

THE second of three children, Sheila was born in Washington, D.C. Her parents instilled in her love, compassion, ambition, a thirst for knowledge and a commitment to serving others. She decided at an early age that she wanted to become a lawyer, and she did not let anything deter her from her goal. After graduating from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland in 1979, she attended Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., working her way through law school by selling books door-to-door. The experience taught her how to effectively communicate and interact with people from various backgrounds; it has served her well in her law career.

Sheila received her law degree in 1982. In 1984, after working in the Domestic Law Unit of the Legal Aid Bureau for two years, she became an assistant state's attorney in the Prince George's County State's Attorney's office. She tried cases in the District Court and Juvenile Court and served in the Felony Criminal Trials Division before capping her career as a prosecutor by being appointed chief of the Sexual Assault/Child Abuse Unit in 1987.

In June 1988, Sheila became the first female African American deputy county attorney for Prince George's County. Appointed by County Executive Parris Glendening, she supervised the legal aspects of all county contracting and procurement transactions. During her five-year tenure, the largest infrastructure and public facility construction program in county history was undertaken; Sheila played a significant role in its completion. In 1993, having accumulated a long list

of impressive professional accomplishments, Sheila was appointed to serve a ten-year term on the Prince George's County District Court by Governor William Donald Schaefer.

Sheila's commitment to her community has been exemplified by her tireless efforts on behalf of young people. An active member and past president of the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, Inc., she and other members established a mentoring program with Central High School in Capitol Heights, Maryland to foster and enhance the academic pursuits of individual students. She also has been active in two community programs, "Safe Streets 2000" and "Youth at Risk." The first was established by a group of elected officials, community leaders and organizations whose goal is to reduce incidents of violent crime by the year 2000 through education-related legislation and community activities. "Youth at Risk" is an organization based in Washington, D.C. that addresses the needs of disadvantaged children in the District and Prince George's County who are considered to be "at risk." Sheila became a mentor, advisor and friend to a child selected by the organization.

Sheila's professional associations have underscored her commitment to equal justice and opportunity for all. She has served on the Governor's Commission to Revise the Administrative Procedures Act, the Work Release Advisory Committee of the Prince George's Department of Corrections, and the Advisory Council on Family Legal Needs of Low Income Persons. Her memberships have included the Maryland State Bar Association, where she has served on the Board of Governors, and the National Bar Association.

Sheila has received numerous honors and awards during her career, including the County Attorney's Recognition Award for outstanding achievement, the Outstanding Regional Award from the National Bar Association and the Outstanding Achievements in Government and Politics Award from the National Urban League, Washington Chapter. ♣

SHEILA R. TILLERSON *Judge and Community Activist, 1957-*

