

1994

**Letter re: National Lawyers Guild-New York City Chapter 1994  
Honoree**

National Lawyers Guild - NYC Chapter



## National Lawyers Guild—New York City Chapter 1994 Annual Dinner

55 Avenue of the Americas ■ Third Floor ■ New York, N.Y. 10013 ■ (212) 966-9494 ■ Fax (212) 966-9714

Dear Friend,

I am delighted to announce that the New York City Chapter will be honoring Lewis Steel at this year's Annual Dinner. A nationally recognized civil rights lawyer, Lewis is a longtime stalwart of the New York City Chapter, having served as President from 1983-1985. The Dinner will be on Friday, March 4, 1994 at the Sheraton Centre Hotel.

After graduating from law school in 1963, Lewis joined the legal staff of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In the 1960's, besides combatting the southern states' strategy of "massive resistance" to the clarion call for a more just society sounded by *Brown v. Board of Education*, NAACP lawyers were in courtrooms throughout the country arguing cases dealing with segregation and community control of schools, the First Amendment rights of demonstrators and students, and discrimination in employment and housing. Lewis was prominently involved in all these issues.

Lewis left the NAACP in 1968 and entered private practice. Determined to continue working with progressive lawyers in an organizational setting, he joined with Mary Kaufman and others in the work of the Mass Defense Office. As many members will remember, the decade that began with the mid-60's was a time of extraordinary ferment. Reflecting the powerful currents set in motion across the country by the Civil Rights, Anti-Vietnam War and Women's Movements, the National Lawyers Guild entered a period of dynamic change and growth. As the Guild geared up nationwide to confront Washington's policies of war abroad and divisiveness at home, our chapter's Mass Defense Office organized hundreds of lawyers, law students, and others to deal with the legal problems that resulted from demonstrations in the streets and on the campuses, and from anti-war organizing in the draft centers and on the military bases.

Even as he actively participated in that work, Lewis's private practice featured a progressive lawyer's dream docket. He was lead or co-counsel in many significant civil rights and criminal law cases, among the latter being the seemingly endless, but ultimately successful, defense of Ruben "Hurricane" Carter and John Artis, who had been twice convicted of murder on perjured testimony in racially tainted proceedings. Lewis also made his presence felt by writing articles in a variety of publications, serving as general counsel to the National Writers Union, and working with many organizations that Guild members are allied with, such as the Center for Constitutional Rights, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, the New York Civil Liberties Union, The Legal Aid Society, and various legal services offices.

### HONORARY DINNER COMMITTEE

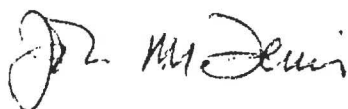
Daniel L. Alterman • Myron Beldock • Derrick Bell • David Berenbaum • Steven M. Bernstein • Robert L. Boehm  
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For nearly twenty years, Lewis has shared his professional life with his law partner and friend Richard Bellman, whom he met while they were NAACP staff lawyers. Lewis has also served as mentor to many younger progressive attorneys, especially his most recent partners, Susan Ritz and Miriam Clark.

Steel Bellman Ritz and Clark has demonstrated that a firm dedicated to practicing a progressive brand of civil rights law can have a national impact on civil rights issues, and flourish while doing so. The firm's cases have attacked many forms of public and private discrimination and abuse--employment and housing discrimination, racial and sexual harassment, exclusionary zoning, and police brutality. In the process, Lewis and his partners have won major victories in the Supreme Court as well as significant jury verdicts in the trial courts. It is more than fitting that the Chapter has decided to honor such a remarkable record of achievement.

This year's Dinner will be a major political and social event for the Guild. It will also be the year's financial highlight. As always, we need your help to make the Dinner the outstandingly successful event it promises to be. Once again, we will be publishing a Journal, an especially critical source of income for the Chapter. Please use the enclosed form and return envelope to send in your ad or greeting as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. D. B. Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

JOHN D. B. LEWIS