



## **Kym L. Worthy** **Wayne County Prosecutor**

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy received her undergraduate degree in economics and political science from the University of Michigan, and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame School of Law. In 1984 she began her legal career at the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, and in 1989, she became the first African-American selected by the office as a Special Assignment Prosecutor. She specialized in high profile murder cases, including the prosecution of Toni Cato Riggs (convicted of the murder of her husband, a returning Gulf War Veteran) and of two Detroit Police Officers convicted in the beating death of motorist Malice Green.

In 1994, Worthy was elected to the Detroit Recorder's Court (now the Wayne County Circuit Court). During the next nine years, she presided over hundreds of serious felony cases and was re-elected to the court twice by overwhelming margins. As a judge, she served on numerous court committees and sat on the Board of Directors for the Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program, which provides training and continuing legal education for felony trial attorneys. She was on the faculty of the Michigan Judicial Institute, which trains new judges, and was President of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan from 2001-2002. Worthy was also a Master of the Bench for the American Inns of Court, a member of the Wolverine Bar Association, and a member of the Michigan Judges Association. In the fall of 2007, the State Bar of Michigan conferred the prestigious Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award upon Worthy, recognizing her many career achievements, including the many innovative programs and new units that she has created in her role as the Wayne County Prosecutor.

On January 6, 2004, Worthy came full circle in her career and returned to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, this time as *the* Wayne County Prosecutor, the first African American and the first female to hold the position. She had declared her candidacy for the office for the November 2004 election. These plans were accelerated when the incumbent resigned and she was appointed by a solid majority of the Wayne County Judges.

In 2008 Worthy charged and successfully prosecuted ex-mayor of Detroit Kwame M. Kilpatrick and his former Chief of Staff Christine Beatty. The case garnered national and international press coverage. She has been widely acknowledged for her courage and integrity in charging a case that could have negatively impacted her political career. As a result of this case Worthy has received the following awards and honors: , 2009 Michigan Chronicle Women of Excellence Award; 2009 Southfield-Lathrup Optimist Club Public Servant of the Year; 2008 Detroit Free Press Renaissance Hero; 2008 Radio One Newsmaker of the Year; 2008 Channel 7 *Spotlight on the News* Newsmaker of the Year; 2008 Spirit of Detroit Award; 2008 *Crain's* Most Powerful Attorneys; 2008 MADD

Outstanding Service Award; 2008 CLEO Legacy Public Service Award, and 2008 *Crain's* Women to Watch, and featured in *Essence* Magazine in February, 2010.

Worthy has been a persistent advocate for witnesses who risk their lives to come to court and testify. Due to her tireless advocacy the Wayne County Commission awarded funds solely to be used to protect witnesses for the first time in 2007. This important allotment continues today.

Worthy has used her prosecutorial experience to greatly enhance the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. She created the first Elder Abuse Unit in the history of the office. This unit handles all cases involving elderly and vulnerable adults, and focuses on the unique needs of senior citizens when they are victims of crime.

Appalled by the degree of gun violence in Detroit, Worthy conceived and implemented a "Change the Culture," initiative that focuses on educational training and community policing in an effort to reduce gun violence. The first public forum, held on January 25, 2004, at Greater Grace Temple in Detroit, drew over 3,000 citizens, church and civic leaders. Currently Worthy is joined in her initiative by Governor Jennifer Granholm, the United States Attorney, the Wayne County Executive, the Wayne County Sheriff, the Michigan State Police, the Detroit Police Department and the Detroit Public Schools.

Worthy is an adjunct professor of criminal law at the University of Detroit/Mercy and has lectured at Harvard Law School, the University of Notre Dame Law School, Wayne State University Law School and the Universite des Sciences Sociales in Toulouse, France. She has lectured for the National College of District Attorneys, the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, and the Detroit Police Department.

Recognizing that "service is the rent we pay for living," Worthy is active in The United Way, The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Lead Poisoning Task Force of Michigan, the Optimist Club, and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She created the Alexandra Simone Fund for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of Henry Ford Hospital in memory of her deceased daughter. The fund provides services to the parents of prematurely born infants. An advocate for all children, she frequently speaks out about the need for fostering and adoption of children who do not have a permanent home. Worthy was named one of "America's Best and Brightest" by two nationally-circulated magazines, and has received over 100 other awards and honors for her public service and community leadership. She is a sought-after motivational speaker for youth, civic, and church organizations.

Worthy's proudest accomplishment is being the mother of three daughters, Anastasia, 16 and 5-year-old twins Anniston and Alessandra.