RENEE BYAS

[redacted]

EXPERIENCE

Managing Partner **2018-Present**
Byas|Smith and Associates **Houston, Texas**

Provides legal advice to education institutions, state and local government, and other entities on compliance and regulatory affairs, accreditation standards, assessments, risk management, corporate governance, ethics, complex contracts, procurement, real estate, construction law, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and regulations and other athletic matters. Advise on Title IV, Title IX, employment law, tenure, human resources, investigations, facilities and construction, public information act, strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, training, and internal policies and procedures.

General Counsel **2016-2018**
Houston Forensic Science Center **Houston, Texas**

Provided legal advice at the science lab on compliance and international accreditation standards for forensic testing laboratories, business and finance, corporate governance, ethics, procurement, risk management, complex contracts, real estate, human resources, public information act, records management, internal policies and procedures, and business continuity plan.

Of Counsel **2015-2016**
Karczewski Bradshaw **Houston, Texas**

Provided legal advice to education institutions, and other entities on contracts, compliance and risk management, corporate governance, ethics, procurement, Title IX, employment law, terminations, education law, human resources, business and finance, elections, public information act, and drafted and reviewed internal policies and procedures.

General Counsel **2008-2014**
Houston Community College System **Houston, Texas**

Served in overlapping roles as General Counsel and as Acting Chancellor. Provided legal advice to Chancellor and senior level administrators including six college Presidents on compliance and regulatory affairs, insurance and risk management, business and finance, procurement, real estate, and facilities planning. Advised on governmental relations, corporate governance, ethics, institutional research, grants, eminent domain proceedings, athletics, international and immigration law, human resources, employment law, terminations, health law, HIPPA, Title IV, Title VII, Title IX, intellectual property, construction law, FERPA, and other legal areas. Responsible for negotiating a full range of legal transactions including complex contracts, sponsorships, major capital asset acquisitions and multimillion-dollar construction contracts and managed outside legal counsel. Supervised the Offices of General Counsel, Risk Management, Institutional Equity, Procurement, and Records Management and managed a $106 million-dollar operating budget. Provided legal advice to facilities team on $425 million bond initiative and other multimillion-dollar construction projects. Restructured Office of Procurement Operations which is now rated nationally. Created Office of Institutional Equity and Office of Compliance. Participated in the drafting and development of the emergency preparedness plan, the business continuity plan and the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. Reduced the lawsuits in two years through successful training and effective policies. Drafted, reviewed and negotiated various contracts for the System, including major construction contracts.

Chaired and assisted in development of Enterprise Risk Management Model. Drafted and/or reviewed College System's Policies and Procedures, and legislative items. Responsible for all Ethics issues and investigations for College system. Advised 5000 plus FTEs and part time employees on various legal topics.

Acting Chancellor **2013 - 2014**
Houston Community College System **Houston, Texas**
Served as Acting Chancellor for the 4th largest Community College in the US for a year and 5 months. Responsible for managing a combined operating and capital budget of over $1 Billion; 70,000 students and over 5000 plus FTEs and part time employees. Provided oversight on $425 million bond initiative, which included new buildings and upgrades at HCC's six colleges.

Vice Chancellor and General Counsel **2005-2008**
Lone Star College System **The Woodlands, Texas**

Served as Chief Legal Counsel to the Board, Chancellor and Senior Level Administrators including five college Presidents.
Participated in negotiations and provided legal advice on compliance and regulatory affairs, insurance and risk management, business and finance, procurement, real estate, facilities planning, governmental relations, eminent domain proceedings, institutional research, athletics, international and immigration law, human resources, employment law, and terminations.
Advised on health law, HIPPA, Title IV, Title VII, Title IX, intellectual property, construction law, grants, FERPA, external foundation, business continuity plan, strategic plan, and managed outside legal counsel.

Responsible for negotiating a full range of legal transactions including complex contracts, sponsorships, major capital asset acquisitions and multimillion-dollar construction contracts.

Advised on Election Law issues including Section V matters, conducted elections, advised on contested elections, and assisted demographers, redistricting, annexations, prepared and submitted U.S. Department of Justice Submissions and other election related matters.

Successfully trained 5,000 plus FTEs, part time & and student workers on the various legal matters.
Reduced litigation costs and litigation by 65% over 2 ½ years through successful negotiation and training.
Drafted, reviewed and negotiated various contracts for the System.

Represented the College System before the EEOC and Texas Workforce Commission.
Revised and updated College System's policy and procedure manual.

Departments supervised included Office of General Counsel, Risk Management, and Public Records.
Served as Ethics Officer for College System.

