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### African-American Alumni Celebration, February 21-22, 2014

William & Mary Law School

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#### Recommended Citation

William & Mary Law School, "African-American Alumni Celebration, February 21-22, 2014" (2014). *Black History at W&M Law*. 26.

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# *African-American Alumni Celebration*

William & Mary Law School  
February 21–22, 2014





## Welcome from Dean Davison M. Douglas

Dear Alumni,

I am delighted to welcome you back to William & Mary Law School for this marvelous African-American Alumni Celebration.

This is a special milestone in the history of the nation's oldest law school. We gather to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the law school graduation of Edward A. Travis, the first African-American to receive any type of degree from William & Mary.

Edward Travis was a true trailblazer who paved the way for the many exceptional students of color who followed in his footsteps. This weekend provides the opportunity to remember his accomplishment and to celebrate all of the Law School's African-American alumni.

I hope that you will enjoy reconnecting with classmates, meeting graduates who walked the halls of Marshall-Wythe before or after you, and speaking with current students who can tell you about life at William & Mary Law School in 2014.

Thank you for joining us this weekend! I hope you will wish to return often!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Davison M. Douglas

Dean

Arthur B. Hanson Professor of Law



**Edward Augustus Travis** received his B.C.L. degree from Marshall-Wythe in 1954, breaking the color barrier and paving the way for generations of exceptional students of color at the College and the Law School. This year is the 60th anniversary of his

graduation—the first African-American from William & Mary. Travis was living in Hampton when he entered law school. He was born on October 16, 1911, in Reed's Ferry, Virginia. He attended high school at St. Paul's in Lawrenceville, Virginia. Travis attended Hampton Institute and graduated from Florida A&M University in 1939.

Travis died in November 1960 at Whittaker Memorial Hospital in Newport News, Virginia. He was a teacher at Carver High School at the time of his death and a member of the Newport News Teachers Association. He was married to Pearly Travis, and their daughter is Edwardine Travis of Hampton, Virginia.

Edward Travis Earns B. C. L.: First Negro Is Awarded William and Mary Degree  
Knattle, J.  
 New Journal and Guide (1916-2003); Aug. 28, 1954.  
 Post-Quant Historical Newspapers: Norfolk Journal and Guide (1921-2003)  
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EDWARD A. TRAVIS  
 Earns Degree

### Edward Travis Earns B. C. L.

## First Negro Is Awarded William and Mary Degree

By J. H. Knattle  
**WILLIAMSBURG**—Edward Augustus Travis of 708 Kentucky avenue, Hampton, stepped forward on the evening of Friday, August 13, and received the degree of bachelor of civil law at the historic William and Mary College. The officials of the famed college conferred the degree upon Mr. Travis without fanfare.

But history was made at William and Mary College that evening and Mr. Travis was the key figure in that history. He is reputed to be the first regular Negro student to attend and receive a degree from the renowned college.

**THIS REPORTER**, who was present at the special exercises at which degrees were conferred upon 82 persons, was particularly impressed with the warm congratulations bestowed upon Mr. Travis by members of the white race.

On hand to see Mr. Travis graduate were his wife and daughter, Mrs. Pearly Travis and Edwardine; his mother, Mrs. Mary Travis Stow; Mrs. Sarah Jordan, Mrs. Octavia Knight and daughter Janet. Apparently no provision had been made for a cause colored visitors were seated indiscriminately among members of the opposite race.

**MAIN SPEAKER** for the occasion was Thomas C. Boushall, president of the Bank of Virginia, Richmond. Mr. Boushall traced how the baton of civilization through the years has passed from one nation to another. He said that the baton now has been placed in the keeping of the United States.

He charged this country not to be delinquent in the task that Providence has placed upon it. It is this country's duty, he said

to see to it that all the people within its borders and elsewhere share in this world's wealth. This, Mr. Boushall said, is a necessary prerequisite if man is to develop his spiritual potentials.

The exercises which were of an hour duration were held on the campus in front of the Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Building. Of singular interest was the fact that a nearby clock began striking the hour of six as the exercises got under way and again at seven at the exact conclusion of the program.

**AN INFORMAL** reception for the graduates, their relatives and invited friends was held in the great hall and on the piazza of the Sir Christopher Wren Building immediately following the exercises.

Here again this reporter was impressed with the friendly manner in which colored visitors were greeted by everyone. As this writer was leaving the confines of the beautiful, rolling campus, he could not help but sense that he had witnessed a minor scene in a spectacular drama that has not begun to unfold. Years shall doubtlessly elapse before the climactic scenes of the drama are reached, but this minor scene hints at the wonderful day that lies ahead for the race.

## Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott



Congressman Scott is currently serving his 11th term in Congress. Prior to serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Scott served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1978 to 1983 and in the Senate of Virginia from 1983 to 1993.

During his 15-year tenure in the Virginia General Assembly, Rep. Scott successfully sponsored laws that are critical to Virginians in healthcare, education, employment, economic development, crime prevention, social services, and consumer protection. His legislative successes included laws that improved healthcare benefits for women, infants, and children; increased the Virginia minimum wage; and created the Governor’s Employment and Training Council. He also sponsored the Neighborhood Assistance Act, which provides tax credits to businesses for donations made to approved social service and crime prevention programs.

