

## 2016 Citizen Lawyers: Sonny S. Haynes

**By Dena J. Griffin**

WINSTON-SALEM – Sonny S. Haynes, because of her deep commitment to serving her local community and her background in nonprofit work, has devoted a tremendous amount of time to serving the Winston-Salem community, legal profession, and business industry with her many talents.

Haynes serves as chair of the board of directors of Authoring Action. Authoring Action provides creative writing and spoken word workshops to students ages 12-18. The goal of the organization is to develop the students as authors and advocates for social change. Haynes is passionate about improving illiteracy rates in North Carolina.

The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council of Forsyth County collaborates with Authoring Action through the “Just Us” program to help juveniles in Forsyth County who are at risk of delinquency or who have been adjudicated delinquent. Authoring Action provides programming designed to help juveniles empower themselves and most importantly, tackle the challenges of illiteracy that many of them face. The students who graduate from the “Just Us” program are empowered by finding their literary voice.

Haynes also seeks to ensure that she adds to the Bar’s goal of providing equal access to justice to all North Carolina citizens. At a time when there are increasing numbers of attorneys, but access to justice eludes so many, Haynes commits herself to working on behalf of domestic violence victims, children in Guardian ad Litem appeals, and parents in termination of parental rights hearings. Haynes also provides legal advice through the Winston-Salem office of Legal Aid of North Carolina. Haynes inspires future attorneys to serve pro bono clients by training and assisting law students in completing advance health care directives and living wills for cancer patients.

In “putting service before self,” Haynes seeks to maintain her deep relationships with law schools and continues to mentor law students. Haynes tells us that she gives of her time to “working with law students to give back at least a portion of the countless hours that other attorneys devoted to [her] when [she] was a law student.” Law schools have recognized Haynes for this dedication, including the North Carolina Central University School of Law Black Law Students Association in recognizing Haynes as their Emerging Leader for the 2013-2014 year.

Haynes’ continued work in the community and legal profession is invaluable and reminds those around her why it is ever so important to be a citizen lawyer.

*The Citizen Lawyer Committee of the NCBA Young Lawyers Division, in conjunction with the NCBA Citizen Lawyer Committee, provides expanded coverage of the 2016 Citizen Lawyer Awards in recognition of their volunteer service and leadership in their communities and beyond.*

*Dena J. Griffin serves as research and executive assistant to the Honorable Cheri Beasley of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.*