



HON. CYNTHIA STEPHENS (RET.)

State Bar of Michigan ADR Section
Annual Conference | 2026

Hon. Cynthia Stephens (Ret.) is a mediator and arbitrator with decades of appellate, commercial litigation, and civil rights experience. She was appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals in 2008 and served on the bench until 2022. Before her appointment to the Court of Appeals. She served as a Judge for the Third Circuit Court and the 36th District Court. Judge Stephens has been admitted to practice in Georgia, Texas, and Michigan.

Prior to her election to the district court, she served as Vice-Chair of the Wayne County Charter Commission, Associate General Counsel to the Michigan Senate, Regional Director for the National Conference of Black Lawyers-Atlanta office, and consultant to the National League of Cities Veterans Discharge Upgrade Project.

As an active member of several local professional associations and organizations, Judge Stephens served as Commissioner of the State Bar of Michigan for 16 years. During her tenure as Commissioner, she chaired its Justice Initiatives Committee, Communications Committee, and Children's Task Force. Additionally, she is a former chair of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan and a former member of the Executive Board of the National Bar Association and its Judicial Council. She is the current co-chair of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Commission.

Judge Stephens' broad understanding of the judicial process has gained her notable recognition in the form of numerous awards and honors, including the State Bar of Michigan's highest honor, the Roberts P. Hudson Award for her selfless, outstanding, and unique service to and on behalf of the State Bar, the legal profession, and the public.

In addition to her work as a judge, mediator, and arbitrator, Judge Stephens served as an adjunct professor at the University of Detroit Mercy Law School and as a faculty member at Wayne State University Law School and the Detroit College of Law. She teaches trial advocacy at Loyola Law School and Emory Law School.

Judge Stephens has served on numerous civic boards and commissions, including the Inner-City Business Improvement Forum, the Greater Detroit Area Health Care Council, and the Girl Scout Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

