

Presentation for the Alabama Lawyers Association
Spring Retreat on Saturday, May 18, 2019

Keynote Luncheon – The History of The Alabama Lawyers Association (ALA) Told By The Presidents Who Served During Its Infancy

Presentation by Hank Sanders

I. In the Beginning

A. Why and How ALA was Created

*Initial Letters Sent to Black Lawyers – Hank Sanders

*Initial Meeting in Birmingham –Who was present - Oscar Adams, J. Mason Davis, Vernon Crawford, U W Clemons, Peter Hall, Orzell Billingsley, J. L. Chestnut, Jr., Houston Brown; Hank Sanders, Faya Rose Toure (Rose Sanders), Dave Coar, others

*Second Meeting in Birmingham –Who was present - Oscar Adams, J. Mason Davis, U. W. Clemons, Fred Gray, A. J. Cooper, Orzell Billingsley, J. L. Chestnut, Jr., Houston Brown, Peter Hall, Solomon Seay, Hank Sanders, Faya Rose Toure, Dave Coar, Audrey Gaston, others

II. Organizing the Alabama Black Lawyers Association

A. Creating a Vision

*Improving Conditions for practicing law in Alabama

*Improving Conditions for Black people

B. Creating a Name

*Charles Hamilton Houston Society

*Alabama Lawyers Association

*Alabama Black Lawyers Association

C. Whether to Officially Connect with Other Organizations

* National Bar Association

* National Conference of Black Lawyers

D. Initial Officers

* Tri-Presidents – Fred Gray, Oscar Adams and “A. J. Cooper, one from each of the three existing law firms on a meeting by A. J. Cooper. The Tri Presidents served from November 1971 to January 1973.

* Treasurer - Hank Sanders

* Secretary - J. Mason Davis

III. Reorganizing the Alabama Black Lawyers Association (Meeting in Mobile)

A. From a Multiple Presidency to a Solo Presidency

B. First Solo President – Hank Sanders 1973-1974

C. Second Solo President – Fred Gray 1974-1975

IV. Early Accomplishments

A. Connecting with Law Students

B. Lawsuit against the Bar

C. Bar Review Course

V. Other Matters of Interest

A. Changing of the Organization of the Name

*** The foregoing is subject to memory from nearly 48 years ago.