Charles Ogletree

Charles Ogletree, the Harvard Law School Jesse Climenko Professor of Law, and Founding and Executive Director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, is a prominent legal theorist who has made an international reputation by taking a hard look at complex issues of law and by working to secure the rights guaranteed by the Constitution for everyone equally under the law. Professor Ogletree opened the offices of The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice www.charleshamiltonhouston.org in September 2005 as a tribute to the legendary civil rights lawyer and mentor and teacher of such great civil rights lawyers as Thurgood Marshall and Oliver Hill. The Institute has engaged in a wide range of important educational, legal, and policy issues over the past 6 years.


Professor Ogletree is a native of Merced, California, where he attended public schools. Professor Ogletree earned an M.A. and B.A. (with distinction) in Political Science from Stanford University, where he was Phi Beta Kappa. He also holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School. In 2009 Professor Ogletree was awarded the prestigious ABA Spirit of Excellence Award in recognition of his many contributions to the legal profession. In 2008, the National Law Journal named Professor Ogletree one of the 50 Most Influential Minority Lawyers in America. Every year since 2006, Professor Ogletree has been named by Ebony Magazine as one of the 100+ Most Influential Black Americans. He was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame for the National Black Law Students Association, where he served as National President from 1977-1978. Professor Ogletree also received the first ever Rosa Parks Civil Rights Award given by the City of Boston, the Hugo A. Bedau Award given by the Massachusetts Anti-Death Penalty Coalition, and Morehouse College’s Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize. He has also received honorary doctorates from several universities and colleges including Cambridge College, Wilberforce University, the University of Miami, the New England School of Law, Lincoln College, Tougaloo College, Mount Holyoke College, and Amherst College.
Professor Ogletree has been married to his fellow Stanford graduate, Pamela Barnes, since 1975. They are the proud parents of two children, Charles Ogletree III and Rashida Ogletree, and grandparents to granddaughters, Marquelle, Nia Mae, Jamila Ogletree, and Makayla George. The Ogletrees live in Cambridge and are members of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church.