



## DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

### APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

**Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024:** Completed applications are due at 12:00 p.m. Please submit completed applications via email to [law.laca@nyu.edu](mailto:law.laca@nyu.edu).

In 1994, the Black, Latino, Asian Pacific American (BLAPA) Law Alumni Association Public Service Scholarship was created to promote the practice of law in the public sector by graduates of the New York University School of Law. In October 2011, the Scholarship was renamed the Derrick Bell Scholarship for Public Service\* to celebrate Professor Bell and his commitment to legal education, critical thought, and community empowerment. The Law Alumni of Color Association (LACA), *formerly known as BLAPA*, alumni have contributed funds to create this Scholarship **to reduce the law school debt burden of second and/or third year students** who are members of **APALSA, BALSALSA, LaLSA, MENALSALSA, NALSALSA, or SALSALSA**, have proven their dedication to public service, plan to pursue careers in public interest law, and demonstrate a commitment to social justice in the best tradition of Professor Bell.

LACA plans to award scholarship(s) in the amount of \$15,000 in 2025. **The award will be directly applied to the recipient's financial aid package for the academic year 2025-2026.** *Please note that the total amount of financial aid (including but not limited to loans, scholarships, and stipends) that the Law School can disburse is limited by the cost of attendance (COA). To ensure that COA guidelines are met, Derrick Bell scholarship recipients who already have financial aid up to the COA must have their financial aid reduced so that the total aid, inclusive of the Derrick Bell award, does not exceed the COA. For example, if the recipient of a Derrick Bell scholarship already has a combination of scholarships and loans up to the COA, the student's loans would need to be reduced in order to accommodate the addition of the Derrick Bell scholarship.*

A screening panel of alumni, chosen by the LACA Board, will read all applications. The panel will make every attempt to preserve the anonymity of each applicant during this initial screening process; the readers will not know the applicants' names. This panel will select several finalists to be interviewed in person.

Finalists will be notified via telephone or e-mail on **Wednesday, December 4, 2024**. All finalists must be available for a personal interview with the Selection Committee to take place at NYU School of Law on **Friday December 6, 2024** from 1:00-4:00pm or **Saturday, December 7, 2024**, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicants must be a member of **APALSA, BALSALSA, LaLSA, MENALSALSA, NALSALSA or SALSALSA**.
2. Applicants must be first or second year students in good academic standing.
3. Applicants must have demonstrated commitment to public interest/public service.
4. Applicants must intend to pursue careers in public interest law.
5. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to social justice in the tradition of Professor Bell.

## SUMMARY OF PROFESSOR BELL'S LIFE AND WORK

### **The Early Years: The Making of the Intellectual and Activist**

Professor Derrick Bell Albert Bell, Jr., was born on November 6, 1930, in Pittsburgh, the eldest of four children. A serious work ethic and the drive to confront authority were instilled in Professor Bell at an early age by his parents: Ada Elizabeth Childress Bell, a homemaker, and Derrick A. Bell, Sr., a department store porter who also established his own hauling business.

Professor Bell was the first in his family to go to college, followed by his brother and two sisters. He earned an undergraduate degree at Duquesne University and served as a lieutenant in the United States Air Force, stationed in Korea and Louisiana.

After his military service, Professor Bell entered the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, where he was the only black student in his class of 140, and only one of three black students in the school. He was elected an associate editor-in-chief of the Law Review, graduating in 1957.

When law firms in Pittsburgh refused to hire him solely on the basis of his race, Professor Bell joined the newly formed U.S. Department of Justice in the Honor Graduate Recruitment Program. He transferred a year later to the Civil Rights Division because of his interest in racial issues. His tenure there proved brief because his superiors expressed concern over his two-dollar membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). After Professor Bell's refusal to surrender his NAACP membership, senior officials physically moved his desk into the department's hallway and reduced the docket of cases to which he was assigned. In 1959, after repeated requests that he relinquish his membership, Professor Bell instead resigned.

Returning to Pittsburgh, Professor Bell went to work for the local chapter of the NAACP. While working there, he met Thurgood Marshall, then head of the NAACP's legal arm—the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF). Marshall asked Professor Bell to join his staff.

From 1960 to 1966, Professor Bell worked to dismantle the vestiges of Jim Crow and school segregation in the South, alongside Marshall and future federal court judges Robert L. Carter and Constance Baker Motley. Professor Bell supervised more than 300 school desegregation cases in the South. Upon leaving LDF, he continued his school desegregation work as deputy director of the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

He became the first executive director of the Western Center on Law and Poverty at the University of Southern California Law School, where he ran a public interest law center and taught his first classes.

In 1969, Professor Bell joined the faculty of Harvard Law School; in 1971, becoming the first black tenured professor on its faculty. Even with an outstanding career and credentials, Professor Bell credited his hiring as a response to student protests for diversity, a fact that he proudly stated over the years. In 1973, Professor Bell published the casebook that would help define the focus of his scholarship and that of many who emulated it: *Race, Racism and American Law*. Its publication, now in its sixth edition, heralded an emerging era in American legal studies, the academic study of race and the law.

In 1980, Professor Bell became the dean of the University of Oregon School of Law, one of the first African Americans to serve as dean of a predominantly white law school. That same year, he published another seminal work, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma*, 93 Harv. L. Rev. 518 (1980), in which he argued what is known as

his “interest convergence” theory, that white Americans would support racial and social justice only to the extent that it benefits them.

