

Press Release

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

**Laura A. Briggs, Clerk
46 E. Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

The Federal Court Family Celebrates Black History Month with

Making Black History – Judge Robert L. Wilkins’ Journey from Muncie to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit

Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 2:00 pm

On Wednesday, February 17, 2016, federal agencies in Indianapolis will sponsor an annual Black History Month Celebration. The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana will host the event at 2:00 pm in Courtroom 216 at the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Courthouse, 46 East Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Judge Robert L. Wilkins of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit will be the featured speaker and reflect on his remarkable journey from his boyhood in Muncie to his current position as a judge on one of the most important federal courts in the nation. President Obama appointed Judge Wilkins to the court on January 15, 2014. This appointment elevated Judge Wilkins from his previous seat on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, to which he was appointed on December 27, 2010.

A native of Muncie, Indiana, Judge Wilkins obtained a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in 1986 and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1989. Following law school, Judge Wilkins served as a law clerk to the Honorable Earl B. Gilliam of the United States District Court for the Southern District of California. In 1990, he joined the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia; in 2002, he joined the law firm of Venable LLP as a partner, handling white-collar defense, intellectual property and complex civil litigation matters.

During his tenure with the Public Defender Service and in private practice, Judge Wilkins served as the lead plaintiff in *Wilkins, et al. v. State of Maryland*, a landmark civil rights lawsuit that inspired nationwide legislative and executive reform of police stop-and-search practices and the collection of data regarding those practices. Judge Wilkins also played a key role in the establishment of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (scheduled to open in late 2016 on the National Mall), serving as the Chairman of the Site and Building Committee of the Presidential Commission, whose work led to the Congressional authorization of the museum and the selection of its location.

Musical entertainment will be provided by the Northernaires, North Central High School’s gospel choir.

The program will last one hour and approval of one hour of Continuing Legal Education credit is pending. **Pre-registration is NOT required.**

The program is free and open to the public. Photography will be permitted during the program. If you would like to send a photographer and/or reporter to cover the program, or if you have other questions, please contact Doria Lynch at 317-229-3729.