



PUBLIC INTEREST LAW  
CENTER OF PHILADELPHIA

AFFILIATED WITH THE LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

# Thaddeus Stevens Award Dinner

Honoring:

Governor Edward G. Rendell

Honorable Doris A. Smith-Ribner

Secretary of Policy & Planning Donna Cooper



September 30, 2010

The Down Town Club

Philadelphia, PA



## ABOUT THE HONORABLE DORIS A. SMITH-RIBNER

Former Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court Judge Doris A. Smith-Ribner is a resident of Pennsylvania who has an exemplary record of public service to the people of her state.

Smith-Ribner was first elected to a ten-year term on the Commonwealth Court in 1987, and she won retention elections for a second and third ten-year term in 1997 and 2007, respectively. During her tenure on the court, Smith-Ribner presided over the long-running School District of Philadelphia desegregation case starting in 1993, when she denied the District's request to end the lawsuit, finding that the District remained segregated and that its failure to provide an equal and high-quality education to racial minorities persisted. Her decision and subsequent remedial order, among other remedies, led to full-day kindergarten for every eligible child attending public schools in Philadelphia since September 1995. She presided over the case until it ended in July 2009, with her approval of an agreement committing the District to reforms designed to reduce racial achievement gaps and unequal resource allocation.

While on the court, Smith-Ribner was appointed in 1991 to serve on the Pennsylvania Judicial Auditing Agency, which she served as chairperson from 1999 to 2004. She also developed a statewide court mediation program, now in its eleventh year.

Prior to assuming her judicial offices, Smith-Ribner practiced law in Pittsburgh for over twelve years, handling civil and criminal litigation in federal and state courts, and she also served as the solicitor for the Allegheny County Controller.

Smith-Ribner was appointed in 1974 and in 1980 to serve as a commissioner on the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, which was created to enforce the state's anti-discrimination laws. For several years she served as a member of a Supreme Court Disciplinary Board Hearing Committee, later becoming chairperson.

Smith-Ribner is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where she obtained an undergraduate degree in economics and thereafter her J.D. Law Degree in 1972. She has remained involved in the education and training of law students, both as a member of the Board of Visitors of the University's School of Law and through her implementation of a national judicial externship/clerkship program that she developed.

In 2006 Smith-Ribner was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court as its designee to serve on the "Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender Racial and Ethnic Fairness," which conducts research and makes recommendations for insuring equal access and fair treatment to all persons who enter the unified judicial system.

Smith-Ribner has been a member of various professional associations, including the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and the Pennsylvania Bar association. She has served on the boards of corporations as well as civic and community organizations. She has lectured at law schools, an immigration and naturalization proceeding, and at many other forums.



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