In 1985, Professor Bell resigned as dean of Oregon Law in protest of the faculty’s refusal to hire a superiorly qualified Asian American female professor. He returned that same year to Harvard Law School. In response to student demands for diversity, he was moved to actively support their protests, helping to bring to them national attention.

In 1990, after years of activism around the hiring and promotion of female professors of color, Professor Bell took an unpaid leave of absence from Harvard Law School in protest. When the school did not hire a woman of color, Professor Bell refused to end his two-year protest leave, thereby relinquishing his tenured position at Harvard.

Professor Bell did not protest for the sake of protesting. But he did not shy away from taking principled, sometimes public and controversial, stands. In *Confronting Authority: Reflections of an Ardent Protester*, he describes the moral and ethical basis for his challenges to the status quo. His first major non-legal book was *And We Are Not Saved*, which introduced his fictional alter ego and heroine Geneva Crenshaw.

### **The NYU Law Years: A Time of Prolific Writing and Teaching**

In 1992, Professor Bell was invited to join the faculty of New York University School of Law as a visiting professor by John Sexton, then dean of NYU School of Law.

In 1995, in honor of Professor Bell’s 65th birthday, Janet established the Derrick Bell Lecture on Race in American Society at New York University School of Law. The Bell Lecture has the distinction of being one of the nation’s leading forums on race and the law. Lecturers have included: Charles Ogletree, Charles Lawrence III, Patricia J. Williams, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, John O. Calmore, Cheryl I. Harris, Mari Matsuda, Frank Michelman, Anita Allen, Kendall Thomas, Robert A. Williams, Paul Butler, Emma Coleman Jordan, Devon Carbado, Ian Haney-Lopez and Annette Gordon-Reed.

Professor Bell is credited as a founder of Critical Race Theory, a school of thought and scholarship that critically engages questions of race and racism in the law, investigating how even those legal institutions purporting to remedy racism can profoundly entrench it.

In addition to *Confronting Authority*, his books include the New York Times bestseller, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* with the apocalyptic Space Traders story, adapted by Trey Ellis and produced by the Hudlin Brothers for HBO; *Afrolantica Legacies*; *Gospel Choirs: Psalms of Survival in an Alien Land Called Home*; and *Confronting Authority: Living a Life of Meaning and Worth*.

After a valiant, 10-year battle with carcinoid cancer, Professor Bell died on October 5, 2011. He leaves a legacy of commitment to teaching, scholarship, and activism.

# DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

**Completed applications must be received by 12:00 p.m., Monday, December 2, 2024 at law.laca@nyu.edu. Absolutely no extensions will be granted.** All materials, including a list of references must accompany the application.

The Office of Student Financial Services will redact your name from all submitted materials, except the application form, to ensure anonymity in the initial review process. To facilitate this process, make certain your NYU ID number appears on all pages.

A complete application must contain the following:

1.  A signed and dated application form.
2.  A personal statement no longer than 750 words. The statement should discuss one or two public service experiences and their importance to you (how these experiences reflect your creativity, initiative, skills, values, etc.). The statement should also discuss how your experience and goals reflect the commitment of Professor Bell. \* *Remember to put your NYU ID number (and not your name) at the top of each page of your essay.*
3.  A list of 1-2 references of people with first hand knowledge of you and your work (*i.e.*, professors, law school professors or employers).
4.  A current résumé or curriculum vitae (If your résumé does not include a detailed description of your public service experiences, please feel free to provide more detail on a separate sheet).
5.  A statement of financial need. The statement should be no longer than 250 words and should demonstrate a financial need for the scholarship.
6.  A list of all current scholarships and their criteria.
7.  Signed Transfer of Derrick Bell Scholarship for Public Service application to the LACA Scholarship Sub-Committee

# DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

## APPLICATION PROCESSING DEADLINES

<b>Monday, December 2, 2024:</b>	Scholarship applications due.
<b>Wednesday, December 4, 2024:</b>	The Scholarship finalists will be notified of their status and scheduled for interviews with the selection committee.
<b>Friday December 6, 2024:</b>	Finalists will be interviewed at NYU School of Law beginning at 1:00 p.m. Each interview will last 20 minutes. The location will be announced.
<b>Saturday, December 7, 2024:</b>	Finalists will be interviewed via zoom beginning at 10:00 a.m. Each interview will last 20 minutes. The location will be announced.
<b>Tuesday, December 10, 2024:</b>	The names of the Scholarship recipients will be announced by the Office of Student Financial Services. Recipients will be notified via e-mail.

# DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

-- 2025 --  
APPLICATION FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NYU ID NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number where you can be reached on **December 4, 2024**: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Year of Graduation from NYU School of Law: \_\_\_\_\_

State your membership in APALSA, BALSAs, LaLSAs, MENALSAs, NALSAs, and/or SALSAs:  
(give dates and offices held or activities related to membership)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you accepted summer or post graduation employment? If so, what: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby attest that my statements on this form, and any attachments submitted with it, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and are made in good faith. I have read the application requirements and agree to abide by them if selected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

**TRANSFER OF DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE  
APPLICATION TO THE LACA SCHOLARSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE**

I give permission to the Office of Student Financial Services to transfer my application and the submitted materials to the LACA Scholarship Sub-Committee for review.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Applicant

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# DERRICK BELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

## ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

- Personal Statement (*Remember to put your NYU ID number (and not your name) at the top of each page of your essay.*)
- Reference List (1-2)
- Current Résumé or Curriculum Vitae
- Statement of Financial Need
- List of current scholarships.
- Transfer of Derrick Bell Scholarship for Public Service application to the LACA Scholarship Sub-Committee.