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PRESS RELEASE

THE WILKIE D. FERGUSON, JR. BAR ASSOCIATION MOURNS THE LOSS OF THE HON. MARCIA COOKE

MIAMI, FL – January 28, 2023

Miami's historic Black lawyers bar association, the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association mourns the passing of the Honorable Marcia G. Cooke. Judge Cooke served this community with distinction for nearly two decades on the federal bench as a United States District Court Judge for the Southern District of Florida. But to the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association, she was family.

We share our heartfelt condolences to Judge Cooke's family as well as to her past and current law clerks, judicial assistants, interns, colleagues, mentees, and loved ones near and far. Judge Cooke defied the odds throughout her life, including as early as last year. She has now been called home to her heavenly home. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and all those mourning her loss.

Judge Cooke presided over a number of high-profile cases during her 18-year tenure. Those cases included a lawsuit over the seizure of six-year-old Elian Gonzalez from a Miami home to the prosecution of Jose Padilla, a convicted terrorist. Notably, Judge Cooke acted with integrity and independence in those and all her cases, even when it was not politically expedient to do so.

Judge Cooke served at the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. United States Courthouse, the federal courthouse in Miami whose namesake was her predecessor. Judge Cooke succeeded Judge Ferguson, who, like her, died while in service to this community. The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed Judge Cooke to the bench in 2004. She was the first Black woman ever to ascend to the federal bench in the State of Florida, a trailblazer whose legacy lives on through all of those who follow in her footsteps or trek through the terrain she pioneered.

The Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association calls on our members and allies to join us in tribute to an esteemed jurist and cherished friend. Association president Christopher Lomax, Esq. remarks that "Judge Cooke's legacy will remain forever present in our hearts and minds. She represents the best of us, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and loved ones."

Formerly known as the Black Lawyers of Miami, for more than thirty years, the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association has served the Miami-Dade community by cultivating excellence and inclusion in the legal profession, promoting diversity in legal education through financial assistance and mentorship, and advocating for equal access, equal opportunity, and equal justice in the legal system.