



## **Walter Sutton**

**Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.  
Associate General Counsel**

Dr. Sutton grew up in Marshall, Texas, where he attended segregated schools. He graduated high school at 16 and went to college in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Sutton majored in economics at the University of Denver and was the first African-American to become Student Body Vice President. He initially took a job with Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan, where he was responsible for the logistics of shipping cars by rail all over the country. While in Michigan, he met a judge from his hometown who suggested that Dr. Sutton consider going to law school part time while he worked at Ford. To that end he attended Wayne State University at night and performed so well during his first year of law school that he was offered a full scholarship to the University of Michigan School of Law. After graduating from law school in 1970, he returned to work at Ford as a staff attorney until 1972, when he moved back to Texas to work as the first African-American in Tenneco Oil Company's legal department.

Shortly thereafter, he was hired by Texas Instruments (TI) in Dallas, and was the first African-American lawyer there as well. At the time, he was one of only 12 African-American lawyers in Dallas. While working at TI, Dr. Sutton was tasked with an environmental law issue, which led to his specialization in environmental law. As a result, Dr. Sutton became a pioneer in the field of environmental law. He continued working on various environmental law issues for TI until he left the company in 1988 to complete his coursework for a Ph.D. in Management Science at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD).

Upon graduation in 1989, he became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. from UTD. Dr. Sutton was then hired by Hughes & Luce to direct the firm's expansion into the field of environmental law. He was also active as a lobbyist in Austin representing 25 corporate and association clients, including Perot Systems. After leaving Hughes & Luce in 1993, Dr. Sutton went to the Environmental Protection Agency where he became the first African-American to head up the regional counsel's office in Dallas.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton appointed him as the Associate Administrator for Policy for the Federal Highway Administration. Two years later, he was appointed Deputy Federal Highway Administrator where he administered a \$60 billion budget and managed a national staff of 3,000 employees. After leaving the Federal Highway Administration in 2001, Dr. Sutton became the Chief of Staff/Special Assistant to the President at UTD. There he served the university community as ombudsman for issues of equity, equal employment opportunity, ethics and diversity until 2005 when he moved to Bentonville, Arkansas, to take a job at the Home Office of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Dr. Sutton has managed Wal-Mart's Legal Department's diversity and external funding budget, and coordinates diversity events for the Legal Department. While Dr. Sutton was in Dallas, he was appointed by Dallas Mayor Steve Bartlett to serve as the first African-American to head the Environmental Health Advisory Committee. He was also Chair of the Environmental Law Section for the Dallas Bar Association and was President of the J.L. Turner Legal Association. He also served as President of the National Bar Association. He currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Wiley College in Marshall, Texas.