

## Biography

Dawn Baxton was raised in Washington County, North Carolina by her grandparents. As a first-generation college graduate, she received a Bachelor of Arts in English, and a Minor in African American Studies from North Carolina State University and obtained her Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University School of Law. During law school, Dawn was very active with the Trial Advocacy Board, where she developed her passion for being a zealous advocate. In addition to serving as president of the Trial Advocacy Board, Dawn won local and regional competitions. She was a member of the first team to be invited to the prestigious Tournament of Champions. As a result of the work of Dawn and her teammates, North Carolina Central University School of Law was recognized as having one of the best trial advocacy programs in the country.

Dawn has been an Assistant Public Defender for twenty-one (21) years. Shortly after joining the Public Defender's Office, Dawn was promoted to Superior Court where she obtained extensive trial experience in all felony offenses, which includes Capital First Degree Murder and Non-Capital First Degree Murder. In 2006, Dawn was promoted to the position of Senior Assistant Public Defender, a position she has held for fourteen (14) years. As the Senior Assistant Public Defender, Dawn maintains a full caseload and has the additional responsibility of managing the office and supervising the staff in the absence of the Chief Public Defender. Dawn has provided counsel to the Public Defender on various issues regarding the operation of the Public Defender Office. She has also performed administrative functions in the absence of the Public Defender on numerous occasions. Her administrative duties include the hiring of all legal staff and investigators for the office. Dawn has also assisted the Public Defender in the selection of a diverse group of Assistant Public Defenders. In addition to her administrative duties, Dawn coordinates and conducts in house training for new attorneys and for attorneys who are promoted to Superior Court.

Dawn is dedicated to training future lawyers as an Adjunct Professor/ Trial Advocacy Coach at North Carolina Central University School of Law. She has been an Adjunct Professor/Trial Advocacy Coach for sixteen (16) years. Dawn has also served as a faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government Defender Trial School for ten (10) years, where she assists in training fellow Assistant Public Defenders and Private Court Appointed Attorneys on how to prepare their cases for trial.

After making Durham her home in 1995, Dawn served the community for many years as Vice Chair of the Legal Redress Committee of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People. She was also appointed to serve on the North Carolina State Board of Elections, and the Durham County Board of Elections, where she currently serves to ensure that voters have unhindered access in exercising their right to vote.

She is member of Union Baptist Church.