



## Joan Armstrong

June 9, 2018

A graduate of Xavier University and Loyola University School of Law, Joan made history as the first African American woman elected judge in Louisiana after having been appointed by the Governor to the position in January, 1974. She was first elected without opposition as judge of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court in June, 1974. Her election was historic. At the time there were no other women judges serving in this state. She was re-elected without opposition in 1978. During her ten year tenure, she served as the court's administrative judge. Her work on behalf of bettering the welfare of families and children has been recognized by local, state and national awards. The boards of countless religious, charitable, educational and civic organizations sought her counsel and leadership.

Chief Judge Armstrong's early achievement and accomplishments resulted in her election without opposition to the court of appeal in 1984. She was the first African-American woman appellate judge in Louisiana, the first woman on the Fourth Circuit and the first African-American to serve as the court's chief judge. Joan has also served on the Judiciary Budgetary Board; Judicial Human resources Committee and the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice. She also served on the Judicial Ethics Committee as well as other committees. In addition to distinguishing herself as a chief judge, she dedicated herself to the improvement of the administration of justice, teaching law and mentoring. She, when retired, was currently the longest serving judge in Louisiana. She

served twice as the Chair of the Louisiana Conference of Court Appeal Judges. Chief Judge Armstrong was the chief judge of Louisiana Fourth Circuit from 2003 until her retirement, January 2012.

Some of the honors bestowed on Chief Judge Armstrong included: Former member, Loyola University Law School Visiting Committee; Gillis Long Poverty Law Center First Board of Advisors; Adjunct Professor of Law, Southern university Law center, 1985to 2003; Ebony Magazine Pioneering Outstanding Black Women Judges, 1978; The William H. Samuels, Jr. Humanity Award, Southern University Law School Alumni Association, 1974; National Bar Association-Women Lawyers Distinguished Jurist Award, 1984; National Council of Jewish Women Hannah G. Solomon Award for Outstanding Service, 1986; American Bar Association Women Lawyers Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Legal Profession,1977; Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Inducted Hall of Fame, 1988; New Orleans Branch, National Association of Social Workers Citizen of the Year Award, 1988; New Orleans NAACP, Outstanding Community Service Award, 1989; Children's Bureau Clay Award for Outstanding Service, 1984;A Philip Randolph Institute Outstanding Community Service Award, 1980; The Award of Merit, The Board of Levee Commissioners of Orleans Levee District, 1976; Merit Award, National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., 1975; Special Honor, Nu Omicron Lambda Chapter of Alpha Pi Chi, Inc., 1979; Honor, Special Programs Division NOPD, 1978; One Hundred Outstanding Women leaders Honored by President and Mrs. Carter, White House Reception, 1982; Outstanding Service Award to Children in Foster Care, Jefferson Foster Parent Association, 1983; Southern Louisiana Chapter 1980-1983 recognition; Outstanding Achievement in the Legal Profession Award, A.A. Lenoir Senate Delta Theta Phi law Fraternity, 1983; Outstanding Service to the Judicial Branch of Government, A.P. Tureaud Chapter of BALSAs, 1983; American Red Cross, 1983; Exemplary Service Award, Louisiana league of Good Government,1984; The National Sojourner Truth Meritorious Service Award, The National Association of Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc.,

1985; Associated Catholic Charities Volunteer Award, 1987; Judicial Service Award in Recognition of Distinguished Career, Judges and Staff, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, 1984; National Council of Negro Women for Community Service Award, 1986; Southern Christian Leadership Conference Rosa Parks Award; Women of Distinction Southeast Louisiana Award, Girl Scout Council, 1992; Distinguished Member of Louisiana Judiciary, Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, 1996; New Orleans Hall of Fame Imperial Court Daughters of Isis, 1998; Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Ernest Morial Judicial Pace-Setter Award, 2000; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., Epsilon Sigma Chapter, Salute to Exemplary Community Service, 2001; Celebrating Women in Louisiana Politics, The Louisiana Center for Women and Government, Nicholls State University, 2004; A.P. Tureaud Achievement Award 2011; Loyola College of Law Alumni Luncheon Recognition, 2011; Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement for Outstanding Service, 2011; and numerous others.

Although Chief Judge Armstrong has been presented awards by the National Bar Association in past years, during the 2010 National Bar Association's 85th Annual Convention, she was presented the "Jurist of the Year Award" by the Women's lawyers Division of the national Bar Association. She was also presented the 2010 "William Hastie Award" by the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association at their 39th Annual Meeting attended by jurist from throughout the country. The "William H. Hastie Award" is the highest award given by the National Judicial Council.

Chief Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong entered into eternal rest on Saturday, June 9, 2018 at the age of 77. Wife of the late Deacon Andrew Armstrong and the late Clothilde Williams Bernard; Mother of Reverend David Armstrong and Anna-Karletta Armstrong-Alexander (Joshua); Sister of Florence Bernard James. She is also survived by 2 grandchildren, Amaya Alexander and Joshua Alexander, Jr.; 1 nephew, Attorney G. Karl Bernard (Cassie), other relatives and friends.

Relatives and friends of the family, also pastors, officers and members of St.

Mark Fourth Baptist Church and all local churches, also employees of the state and local judicial courts are invited to attend a Funeral Service at St. Mark Fourth Baptist Church, 2130 Perdido Street, New Orleans, Louisiana on Saturday, June 16, 2018 at 10:00am. Visitation will begin at 8:00am. Interment: Mt. Olivet Cemetery and Mausoleum. Arrangements by D. W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave., NOLA 70125. Please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com) to sign the online guestbook.

# Cemetery Details

## Mt. Olivet Cemetery

4000 Norman Mayer Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70122

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 16. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Mark Fourth Baptist Church  
2130 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

## Service

JUN 16. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Mark Fourth Baptist Church  
2130 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

# Tribute Wall

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“ *The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (OPJC) Judges honor the legacy of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong and will forever remember her philanthropic spirit. The legacy a person leaves behind is not always defined by accomplishments made during their lifetime, but by the lives touched and abetted along this life’s journey. Chief Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong will always be remembered for her enduring influence on generations of young people and adults that encountered her path throughout her lifespan. We convey our deepest sympathy to Judge Armstrong’s family and friends. Her memory is forever engrained within our hearts.*



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**Candice Bates Anderson** - June 15, 2018 at 05:01 PM