

## **John C. Brittain**

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*Washington, D.C.*

Brittain returned to legal academia in June 2009 as a professor of law at the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law in Washington.

Before then, Brittain had been the Chief Counsel and Senior Deputy Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington, DC, a 45 year old public interest legal organization started by President John F. Kennedy to enlist private lawyers to take pro bono civil rights cases.

Brittain, a veteran former law school dean at Texas Southern University in Houston, law professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law and public interest civil rights lawyer with a career spanning 40 years with residences in four states, has served as the president of the National Lawyers' Guild, on the Executive Committee and the Board of the ACLU, and legal counsel to NAACP at the local level and national office of the General Counsel. He received the NAACP's highest honor for a lawyer, the coveted William Robert Ming Advocacy Award for legal service without a fee.

He is a school desegregation specialist and one of the original counsel in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, a landmark case decided by the Connecticut Supreme Court in 1996. He was frequently mentioned in the book, "*The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial*," by Susan Eaton, an excellent chronicle of the *Sheff* case. In addition, Brittain is a part of a legal team that filed a friend of the court brief on behalf of the NAACP in the *People Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (Louisville) school cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court (2007) concerning voluntary race-conscious student assignment plans. Further, he filed a friend of the court brief in the Connecticut adequacy finance lawsuit styled, "*Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) v. Rell* (pending in the Connecticut Supreme Court 2009). In one other related area, Brittain has focused on the intersection between housing and school segregation, and the policies that contribute to the condition of structural poverty in low income and minority neighborhoods.

At the higher educational level, Brittain was trained by his mentor, the late Professor Herbert O. Reid, the Charles Hamilton Houston Professor Law at Howard University, to pursue comparability and competitiveness for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Finally, he has participated in the publication of two reports on judicial diversity.

He has traveled extensively throughout the world on international human rights delegations in Africa, Central America, Middle East, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean and to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. He is the author of numerous articles and amici briefs

in the United States Supreme Court. He loves reading books, running in master age group competition and sailing.