

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
HUGO L. BLACK UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35203
(205) 278-1850



CHAMBERS OF
U. W. CLEMON
DISTRICT JUDGE

January 20, 2009

United States President Barack Hussein Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.”
Ecc. 3:1. After almost thirty years of service as Alabama’s first black federal judge, I hereby tender my resignation from the office as a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 371, having attained the age and met the service requirements.

On a personal note, I am ecstatic over your election. My exceeding joy springs from my background as a laborer in the vineyards of civil and human rights.¹ It has been my lifelong dream that at some point in the indefinite future, a black American would be elected president of the United States.

In the time I have served as a federal trial judge, I have conscientiously tried to administer fair and impartial justice under the law, tempered with generous drops of mercy. I am unashamed of and unapologetic for my judicial inclinations, which, among other things, resulted in justice for Lilly Ledbetter (later overturned by the Supreme Court), and for hungry prisoners in county jails.

When it became clear to me last spring that Almighty God had ordained you as the next president of this great nation, I delayed my retirement so that you would appoint my replacement.

¹In my college years, I was privileged to have confronted the infamous Eugene “Bull” Connor in 1962 over our city’s notorious segregation ordinances and to have participated in Dr. Martin Luther King’s Birmingham demonstrations a year later. In my role as a civil rights lawyer, it was my blessing to represent the NAACP, SCLC, and numerous black citizens in school desegregation and employment discrimination cases. As a state senator, I felt honored and duty bound to challenge Governor George Wallace on various racial issues.

Your inauguration affords me the unique opportunity of leaving this position as one whose dream has been fulfilled much sooner than expected.

May God continue to bless you and our beloved nation.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "U.W. Clemon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "U" and a long, sweeping tail.

U.W. Clemon

cc: United States Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.
Eleventh Circuit Chief Judge J. L. Edmondson
Northern District of Alabama Chief Judge Sharon L. Blackburn
Director James C. Duff, Administrative Office of United States Courts
Judge Barbara J. Rothstein, Director, Federal Judicial Center
Clerk of Court Sharon Harris, Northern District of Alabama
Chief Carol S. Sefren, Compensation and Retirement Services Office,
Administrative Office of United States Courts
Congressman Artur Davis
Congressman John Lewis
Congressman Alcee Hastings
Congressman Sanford Bishop
Congressman John Conyers