

Honors & Awards

40 under 40, Nashville Business Journal

40 under 40, Nashville Black Professionals

Business Woman of the Year, Nashville Gospel Music Awards

Women Business Extraordinaire

Dare to Soar, Women in Numbers (WIN)

Outstanding Contribution Award, African- Methodist Episcopal Church- Women's Missionary Society

Candlelight Award, Jefferson Street United Merchants Partnership (JUMP)

Women of Character, Courage & Commitment Community Advocate Award, Middle TN State University (MTSU)

Public Servant of the Year, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.- Tau Lambda Alumni Chapter, Nashville, TN

Citizen of the Year, Omega Psi Phi, Inc., Gamma Phi Chapter, Nash, TN

Professional of the Year, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Nashville Alumnae Chapter

Top 100 Lawyers, The National Black Lawyers

Pro Bono Attorney for Justice, TN Supreme Court

Mahogany LGBT Advocacy Award, Mahogany Honors

LGBTQ Outstanding Support Award, Tri-State Black Pride & The Cathedral Foundation, Memphis, TN

Judicial Excellence Award, Women WHO Rock Nashville, TN

Best in Community Advocacy, Power Moves Awards, Nashville, TN

Justice Janice M. Holder – Access to Justice Award, TALS- Nashville, TN

Outstanding Service Award, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Access to Justice Award, LEGALTECH

Nominee and/or Finalist

Women of Influence- Nashville Business Journal

Athena Young Professional - Nashville ATHENA

Nashville Emerging Leader Award- Legal Services & Government Services

Civic Volunteer Group, Mary Catherine Strobel Volunteer Awards- Hands on Nashville

BIO-Judge Rachel L. Bell is a third generation Native Nashvillian and proud graduate of Hillsboro Comprehensive High School, where she was a stellar basketball player. Judge Bell received a NCCA, Division I-Women's Basketball scholarship to Auburn University winning the SEC Tournament Championship her Freshman Year in 1997 and finished her collegiate career at The University of Memphis earning her Bachelor of Science in Education and her Juris Doctorate Degree from Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.

In **2012**, Judge Bell, was elected General Sessions Court Judge, Division VIII (8) and unanimously re-elected in **2014** and **2022** to her 3rd term, with her campaign slogan: **"Nashville's Judge serving ON and OFF the bench, Ringing the BELL for Justice!!"**®

Judge Rachel is the first openly bi-sexual judge in the State of TN and first elected Judge to identify LGBTQ+ in Nashville, TN. She is also the founder of the Music City Community Court (MCCC) with a mission to create initiatives focused on preventive, diversionary and restorative justice. Its vision is to do all it can to help break the playground to prison pipeline; to restore and rehabilitate lives by using its power and resources to move the needle for marginalized people. MCCC is the first in the State of TN and has 3 specialty courts named RESTORE Re-Entry Court for Returning Citizens, C.A.R.E. (Creating Avenues for Restoration & Empowerment) Diversionary Court for offenders that are Ages 18-30 and the L.E.G.A.C.Y. (Let Every Goal Achieve Continuous Yields) Housing Resource Diversionary Court & Program that provides tools to assist tenants dealing with rent arrearages and eviction. During COVID in 2021, Judge Rachel's work was featured during the White House Eviction Prevention Summit, the Black News Channel and MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell Show with Former Secretary of HUD, Julian Castro.

Judge Rachel has won numerous awards a few to mention, the TN Human Rights Award for Outstanding Service, the Women Who Rock Nashville "Judicial Excellence Award, the Power Moves Award, the NAACP LEGACY Award, the Janice M. Holder Access to Justice Award and the LEGALTECH Award for use of technology within the courts. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Fisk University with the John R. Lewis Graduate Social Justice and Leadership Program. Judge Rachel is a true advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and is a David Bohnett Fellow with the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute and was selected and completed the Harvard Kennedy School for Senior Executives in State and Local Government.

Judge Rachel is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, New Covenant Christian Church, Disciples of Christ and worships with her wife at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, A City of Grace. Judge Rachel is on the Board of Directors for the Minerva Foundation, Stonewall Bar Association, Napier Looby Bar Association, the National Bar Association LGBTQ+ Committee, the National Bar Association Judicial Council Communications Chair and is the President and Board Chair for the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce and Ring the BELL Foundation.

Judge Rachel lives in Nashville, TN with her wife, Dr. Dorsha N. James, MD who is the Medical Director at Tennessee State University. They both own Solutions NOW, Inc. as consultants in their respective fields and are truly focused on the I AM ... JUST HUMAN movement to provoke people to make the choice to step away from the labels used to define us and instead choose to see everyone under the unifying umbrella of humanity. The I AM . . . JUST HUMAN campaign encourages individuals to build relationships on the foundation of unconditional love and partake in community outreach and activism.

Judge Rachel cares deeply about equal justice and her mantras are to **"Control the Controllable"** ® and **"Justice does NOT stop at the courthouse steps!"** ®