Theodore McMillian

Judge United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, St. Louis Missouri Inducted July 31, 2004

Judge Theodore McMillian was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri where attended public school. He graduated first in his class from Vashon High School and went on to attend Lincoln University graduating in 1941, Phi Beta Kappa with degree in math and physics. He received his law degree from St. Louis University again graduating first in his class and was the African-American named to Alpha Sigma Nu, a Jesuit National Honor Society.

In 1949, Judge McMillian opened his own law firm in St. Louis. Four years later, he was hired as Assistant Circuit Attorney for St. Louis. In 1956, he became the first African-American appointed by the governor to the Circuit Court for St. Louis 22^{nd} Judicial Circuit. In 1976, he became the first African-American appointed to the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Eastern District of Missouri and in 197, President Jimmy Carter appointed him to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, again making him the first African-American on the court. Since his appointments, he has written over 1200 opinions, some of which paved the way for landmarks Supreme Court rulings.

Judge McMillian has received numerous awards honoring his outstanding achievements as a distinguished jurist and his contributions to the community. These include his induction into the National Bar Association's Hall of Fame and in 2003 he received the Spirit of Excellence Award from the ABA's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession. This award is given to attorney's who are trailblazers, role models and mentors, who have overcome obstacles to assist in the advancement of lawyers from diverse backgrounds. The Spirit of Excellence Award is especially fitting for despite poverty and racial barriers he faced throughout his life, Judge McMillian as accomplished great things from himself and others. Despite his many accomplishments he has an abiding sense of modesty which is evidenced by the sign in his office that reads, "It is much more important to be human than to be important."