, which recognizes members of the University community whose life's work exemplifies outstanding leadership.

While at Columbia, Professor Robinson spent substantial time in the South doing legal research on voting rights and sit-in demonstration cases. As Executive Director of the Law Student Civil Rights Research Council, he met with southern civil rights lawyers and assigned northern law school students to work under their supervision.

Beginning in 1967, Professor Robinson litigated civil rights cases for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, including public accommodations, school desegregation, public housing, and employment discrimination. As Director of the Fund's employment discrimination practice, and First Assistant Counsel, he and his team won more than twenty-five federal appellate cases that essentially rewrote the procedural requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, so that laypersons could effectively bring employment discrimination claims under the statute.

Professor Robinson also played a primary role in taking before the Supreme Court two cases that for the first time gave substantive definition to Title VII and lay the foundation for civil rights discrimination claims. In *Griggs v. Duke Power*, the Court announced the disparate impact theory of discrimination as the template for proving claims of systemic discrimination. In *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green*, the Court established guidelines for proving discrimination against an individual claimant. Together, these landmark decisions govern proof of discrimination against individuals and minority groups under Title VII and all subsequent civil rights legislation. As counsel of record, Professor Robinson presented argument to the Supreme Court in *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corp.*, the Court's first Title VII case. He persuaded the Court to hold that an employer may not refuse to hire a woman simply because she has preschool age children.

Shortly after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was given court enforcement authority, Professor Robinson accepted appointment as Associate General Counsel in charge of all trial court litigation. He approved all complaints and settlements filed in court and represented the agency in numerous cases, including negotiation of the nationwide settlement with the steel industry approved by the courts in *United States v. Allegheny-Ludlum Steel*.

Professor Robinson left the EEOC to become Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law, a private civil rights organization formed at President John F. Kennedy's request. During the Reagan presidency, Professor Robinson was a key player in the coalition of civil rights advocates who persuaded Congress to pass nineteen civil rights statutes, representing more civil rights legislation than at any other time in the nation's

history. He is especially proud of having represented the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in *Helms v. SCLC*. This case rebuffed Senator Jesse Helms' efforts to make public the spurious FBI wiretap tapes of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and prevented the senator from derailing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Holiday Bill.

After stepping down as Dean in 1998, Professor Robinson spent the 1998-1999 academic year as the W. Haywood Burns Professor of Civil Rights Law at CUNY School of Law, and the 1999-2000 year as Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Maryland School of Law. Professor Robinson currently teaches Employment Law and co-directs the Externship Program. He has also taught Appellate Advocacy, Labor Law, Civil Rights in the 21st Century, and Race in the Law. Professor Robinson is on the boards of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund and Oberlin College.





## FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**TO:** The Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Managing Director of Finance *David L. Franklin*  
**DATE:** October 13, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Professor Emeritus Appointment for Professor William L. Robinson

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### **Conclusion**

The proposed resolution is for the title of Professor Emeritus which may be conferred by the Board of Trustees upon a retired member of the faculty who has rendered distinguished service to the University and the community of the District.

### **Background**

The Chief Academic Officer and the David A. Clarke School of Law of the University of the District of Columbia (DCSL), have recommended that Emeritus status be conferred upon the named retired faculty member, Professor William L. Robinson, in recognition of the professor's wide range of contributions over the past 30 years to the academic pursuits of the University and for his service to the University community, including spearheading the UDC DCSL's eventual accreditation.

The award of emeritus status is being justified for Professor Robinson due to his long and committed service to the University and the District of Columbia, and in recognition of the honors previously bestowed upon him by UDC for his teaching and service, including his appointment as a Distinguished Professor by the Board of Trustees. He was also designated the Olie W. Rauh Professor of Law and granted UDC's Ronald Brown Leadership Award.

### **Financial Impact**

This request has been approved based upon the information provided. There are no anticipated risks at this time.