

## **FEDERAL BANKRUPTCY JUDGE FULFILLS DREAM OF BETTER LIFE**

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When Cornelius Blackshear graduated from Jones High School in 1957, he probably had no thought of becoming a federal bankruptcy judge.

He did just that, however, after moving to New York as an unskilled laborer and working his way through college and law school.

Blackshear's dream of a better future began while he was doing odd jobs in New York, jobs that included pushing dress racks in the garment district, working as a shipping clerk for department stores and as a mail clerk for the U.S. Postal Service. After joining the New York City Police Department, he rose from patrolman to detective sergeant while continuing his education.

He graduated with honors from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 1971 and from Fordham Law School in 1977. At Fordham, he was vice president and president of the Black American Law Students Association and helped develop programs to increase enrollment and retention of minority students.

In 1979, after 16 years as a police officer, Blackshear was appointed by the U.S. Attorney General as assistant U.S. trustee in bankruptcy for the Southern District of New York. He received a special achievement award from the Department of Justice in 1980 and the 1981 Ruth Whitehead Award from the Black American Law Students Association of [Fordham University](#).

By 1983 he had been promoted to U.S. trustee by Attorney General William French Smith.

On Nov. 25, 1985, Blackshear was sworn in as a U.S. bankruptcy judge for the Southern District of New York.