

## **Gerald K. Evelyn**

As attorneys, we want to have a certain look, a presence that is felt the moment we walk into the courtroom. It's that elusive blend of style and substance that we believe will convince the judge and persuade the jury that our argument is not just right, but righteous.

A few of us can pull that off on occasion. Gerald K. Evelyn has built a career that embodies style, grace, and a soft-spoken calmness. Mr. Evelyn blends that with a burning passion for justice, fairness, and civil rights. The result is four decades of respect from the courts, the defense bar, and the prosecutors who face him in state and federal trial and appellate courts. But most importantly, it has made him one of the most trusted attorneys among defendants in Detroit.

That passion was kindled early at Michigan State University where he was at the forefront of the black student movement. Mr. Evelyn honed his dedication to the community around him by attending the Antioch School of Law where a crucial part of the mission is a commitment to breaking down barriers and providing equal justice for all.

His career began at the Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services and then the State Defender's Office. In 1981, Mr. Evelyn began to perfect his passion when he went into private practice with the legendary Myzell Sowell, Sr. Since then, Mr. Evelyn has followed in his mentor's steps. He helped create precedent by successfully defending Judge Waterstone in the Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court. He received a directed verdict for George Cushingberry and he stood strongly at the side of Bobby Ferguson during the federal prosecution of Kwame Kilpatrick.

But as stellar as Mr. Evelyn has been in Court, he has also spent most of his career mentoring young attorneys and teaching criminal law and trial advocacy to us here at CDAM, ICLE, and the Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program.

The passion for justice and civil rights continues to burn as brightly as it did at Michigan States and Antioch. With style and grace, Mr. Evelyn fights in state and federal courts, trains future attorneys, and leads in organizations like the National Black Lawyers Guild and the National Lawyers Guild.

For these reasons, among others, Gerald K. Evelyn is the 2019 recipient of CDAM's Right to Counsel Award.