HON. VERNA L. SAUNDERS

Justice of The Supreme Court of The State of New York

Verna L. Saunders is a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York who currently presides over matters involving Complex Litigation, including Asbestos and Mesothelioma trials. She carries a full caseload in a variety of other areas including commercial contracts, labor law, torts, sexual harassment and employment discrimination, among others. Prior to her election to Supreme Court, Justice Saunders served as the Presiding Justice of the Harlem Community Justice Center. Justice Saunders has also served in the Civil and Criminal Courts of New York, as well as presiding five years as a Housing Court Judge, adjudicating landlord-tenant disputes in New York City.

Before embarking on a judicial career, Justice Saunders worked as a Court Attorney in the New York Civil Court where she developed and implemented programs to assist *pro se* litigants. She recruited and trained attorneys through the Volunteer Lawyers Project and implemented a Community Seminar series to educate the public on various legal topics. Justice Saunders also worked as a trial attorney for the AIDS Center of Queens County, Inc. and the Teamsters-Local 237 Legal Services Plan.

All of Judge Saunders' professional pursuits have been dedicated to the public interest. Justice Saunders worked as a caseworker with Edwin Gould Services for Children and as a juvenile counselor with the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice before becoming a lawyer.

Justice Saunders was born and raised in Manhattan where she attended New York City public schools. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from The Pennsylvania State University and a law degree from The City University of New York School of Law. Over the years, Justice Saunders has provided mentorship and judicial internship opportunities to students through Legal Outreach, Inc.; the Joint Minority Bar Internship Program; the Black Law Students Association at CUNY School of Law and through Brooklyn Technical High School, her alma maters.

Justice Saunders is the current President of the Association of Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York; Immediate Past President and Board Member of The Judicial Friends Association, Inc.; a former director and honorary Board Member of the Metropolitan Black Bar Association; and a member of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and the New York State Women's Bar Associations. In addition, Justice Saunders has been a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for over thirty years.

Justice Saunders is from Harlem, a true New Yorker, who balances a very busy professional life with marriage and motherhood.