New York, NY – January 4, 2020 – On Tuesday, February 25 at 6 p.m., the New York County Lawyers Association and the Metropolitan Black Bar Association will present the 18th annual Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award to Sherrilyn Ifill, President & Director-Counsel of NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc. Hosted by Orrick, this awards ceremony will be held at their offices at 51 W. 52nd Street in Manhattan.

Sherrilyn Ifill, a highly regarded national civil rights strategist whose writings, speeches and media appearances enrich public debate about a range of political and civil rights issues, fulfilled a lifelong ambition to be a civil rights lawyer. Ms. Ifill began her career as a Fellow at the American Civil Liberties Union, before joining the Legal Defense Fund as an Assistant Counsel in 1988. In 1993, Sherrilyn joined the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Law, where she launched several innovative legal offerings including an environmental justice course in which students represented rural communities in Maryland, and one of the first legal clinics in the nation focused on removing legal barriers to formerly incarcerated persons seeking to responsibly re-enter society.

In 2013, Ifill was invited back to the Legal Defense Fund to lead the organization as its 7th Director-Counsel. In this role, Ifill has increased the visibility and engagement of the organization in cutting edge and urgent civil rights issues, while maintaining the organization’s decades-long leadership fighting voter suppression, inequity in education,
and racial discrimination in application of the death penalty. Ms. Iffil is also a critically acclaimed author of books and scholarly works reflecting her lifelong engagement in and analysis of race and American public life, and she serves on the global board of the Open Society Foundations, and on the board of Equal Justice Works, the National Women’s law Center and the National Constitution Center.

**About the Ida B. Wells Award**

Named for Ms. Wells-Barnett, one of the first African American women to run for public office in the United States, each year the award is presented to a woman of color whose life reflects her spirit and courageousness by distinguishing herself in the right for racial and gender equality.

**About Orrick**

Orrick is a global law firm focused on serving the Tech & Innovation, Energy & Infrastructure and Finance sectors. The firm ranks in the top 5 for pro bono both in the US and internationally (American Lawyer) and is also recognized as a best place to work (Fortune) and one of the most innovative law firms in North America (Financial Times).

**About the Metropolitan Black Bar Association**

For more than twenty-eight years, the MBBA has committed to advance equality and excellence in the pursuit of justice and to aid the progress of African-American and other attorneys of color by encouraging the personal and professional development of our members.

**About the New York County Lawyers Association**

The New York County Lawyers Association ([www.nycla.org](http://www.nycla.org)) was founded in 1908 as one of the first major bar association in the country that admitted members without regard to race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Since its inception, it has pioneered some of the most far-reaching and tangible reforms in American jurisprudence. For more information on NYCLA please visit nycla.org

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