

**Brenda Joy (B.J.) Bernstein** has worked for 30 years as a trial attorney handling civil and criminal cases as well as appeals.

She is certified by the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution to act as a Mediator and Arbitrator. She is available to mediate civil matters including personal injury, wrongful death, civil rights, church liability, business disputes, trucking cases and business disputes.

She has been recognized in Atlanta Magazine in its Super Lawyer edition as a Super Lawyer including as one of the top 100 Lawyers in Georgia and Top 50 Women Lawyers.

Georgia Trend magazine named B.J. to the Legal Elite list and has individually profiled her in the 2008 issue as one of six of Georgia's "Power Women".

B.J. was born and raised in Columbia, South Carolina.

## **Education:**

Emory University, B.A. History 1984 (graduated in 3 years)

University of Georgia School of Law, J.D. 1987

## **Awards:**

B.J. has received many prestigious awards connected to her commitment to justice.

- John Jay College Justice Award in 2009 (BJ along with former President of Ireland Mary Robinson and NYU Law School's Brennan Center for Justice received this award)
- University of Georgia School of Law Distinguished Service Scroll Award, 2007 (the Highest Award for an Alumni of the law school)
- NAACP Atlanta Jondelle Johnson Freedom Award, 2013
- Y.W.C.A. Salute to Women of Achievement Award, 2009
- SCLC-Women (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) awarded her on the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's Death with the Drum Major for Justice Award in the area of Criminal Justice, 2008
- Case of the Year Award from the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers 2009
- Emory University School of Business and the Rollins School of Public Health 's Martin Luther King Service Day Award
- Professional Award for Public Service from the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 2008
- Special recognition from the Gate City Bar Association for her work in the Genarlow Wilson case, 2007
- Saks Fifth Avenue Atlanta Salute to Women Recognition 2012

## **Media Appearances:**

B.J. has handled a number of high profile cases and provides commentary for the media on legal issues. She has appeared on CNN, CNN International, Fox News, MSNBC, NBC's Today Show, ABC's Good Morning America, CBS Early Show and NPR. She sometimes commentates on V103's Ryan Cameron Morning Show.



## Notable Cases in the Media:

Her own cases have also been in the media including the Douglas County teenager Genarlow Wilson who 's case led to the spread of Romeo and Juliet provisions for consensual teenage sexual encounters; Representing the young male plaintiff's in a lawsuit against Bishop Eddie Long; she served in federal court as the Child Guardian for young teenage girls who were victims of prostitution in the first use of RICO laws to go after child prostitution traffickers. She defended a shaken baby case in which her innocent client was acquitted that was televised on COURT TV (now TRU-TV); Represented a manager in the federal Gold Club case in Atlanta which received national attention in the media; and she wrote the amicus brief on behalf of the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense lawyers in the case of Marcus Dixon; She also was co- counsel for the young women plaintiffs, victims of sexual assault against a fraternity that was on the campus of Georgia Tech. She was co-counsel in an appellate Georgia case that declared Georgia's sodomy law unconstitutional and with the national prominence of the case led to changes in other states decriminalizing consensual sexual behavior.

She has held many leadership positions over the years including Chairman of the Atlanta Judicial Commission, Member of the Board of Visitors of the University of Georgia School of Law, former Chair of the UGA Younger Law Alumni Committee and former Secretary for the Atlanta Committee for CARE- the international relief organization.

She served over 6 years as a Board member of KIPP Charter Schools, and served many years on the Board of the American Jewish Committee Chapter in Atlanta. She was co –Chair of the 2013 Black/Jewish Coalition for the Atlanta Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

