



OFFICIAL RUN OF SHOW

The National HBCU Pre-Law Hall of Fame

*Induction Ceremony & Awards Presentation
and
Aspiring Lawyers Pinning Ceremony*

Saturday, September 26, 2026

6:30 - 8:30 P.M. ET
North Carolina Central University Student Center
Durham, North Carolina

“Honoring Legacy. Affirming Purpose. Inspiring the Next Generation.”

13th Annual National HBCU Pre-Law Summit & Law Expo

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We will conclude the 13th Annual National HBCU Pre-Law Summit & Law Expo with one of its most meaningful traditions: the National HBCU Pre-Law Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Awards Presentation and Aspiring Lawyers Pinning Ceremony.

This powerful evening will honor distinguished lawyers, advocates, educators, leaders, and trailblazers whose careers exemplify excellence, courage, service, and an enduring commitment to justice. Their accomplishments remind us that a legal career can become far more than a profession — it can be an instrument for advocacy, leadership, institution-building, community empowerment, and transformational change.

The evening will culminate in the Aspiring Lawyers Pinning Ceremony, an intergenerational rite of passage affirming the next generation's place in the legal profession. Aspiring lawyers will receive their official pins, recite the Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge together, and be individually pinned by volunteer attorneys and participating Hall of Fame honorees. Each pin will symbolize preparation, integrity, perseverance, service, mutual support, and the responsibility to make the path wider for those who follow.

"We see you, we welcome you, and we are invested in your success."

"I belong here. I accept the responsibility. I am prepared to pursue this calling with purpose."

This will be more than an awards ceremony. It will be a celebration of legacy, a public affirmation of possibility, and a powerful connection between those who have led and those preparing to carry the work forward.

Date: Saturday, September 26, 2026

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 P.M. ET

Location: North Carolina Central University Student Center, Durham, North Carolina

Format: A celebration of distinguished lawyers, leaders and advocates, followed by a ceremonial charge to the next generation of aspiring attorneys.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, September 26, 2026 • 6:30–8:30 P.M. ET • Durham, North Carolina

Time	Duration	Program Segment	Speaker and Production Notes
6:30-6:32 p.m.	2 min.	Invocation and Expression of Gratitude	Speaker TBD. Begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.
6:32-6:36 p.m.	4 min.	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Welcome guests and introduce the evening's purpose: recognizing distinguished leaders and advocates whose careers exemplify excellence, service and commitment to advancing justice while inspiring the next generation of attorneys.
6:36-6:38 p.m.	2 min.	Introduction of Special Guest Speaker	Introducer TBD. Introduce Brandon M. Graham using selected biographical highlights. His complete biography should appear in the digital program.
6:38-6:50 p.m.	12 min.	Special Guest Remarks	Brandon M. Graham, Ed.D., M.B.A., J.D. Candidate — Founder and CEO, Our HBCUs Matter Foundation and National Institute for HBCU Success — Atlanta, Georgia and Washington, D.C.
6:50-6:52 p.m.	2 min.	Introduction of Special Guest Speaker	Introducer TBD. Introduce Jennell Loper using selected biographical highlights. Her complete biography should appear in the digital program.
6:52-7:04 p.m.	12 min.	Special Guest Remarks	Jennell Loper, Esq. — Associate Attorney, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A. — Orlando, Florida
7:04-7:07 p.m.	3 min.	Introduction to the 2026 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony	The emcee explains the purpose and significance of the National HBCU Pre-Law Hall of Fame and briefly describes the induction format. Cue the Hall of Fame graphic, music or introductory presentation.
7:07-7:17 p.m.	10 min.	Induction of A. Scott Bolden	Two-minute introduction and tribute; one-minute award presentation and photograph; up to seven minutes for acceptance remarks.
7:17-7:27 p.m.	10 min.	Induction of Xavier R. Donaldson	Two-minute introduction and tribute; one-minute award presentation and photograph; up to seven minutes for acceptance remarks.
7:27-7:38 p.m.	11 min.	Posthumous Legacy Award Honoring DeWarren K. Langley	Three-minute legacy tribute; one-minute award presentation and photograph; up to seven minutes for remarks by the designated family or organizational representative.

