

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
WESTERN DISTRICT**

IN THE MATTER OF GEORGE B. VASHON, DECEASED	:	No. 5 WM 2010
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PETITION OF: NOLAN N. ATKINSON AND PAUL N.D. THORNELL	:	
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ORDER

PER CURIAM

AND NOW, this 4th day of May, 2010, upon consideration of the Petition filed by Wendell Freeland, Esquire, on behalf of the family of George B. Vashon, this Court recognizes that George B. Vashon possessed the necessary credentials, competency, and good character to practice law in Pennsylvania in 1847 based upon his bachelor and masters degrees from Oberlin College, his mentorship with the Honorable Walter Forward of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas and his subsequent admissions to practice law in the State of New York and before the U.S. Supreme Court. This Court further acknowledges that Article V, Section 10 of the existing Pennsylvania Constitution gives the Pennsylvania Supreme Court the exclusive authority to prescribe the general rules governing admission to the Pennsylvania Bar and to regulate the practice of law.

This Court further recognizes that Mr. Vashon applied for admission to practice before the Allegheny County Bar in 1847 (which appears to have been a prerequisite to practice before this Court), but the examining committee refused to consider his application solely on the basis that he was African-American and therefore could not vote, noting that

the revision to the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1838 only extended voting rights to “every white freeman.” Such discrimination, of course, would be intolerable today.

In acknowledgement of Mr. Vashon’s credentials and achievements, this Court hereby admits George B. Vashon to the practice of law in the Courts of this Commonwealth posthumously. Furthermore, Wendell Freeland, Esquire, and the family members of George B. Vashon are hereby invited to be present at a session of this Court during which this Court will confirm its acknowledgment of George B. Vashon’s qualifications to practice law. The Prothonotary is instructed to contact counsel to make any desired and necessary arrangements so that the presentation can be made in open Court, during a convenient session of the Court.

It is so ordered.