VOLUME 97 - NUMBER 31

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 2018

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PRICE: 50 CENTS

Civil Rights Groups File Brief in Support of Race Conscious Admissions at Harvard

Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard Challenges the College's Race-Conscious Holistic Admissions Policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Boston-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ), and pro bono counsel, Arnold & Porter, today filed an amicus curiae, "friend of the court," brief in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts to support the defendant's motion for summary judgement in the lawsuit challenging Harvard's race-conscious holistic admissions policy (Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard).

The coalition is participating as special "amicus plus" status and represents a cohort of racially diverse applicants, current students, and alumni at Harvard College including African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American students.

"Forty years of precedent affirms the constitutionality of a university's limited use of race in college admissions," said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "Harvard's holistic, individualized consideration of race addresses the pervasive inequalities that persist across our society. Any efforts to reverse this approach is a threat to colleges and universities nationwide."

"The consideration of race is an important aspect of a university's holistic review process and is essential in building a dynamic learning environment," said Nicole Ochi, supervising attorney at Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles. Despite what Edward Blum and Students for Fair Admissions claim, Asian Americans benefit from race-conscious holistic review; in fact, the majority of Asian Americans support affirmative action policies. Asian Americans Advancing Justice will not stand for our communities being used as a cover to end affirmative action, which would have devastaing effects on all communities of color -- including Asian Americans."

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American Bar Association Finds NCCU School of Law Compliant with Standard 501(b) and Interpretation 501-1

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) School of Law received a decision from the American Bar Association (ABA) Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar concluding that the university is in compliance with Standard 501(b) and Interpretation 501-1 on today, July 23, 2018. The school remains an approved ABA law school.

NCCU leadership appeared at the ABA's June 28-29, 2018, meeting and presented documentation and evidence related to the actions that have been put in place by the School of Law related to its admissions policy and practices. According to the Accreditation Committee Decision Public Notice, "the Committee concluded that the concrete steps taken by the Law School with respect to its admissions policy and practices demonstrated the Law School's compliance with Standard 501(b) and Interpretation 501-1. North Carolina Central University School of Law remains an approved law school."

In a message to the NCCU community, Dr. Johnson O. Akinleye, NCCU Chancellor, noted: "University officials appeared before the Committee during its June 2018, meeting and presented documentation and evidence of our commitment to ensuring the successful admission, matriculation, graduation and bar passage of our law school students. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ABA for rendering a favorable decision and members of the NCCU School of Law community for their hard work and diligence over the past several months. As our School of Law embarks on its 80th year of providing high quality legal education to citizens of North Carolina and beyond in 2019, we are reminded of the legacy of leaders that we have produced and will continue to educate in the years to come."

North Carolina Central University prepares students to succeed in the global marketplace. Consistently ranked as a top Historically Black College or University, NCCU offers flagship programs in the sciences, education, law, business, nursing and the arts. Founded in 1910, NCCU remains committed to diversity in and access to higher education. Our alumni excel in a wide variety of academic and professional fields. NCCU is a constituent institution of the University North Carolina System. Visit www.nccu.edu.



BOOTCAMP (From left-right) Denver Lark (North Carolina A&T University), Dana Blair, NNPA DTU Roadtrip Navigator; MC Lyte, Diamond Durant (Morgan State University) and Tyvan Burns (Norfolk State University) pose for a photo during the NNPA's DTU 2018 Immersion experience with Chevrolet. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

Hip-hop Icon MC Lyte Talks about her Role As National Spox for the NNPA's Discover The Unexpected HBCU Journalism Program

By Tyvan Burns, Diamond Durant, Denver Lark (#TeamOptimistic, NNPA DTU Journalism Fellowship)
Hip-hop pioneer MC Lyte is the national spokesperson for the National Newspaper Publishers Association's (NNPA) Discover The Unexpected (DTU) Journalism Fellowship program.

Her passion about education and her desire to create opportunities for HBCU students are two of the many reasons she partnered with the NNPA and Chevrolet, the program's sponsor.

As she continues her great acts of philanthropy, MC Lyte said that music and journalism are much alike, as they are both used to tell stories.

MC Lyte became great friends with Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., the president and CEO of the NNPA, through his

work in hip-hop and civil rights.

When she got the call about the NNPA's DTU program, she said that she was happy to help out; she said that

representing the DTU program is a great fit.

When it comes to her philanthropic work that grew out of her music career, MC Lyte said that she always wanted to give back. That sense of altruism manifested early on in her music career with her hit single "I Cram to Understand"

U," which included a strong anti-drug message, geared towards the Black community.

MC Lyte made it her responsibility to advocate for young people and to shed light on the deluge of heroin and crack

cocaine that flooded her Brooklyn neighborhood in the 70's and 80's.

"I don't think that I really do anything for me, per se," MC Lyte said. "It's about getting out there, [using] the MC Lyte name, to form partnerships with bigger entities and to gain access to resources and sharing those resources with

the people who need them the most."

Hip-hop pioneers like Salt-N-Pepa and Rakim inspired MC Lyte to partake in the music industry at such an early age. MC Lyte also vividly remembered how the Bronx-born, hip-hop group Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five helped to shape her storytelling rap style.

MC Lyte said that "The Message," the Furious Five classic featuring Melly Mel, painted a picture of life in the Bronx that was very different from her life in Brooklyn, where she was born and raised. "The Message" influenced MC Lyte to gravitate towards the storytelling aspect of hip-hop. MC Lyte described "Lyte as a Rock," her first album, as "a book of poems and short stories."

"It was easy to get into a [creative] space and just write," MC Lyte said. "My mother made me write an essay for whatever I wanted to do."

MC Lyte said that young artists, who are pursuing careers in the entertainment business, should educate themselves about royalties, build a trustworthy team and seek legal advice when necessary.

"Never sign anything without counsel and always sign your own checks," MC Lyte advised.

Reminiscing about her career in the music industry, if given the opportunity to change or do anything different, MC Lyte said that she would have said "yes" more often and been more open to trying new music genres and collaborating with unexpected artists."

Although, MC Lyte is often credited as a pioneer in hip-hop culture, her passion to ignite change on a greater scale was alive from the very beginning. She was one of the first female rappers to speak out against sexism and misogyny in the industry. Her voice shook up the male-dominated hip-hop scene and helped pave the way for female MC's that followed in her footsteps, like Queen Latifah and Missy Elliott.

Tyvan Burns (Norfolk State University), Diamond Durant (Morgan State University) and Denver Lark (North Carolina A&T University) are 2018 Discover The Unexpected Journalism Fellows representing #TeamOptimistic. Check out more stories by #TeamOptimistic at nnpa.org/dtu.

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