Time	Duration	Program Segment	Speaker and Production Notes
7:38-7:48 p.m.	10 min.	Induction of Lee Merritt	Two-minute introduction and tribute; one-minute award presentation and photograph; up to seven minutes for acceptance remarks.
7:48-7:50 p.m.	2 min.	Hall of Fame Recognition and Official Group Photograph	Invite all attending honorees, presenters and the representative accepting on behalf of DeWarren Langley to the stage. Hall of Fame honorees participating as ceremonial pinning attorneys should remain near the front after the photograph.
7:50-7:55 p.m.	5 min.	Significance of the Pinning Ceremony and Participant Instructions	Explain the ceremony's symbolism and its connection to excellence, integrity, service and community support. Ensure that every participating student has a pin. Explain the pledge, pinning-line procedure and exit route. Introduce and recognize the nine ceremonial pinning attorneys.
7:55-8:00 p.m.	5 min.	Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge	Pledge leader TBD. Students stand together, hold their pins and recite the Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge in unison. Display the complete pledge on screen and have the leader read it slowly, one phrase at a time.
8:00-8:23 p.m.	23 min.	Aspiring Lawyers Ceremonial Pinning Procession	The nine ceremonial pinning attorneys take their designated positions at the front of the room. Students form lines before the attorneys they would like to pin them. Each student hands their pin to the selected attorney, who formally pins and congratulates the student. Three line coordinators oversee the nine stations and redirect students as needed to maintain an efficient flow. Instrumental music plays throughout.
8:23-8:28 p.m.	5 min.	Closing Charge, Sponsor Recognition and Closing Remarks	Evangeline M. Mitchell, Esq., Ed.M., Founder, National HBCU Pre-Law Summit & Law Expo. Deliver a final charge to the newly pinned aspiring lawyers; recognize the Hall of Fame honorees, special guests, ceremonial pinning attorneys, sponsors, partners, volunteers and team members; and formally conclude the ceremony.
8:28-8:30 p.m.	2 min.	Schedule Cushion and Dismissal	Absorb minor delays and facilitate an orderly dismissal. If the program remains on time, use these minutes for final acknowledgments or instructions regarding post-program photographs and activities.

2026 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES & HONOREES

Listed alphabetically by surname.

A. Scott Bolden, Esq.

*Partner, Reed Smith LLP
Washington, D.C.*

Xavier R. Donaldson, Esq.

*Criminal Defense Attorney
New York, New York*

DeWarren K. Langley, J.D., M.P.A.

*Founder and Executive Director, Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation, Inc.
Durham, North Carolina*

POSTHUMOUS LEGACY AWARD HONOREE

Lee Merritt, Esq.

*Civil Rights Attorney and Founder, Merritt Law Firm
Dallas, Texas*

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Brandon M. Graham, Ed.D., M.B.A., J.D. Candidate

*Founder and CEO, Our HBCUs Matter Foundation
National Institute for HBCU Success
Atlanta, Georgia | Washington, D.C.
Speaking time: 12 minutes*

Jennell Loper, Esq.

*Associate Attorney, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A.
Orlando, Florida
Speaking time: 12 minutes*

HALL OF FAME PRESENTATION FORMAT

Living Hall of Fame Inductees

Each living inductee receives 10 minutes:

- Introduction and tribute: 2 minutes
- Award presentation and official photograph: 1 minute
- Acceptance remarks: up to 7 minutes

Posthumous Legacy Award

The tribute honoring DeWarren K. Langley receives 11 minutes:

- Legacy introduction and tribute: 3 minutes
- Award presentation and photograph: 1 minute
- Remarks by the designated family or organizational representative: up to 7 minutes

ASPIRING LAWYERS PINNING CEREMONY FORMAT

The pinning ceremony will proceed in the following order:

1. Every participating student receives an Aspiring Lawyer pin.
2. The ceremony leader explains the meaning and significance of the pin.
3. The nine ceremonial pinning attorneys are introduced and recognized.
4. Students stand together while holding their pins.
5. The pledge leader guides students in reciting the Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge in unison.
6. The nine attorneys move to their designated pinning stations at the front of the room.
7. Students form lines before the attorneys they would like to pin them.
8. Each student hands their pin to the selected attorney.
9. The attorney formally pins and congratulates the student.
10. The newly pinned student follows the designated exit route and returns to their seat or moves to the assigned gathering area.

CEREMONIAL PINNING ATTORNEYS

Attorneys and judges honoring pre-law students at the Aspiring Lawyers Pinning Ceremony, where each student is pinned by a practicing lawyer and takes the Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge.

Chelsi C. Edwards, Esq.

*Attorney, General Civil Practice
Durham, North Carolina*

Dawn Baxton, Esq.

*Chief Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender, Durham County
Durham, North Carolina*

The Honorable Dorothy Hairston Mitchell

*District Court Judge, North Carolina District Court, Judicial District 16
Durham, North Carolina*

Kehinde Watford, Esq.

