



Candace Jackson-Akiwumi

Nominee for the United States Court
of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

President Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit on March 30. She will be the second Black woman to ever serve on the Seventh Circuit and the only person of color on the Court today. Jackson-Akiwumi previously spent a decade with the Federal Defenders Inc. of Chicago, Illinois, and if confirmed would be only the third federal appellate judge to have spent a majority of their career as a public defender.

Biography

Jackson-Akiwumi received her B.A. with Honors from Princeton University's Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. In 2005, Jackson-Akiwumi graduated from Yale Law School, where she served as a Senior Editor on the Yale Law Journal and was a NAACP LDF Earl Warren Legal Scholar. During law school she was part of a legal team led by future Solicitor General Don Verrilli Jr. that challenged a death row inmate's sentence all the way to the Supreme Court, [ultimately prevailing](#) on an ineffective assistance of counsel claim. After receiving her law degree, she clerked for Judge David H. Coar of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and Judge Roger Gregory of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Legal Experience

Jackson-Akiwumi has spent the majority of her career serving defendants in poverty accused of federal crimes. During her 10 years as a public defender in Chicago, she represented over 400 clients. In this role, she gained extensive courtroom experience in all facets of litigation, including many jury trials. Jackson-Akiwumi also briefed and argued multiple cases on behalf of clients before the Seventh Circuit, including cases related to immigration, sentencing, and the Fourth Amendment. In an article for Yale Law School's alumni directory, she noted that "...my job has meaning to me. I provide quality representation to people who would not be able to afford it, and I am there for clients at a most dreary and frightening juncture: when they are being judged for the worst day or days in their life."

Not only confined to criminal law, Jackson-Akiwumi also has significant civil litigation experience. After finishing up her clerkship, she joined the Chicago office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, where she litigated complex civil cases involving contracts, patents, securities, and tax disputes. More recently, Jackson-Akiwumi joined the litigation firm of Zuckerman Spaeder LLP as a partner, with a focus on complex civil litigation, investigations, and white-collar criminal defense.

Professional and Academic Activities

Jackson-Akiwumi has served as an Adjunct Professor at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, as well as a former board member of the Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago and the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.