General Counsel **1994-2005**
Illinois State University **Normal, Illinois**

Served as the chief legal counsel to the President and senior-level administrators. Advised 6 colleges and 35 academic departments offering 160 fields of study. Advised the university community on all legal matters, including employment terminations, tenure, public policy issues, human resources, personnel manuals, and union issues.

Successfully trained 6539 FTEs, part time & and student workers on the state's ethics laws with 100% completion rate.
Provided advice on compliance and regulatory affairs, procurement, facilities planning, governmental relations, eminent domain proceedings, international and immigration law, real estate, Title IV and Title IX, health care, the external foundation, HIPPA, intellectual property, construction law, risk management, and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and regulations.

Responsible for negotiating a full range of legal transactions including complex contracts, sponsorships, major capital asset acquisitions and multimillion-dollar construction contracts and managed outside legal counsel.

Participated in construction related issues involving the new 460 seat theatre and 830 seat concert hall, and new College of Business. Reduced the litigation costs and litigation by 70% over 4 years through successful negotiation and training.
Advised 3,300+ employees (FTEs & PT) and over 20,000 students on various legal matters.
Assisted in drafting collective bargaining agreements on behalf of university.

Represented the university before the EEOC, the Human Rights Commission, State Civil Service Review Board, Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board, arbitration and dispute resolution hearings. Developed the university's policy and procedure manual.
Provided monthly training seminars to university employees on various legal topics. Served as the university's Ethics Officer to the State of Illinois.

General Counsel **1984-1994**
Texas Southern University **Houston, Texas**

Served as chief legal counsel to the university President and senior administrators. Advised key departments on legal issues relating to compliance and regulatory affairs, grants, contracts, procurement, employment law, tenure, human resources, contract disputes, terminations, student affairs, Title III, Title IV, insurance and risk management, business and finance, facilities, eminent domain, real estate, athletics including NCAA compliance, Title IX, multi-million-dollar new construction projects, construction law, corporate governance, ethics, intellectual property, and the external foundation. Represented University before the Human Rights Commission and the EEOC.

Successfully drafted and argued legislation before the Texas legislature which resulted in the passage of pertinent bills for the university. Participated on facilities management team for over 200 million dollars in new construction and major renovation projects, including a new 424 bed housing unit. Participated in the development of the campus master plan and long range (ten years) strategic plan. Reduced general litigation and legal cost for the university by 71% over 4 years through successful negotiation. Successfully analyzed and resolved various bond issues and over $6 million in construction claims. Coordinated real, personal, and intellectual property interests. Acted as legal advisor on issues regarding issuance of tax-exempt bonds. Drafted and reviewed policies, procedures, personnel manuals and contracts in all areas of University business. Advised 1100+ employees and 10,000 students on various legal matters. Responsible for all Ethics issues and investigations for College system.

EDUCATION

J.D., Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas B.A., Texas Southern University

LICENSES

State Bar of Illinois State Bar of Texas
United States Supreme Court
United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals
United States District Court, Central District of Illinois

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics (current)
American Bar Association (current)
American Bar Foundation Fellow 2014-present
National Bar Association (current) – Chaired Audit Committee 2012-13; General Counsel 2002-03; Administrative and Facilities Committee 2000-2004; Special Assistant for Education 1994-1995; Special Assistant to President for Higher Education 1996-1997; Board of Directors, Women Lawyers Division 1991- 1993; Convention Committee Co-Chair 1992-1993
U. S. Women's Chamber of Commerce (current)
Board of Directors Texas General Counsel Forum 2012-15

United Educators Insurance Legal Advisory Committee 2010-12
Board of Directors National Association of College and University Attorneys 2000-07, Secretary 2004-07; Chair Board Operations 2004-07, Distinguished Service Award 2012
Board of Directors Greenspoint Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone 2007-08
Board of Directors Illinois Special Olympics 1996-2002
Illinois State Bar Association Education Law Council 1997-1998
Houston Lawyers Association President 1992-1993; Judicial Selection Committee 1991-1993, Legislative Committee 1992-1993
Texas Association of African American Lawyers 1st Vice President 1991-1993
Texas Association of State University Attorneys Vice President 1989-1990
State Bar of Texas, Grievance Committee Member 1992-1993
BroMenn Hospital Healthcare Advisory Council Illinois, 1994-2000
Illinois Committee for Black Concerns in Higher Education –Steering Committee Member 2000-2005
Illinois Special Olympics Board of Directors 1996-2002
Top 50 Black Attorneys in Houston 2014
Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.