*Attorney and Founder, Watford Law Firm
Durham, North Carolina*

The Honorable Lori Christian

*Certified Mediator and Arbitrator; Retired Judge, Lori Christian ADR
Raleigh, North Carolina*

Myra Griffin, Esq.

*Vice-Chair and Commissioner, North Carolina Industrial Commission
Raleigh, North Carolina*

The Honorable Rashad Hauter

*District Court Judge, North Carolina District Court, Wake County
Raleigh, North Carolina*

Satana Deberry, Esq.

*District Attorney, Durham County, North Carolina Prosecutorial District 16
Durham, North Carolina*

The Honorable Shamioka LaCher Rhinehart

*Superior Court Judge, North Carolina Superior Court, District 16A
Durham, North Carolina*

PINNING CEREMONY ROOM SETUP

Pinning Stations

- Establish nine clearly marked pinning stations across the front of the room.
- Place sufficient space between stations so students and attorneys can move comfortably.
- Display each attorney's name and professional title on a large, visible sign.
- Arrange the stations in a single row if space permits. If two rows are necessary, maintain a clear entry and exit path.
- Place Hall of Fame honorees who volunteer to participate alongside the other ceremonial pinning attorneys.
- Provide each attorney with water and ensure that lighting is sufficient for pinning and photography.

Student Lines

- Assign at least three line coordinators, with each coordinator overseeing three pinning stations.
- Designate one lead procession manager to monitor all nine lines.
- Allow students to select their preferred pinning attorney.
- If one line becomes substantially longer, coordinators should advise students that they may move to a shorter line.
- Do not compel a student to change lines if being pinned by a particular attorney carries personal significance.
- Create separate entry and exit routes so pinned students do not cross paths with those waiting.
- Use floor markers, stanchions or signs to establish the nine lines before the program begins.

Pin Preparation

- Distribute pins before the pledge begins.
- Remove pins from plastic packaging in advance whenever possible.
- Ensure that clasps and pin backs are loosened and ready for use.
- Ask students to hold their pins securely and have them ready when they reach the attorney.
- Keep replacement pins and pin backs at the front of the room.
- Assign at least one volunteer to manage replacement pins and resolve any pin-related issues.

CAPACITY AND TIMING

With nine attorneys and 23 minutes allotted for the procession, the 8:30 p.m. ending remains realistic for approximately 100-125 students. If participation approaches or exceeds 150 students, recruit one or two additional attorneys, preassign stations or consider adding time.

Number of Students	Average Per Attorney	Timing Assessment
75 students	8-9	Very comfortable
100 students	11-12	Comfortable
125 students	13-14	Workable with active line management
150 students	16-17	Possible, but requires an efficient procession and balanced lines

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

- Assign an event photographer to capture candid images at all nine stations.
- Avoid stopping the procession for posed individual photographs.
- If students want posed photographs with their pinning attorneys, arrange for those photographs after the formal program.
- Capture the official Hall of Fame group photograph during the designated two-minute segment.
- If the program remains on schedule, use the final two-minute cushion to organize a collective photograph of the newly pinned aspiring lawyers.
- Inform the photographer in advance which moments are essential, including award presentations, acceptance remarks, the pledge and the first students pinned at each station.

STAGE AND AWARD MANAGEMENT

- Seat the Hall of Fame honorees and the representative accepting for DeWarren Langley near the stage in presentation order.
- Label each award clearly on the back and arrange the awards in presentation order.
- Assign one person to carry and present the awards.
- Assign a separate stage escort to guide honorees and presenters.
- Confirm which family or organizational representative will accept DeWarren Langley's Posthumous Legacy Award.
- Ask every honoree to identify a preferred introducer or assign someone with a meaningful professional or personal connection.
- Confirm in advance which Hall of Fame honorees will also serve as ceremonial pinning attorneys.

TIMING CONTROLS

- Provide special guests and honorees with two-minute, one-minute and stop cards.
- Notify Brandon Graham and Jennell Loper that each has 12 minutes.
- Notify the living Hall of Fame inductees that their acceptance remarks are limited to seven minutes.
- Notify the representative accepting for DeWarren Langley that their remarks are limited to seven minutes.
- Place the next presenter and honoree in the stage holding area before the preceding segment concludes.
- Introductions should focus on meaningful highlights rather than full biographies.
- If the program falls behind, shorten introductions, photographs and nonessential acknowledgments first.
- Preserve the Posthumous Legacy Award tribute, Aspiring Lawyer Success Pledge and ceremonial pinning procession.
- The combined closing charge and closing remarks must end by 8:28 p.m.
- The formal program must conclude no later than 8:30 p.m.