

Dawn N. Ison

**U.S. Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**



Dawn N. Ison is a nationally recognized career federal prosecutor, with prior experience as a criminal defense attorney, who has successfully handled large-scale, complex, multi-defendant criminal prosecutions Ms. Ison is a daughter of Detroit; a product of Detroit Public Schools; and, a proud graduate of Spelman College and Wayne State University Law School.

Early in her career, Ms. Ison spent 12 years as a criminal defense attorney. For 19 years before being presidentially appointed as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, she served with pride as an Assistant United

States Attorney with the U. S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. She was assigned to the Public Corruption Unit where she directed investigations and prosecuted public corruption by public officials, law enforcement officers, and other federal and state employees. Before joining the Public Corruption Unit, Ms. Ison prosecuted drug trafficking offenses at the highest level in the office’s Drug Task Force Unit. Ms. Ison formerly served as the Chief of that unit, which is the largest unit in the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Ms. Ison had also served as the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s District Election Officer since 2014 and represented the Office in the federal court’s alternative to prison program.

Ms. Ison has a long-standing commitment to public service. In law school she worked at the Free Legal Aid Clinic. As a woman of color, she strongly believes that she has an obligation to level the playing field for diverse students in marginalized communities. Under her prior leadership as Co-Chair of the Federal Bar Association’s Diversity Committee, Ms. Ison advanced diversity and inclusion. She played a key role in organizing and presenting the first ever Federal Bar Association (“FBA”) implicit bias seminar, entitled *Be a Bias Disruptor*, which featured Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Bernice Donald and Professor Sarah Redfield, Professor Emerita at the University of New Hampshire School of Law. She organized a second implicit bias event in April 2021, *Courageous Conversations: Sharing Stories and Building Understanding*, which featured eye-opening testimonials by various members of the bar and Al Vivian, a nationally respected diversity consultant. Through the Committee’s work, FBA also regularly partners with the Just the Beginning Foundation, a pipeline organization that is designed to expose students of color and those from low-income backgrounds to the justice system. Through a partnership with Retooling Detroit, an early literacy program in the Detroit Public Schools, Ms. Ison spearheaded her office’s participation in Retooling Detroit’s online tutoring program.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Ison’s work has been repeatedly recognized for her work as a litigator. She has received two U. S. Department of Justice, National and Organized Crime and Drug Task Force Awards for Outstanding Investigation Operation and Outstanding Asset Forfeiture Case; a U.S.

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Department of Homeland Security Award for Excellence; two U.S. Attorney's Awards for Outstanding Service; and one U.S. Attorney's Award for Superior Performance by a Litigation Team. Ms. Ison's leadership capabilities have been further recognized with her past elections as President of the Recorder's Court Bar Association; Vice President of the Women Lawyers Association, Wayne Region; and Vice Chair of the National Conference of Black Lawyers.