In November 1992, Rep. Scott was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Through this election, he made history by becoming the first African-American elected to Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia since Reconstruction and only the second African-American elected to Congress in Virginia’s history.

## **The Honorable John Charles Thomas**

The Honorable John Charles Thomas, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, graduated from the University of Virginia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in American government in 1972. He attended the University of Virginia School of Law and received his law degree in 1975. Following law school, Thomas joined Hunton & Williams and was the first African-American at the firm. He was admitted to the law firm's partnership in April 1982 and was the first black lawyer in the history of the American South — from Virginia to Texas — to come to a southern law firm out of law school and “go up the line” to make partner.



In 1983, he was appointed to the Supreme Court of Virginia, becoming the first African-American and (being 32) the youngest person of any race to sit on the Supreme Court. In the middle of his seventh year on the court, he resigned (due to illness) and was succeeded by Leroy Rountree Hassell, Sr., who later became the court's first black chief justice. Judge Thomas now practices law in Richmond, Virginia, as part of the Hunton & Williams LLP law firm.

In 1995, he received the NAACP's Lifetime Image Award. In 2005, Thomas was named a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which is based in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 2006, Thomas was appointed to the Board of Visitors of the College of William & Mary, a position to which he was reappointed in 2009.



**Edith Cumbo** is portrayed by Colonial Williamsburg Historical Interpreter Emily James. Edith, born ca. 1735, was the head of her own household in Williamsburg, one of only a handful of free blacks living within the city limits about the time of the American Revolution.

Cumbo was likely born in Charles City County, Virginia, several miles from Williamsburg. She is the daughter of Richard and Fortune Cumbo. Edith is not enslaved because her mother was a free woman when Edith was born. According to eighteenth-century Virginia law, a child born in the colony inherited the free or enslaved status of his or her mother. She grew up with her five brothers: Richard, Michael, Peter, Stephen, and Thomas.

In June 1778, Edith Cumbo takes steps to protect her property and household when she takes Adam White to the York County Court, located in Yorktown, and sues him for trespassing and assault and battery.

Emily James brings Edith Cumbo to life in her reenactment of her time in Williamsburg and the effects of Virginia Laws on the enslaved.

## Schedule of Events

Friday, February 21

- 11:00 A.M. Registration – Law School Lobby
- 12:00 Noon Lunch in the Holton Room  
National Center for State Courts  
Keynote Speaker:  
Congressman Bobby Scott
- 1:30 P.M – 2:30 P.M. Room 124 - In-House Attorneys Panel  
Robert W. Alexander (Wes) '02  
Ozell C. Freeman, Jr. (O.C.) '91  
Moderator - Ezekiel Ross (Zeke) '03
- 2:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. Room 124 - View from the Bench  
Judges Panel:  
The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton '87  
The Honorable Wilford Taylor, Jr. '78  
The Honorable Eileen A. Olds '82  
Moderators -  
Reginald M. Barley (Reggie) '77  
Courtney M. Malveaux '02
- Break
- 3:45 P.M. – 4:45 P.M. Room 124 - African American Law  
Students/BLSA  
President W. Taylor Reveley III  
Dean Davison Douglas  
Associate Dean Faye F. Shealy  
Professor *Emeritus* John M. Levy  
Moderators -  
Barbara L. Johnson '84  
Megan Tumi Jackson '08
- 5:00 P.M. Reception – Law School Lobby
- 6:30 P.M. Dinner and Dancing  
Leadership Hall, Alumni House,  
500 Richmond Road  
Keynote Speaker:  
The Honorable John Charles Thomas  
Former Justice of the Supreme Court of  
Virginia

(Continued)



Saturday, February 22

9:00 A.M.

Continental Breakfast  
Law School Lobby

9:30 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Room 124 - CLE Course  
The Honorable Margaret P. Spencer  
Social Media Evidence and the  
Admissibility of Computer- Generated  
Evidence – 1 ½ Credit Hours\*

11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Room 124 - Reflections – Representative  
from each decade to give thoughts and  
reflections on their  
Law School Experience  
Sharon Coles-Stewart '75  
The Honorable Birdie Hairston Jamison '82  
Pleasant S. Brodnax III '86  
Daniel A. Cody '98

12:30 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Lunch – Law School Lobby

1:30 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Room 124 - Colonial Williamsburg  
Presentation especially designed  
for African-Americans. Colonial  
Williamsburg interpreter  
Emily James portrays Edith Cumbo in the  
time of the American Revolution.

6:30 P.M.

Oliver Hill Banquet – Chesapeake A&B  
Cocktail Reception and Dinner  
Sadler Center – Main Campus of the College  
Speaker: David Baugh, Criminal Defense  
Attorney

\*Please inquire at the registration desk for forms to apply for Virginia CLE credit.

Many thanks to our hardworking and dedicated committee members  
for making this wonderful celebration possible:

Barbara L. Johnson '84, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Eileen A. Olds '82, Co-Chair  
Reginald M. Barley (Reggie) '77  
Daniel A. Cody '98  
Megan Tumi Jackson '08  
Courtney M. Malveaux '02  
Earl G. Pinto '00  
C. Ezekiel Ross (Zeke) '03  
The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton '87