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The Honorable Earl B. Gilliam

Thomas Jefferson School of Law is proud to recognize the Honorable Earl B. Gilliam, a highly esteemed and dedicated member of the San Diego judiciary and of this law school's faculty for several decades.

Judge Gilliam's many years of distinguished service to the legal community began in 1957 when, having just graduated from the Hastings College of Law, he was admitted to the California Bar and appointed Deputy District Attorney for the County of San Diego. In 1961, he started his own general law practice. Two years later, Judge Gilliam was appointed to the Municipal Court, becoming the first African American to sit on the San Diego bench. He was elected Presiding Judge in 1971. Governor Jerry Brown elevated Judge Gilliam to the Superior Court in 1975 and, five years later, President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve on the United States District Court for the Southern District of California.

Thomas Jefferson School of Law is extremely fortunate to have recruited Judge Gilliam as an adjunct professor in 1969, the year the school opened in San Diego as Western State University College of Law. With a combined background in business administration, economics, civil and criminal law, and trial practice, Judge Gilliam proved to be an inspirational and devoted instructor for the Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, Trusts, Community Property and Trial Practice courses he has taught over the years. For more than 15 years, Judge Gilliam also served as the Director of Trial Practice, a position of key importance to the school's curriculum and students.

A resident of San Diego since his youth, Judge Gilliam has generously given time and effort to this community in countless ways. He has served on the boards of numerous civic, professional and private organizations, including the YMCA, the Urban League, the Boys' Club, the San Diego State University Alumni Association, the Burn Institute, the Salvation Army, Western State University and the Black Jewish Dialogue, which he founded and organized. The community, in turn, has repeatedly acknowledged his contributions. He was named Young Man of the Year by the San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1965 and Golden Man of the Year by the Boys' Club of San Diego in 1981. That same year he was named the recipient of the prestigious San Diego Trial Lawyers Association's Trial Judge of the Year award. Judge Gilliam also has earned the Sharp Hospital Foundation's Eagle Spirit Award and the NAACP's Civil Rights Pioneer Award. San Diego's African American lawyers' organization honored him several years ago by changing its name to the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association.

The students, faculty and staff of this law school have been deeply privileged to associate with such a remarkable and caring individual as Judge Gilliam. In tribute to his unwavering commitment to this school and to the many attorneys he has positively influenced and helped prepare for a career in law, Thomas Jefferson School of Law is proud to acknowledge this outstanding jurist with the dedication of The Honorable Earl B. Gilliam Moot Courtroom.

November 17, 1995