



Rhonda F. Hunter

Farrow-Gillespie & Heath LLP
Partner

Rhonda Hunter is a Board Certified Family Law Specialist. After 25 years in solo practice, she recently joined the law firm of Farrow-Gillespie & Heath, L.L.P. as a partner.

Rhonda Hunter became the first African-American President of the Dallas Bar Association in 2004. Ms. Hunter served on the Dallas Bar Association Board of Directors for fourteen years before becoming President of the Association, shaping, designing and implementing many bar-related programs that have helped others succeed.

Ms. Hunter also served as President of the J.L. Turner Legal Association, President of the Dallas Association of Black Women Attorneys, and President of the Dallas Bar Association's Community Service Fund. Ms. Hunter has served on the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors, is a former member of the State Bar of Texas Family Law Council, and is a former member of the Supreme Court of Texas Board of Disciplinary Appeals. On a national level, Ms. Hunter has served on the National Conference of Bar Presidents' Executive Council and Metropolitan Bar Caucus Executive Committee. Ms. Hunter is the Dallas Bar Association's representative to the American Bar Association's House of Delegates.

In 2009, Ms. Hunter became the first African American to be a candidate for President of the State Bar of Texas. Ms. Hunter did not win that election, but through her work she provided inspiration and opened doors for future leaders.

Ms. Hunter, an experienced choreographer and dancer, has served as the choreographer and Assistant Director of the Bar None musical variety show for 27 years. The show is the principal fundraiser for the Sarah T. Hughes Diversity Law Fellowship, raising over \$1.6 million for minority scholarships at Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law. Since it started in the 1980's, the fellowship has been awarded to 49 law students, whose alumni include a federal magistrate, federal and state prosecutors, a judge, and a member of the Dallas City Council.

Ms. Hunter is also the founder of the Dallas Bar Association's Minority Attorney Business Development Initiative which includes the Dallas Minority Attorney Program annual seminar and workshop modules. The goal of the Minority Attorney Business Development Initiative is to provide training and increase business

development opportunities for ethnically diverse lawyers. Although geared toward the ethnically diverse lawyer, the programs are open and free to all attorneys in Dallas, including those who are not members of the Dallas Bar Association.

Ms. Hunter also helped establish the State Bar of Texas' Minorities at the Podium Program. This program, which helps connect minority attorneys with speaking and writing opportunities, won the American Bar Association's Partnership Award. Ms. Hunter has served as a mentor in the Transition to Law Practice Program, which provides mentors to young lawyers during their first years of practice.

In her inaugural address to the Dallas Bar Association in 2004, Ms. Hunter asked the association to conduct a comprehensive and candid evaluation of the state of possible racial and ethnic bias in the courts in Dallas County. While such studies have been conducted in the past, Ms. Hunter's request marked the first time that a metropolitan bar association attempted such an evaluation. The Task Force surveyed lawyers, judges and court personnel on perceptions of justice in Dallas courts and produced a written report on the results.

In 2012, Dallas Bar Association President Paul Stafford appointed Rhonda Hunter to serve as the Chair of the Dallas Bar Association's first ever Diversity Summit. The goal of the 2012 Diversity Summit is to develop "best practices" for diversity in the legal profession in four key areas. These areas are corporate legal departments, large law firms, bar associations, and law schools/pipeline programs. The Diversity Summit will be held in Dallas, Texas on November 29, 2012.

Ms. Hunter has been a dedicated pro bono attorney, helping dozens of low-income clients with their legal problems since she was licensed in 1980. She also started the Belo Legal Clinic in 2002, which provides legal aid to low-income families in Dallas.

During her year as President of the Dallas Bar Association, Ms. Hunter taught audiences from New York to Texas about the historical significance of Brown v. Board of Education and spearheaded a committee to educate 200,000 school children about the case. The State Bar of Texas awarded the Star of Merit Award for the Brown v. Board projects developed under Rhonda's direction.

Ms. Hunter also created a Language Camp. The camp was designed to increase reading level and motivation of children in the juvenile justice system.

Ms. Hunter has also served on the Board of Directors for the Child and Family Guidance Centers, Young Audiences of Greater Dallas, and the North Texas Food Bank.

Ms. Hunter has been named a Texas "Super Lawyer" by Texas Monthly magazine and one of the "Best Lawyers in Dallas" by D Magazine.