

# Honorable Clarease Rankin Yates

## Promotes Self-Improvement for the Betterment of Ourselves and Our Community



“The common threads which tie everything into a neat package are social grace and etiquette. One can attend the most prestigious university, but without the knowledge and practice of good manners and proper social skills, success will be an elusive dream.” – *Honorable Clarease Rankin Yates*

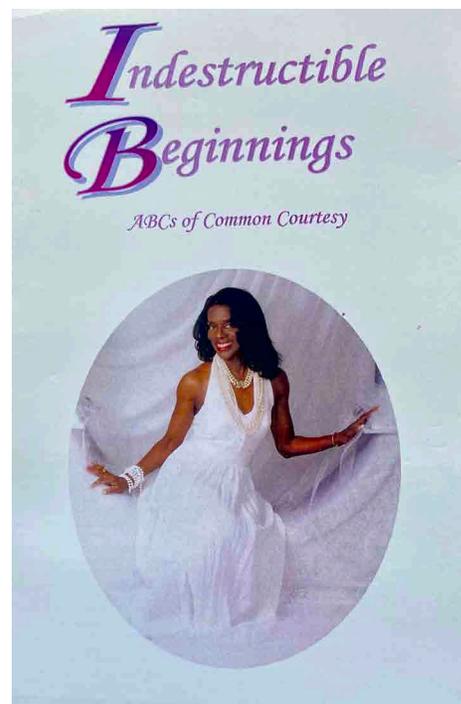
Honorable Clarease Rankin Yates is the first African-American woman in the United States to be appointed to the U.S. Immigration Court. If you asked her how she achieved this venerable position, she might reply that it took hard work, determination, and something she calls “indestructible beginnings.” To understand what she means by the latter, please read on.

Originally from Philadelphia, Judge Yates received her bachelor’s degree

and her Juris Doctorate from Temple University. She began her legal career in the office of Philadelphia’s district attorney, worked as an attorney with the United States International Trade Commission, and served as senior legislative analyst for the District of Columbia. Upon relocating to Houston, Judge Yates served as an adjunct professor of law at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University for eight years. She was appointed to the U.S. Immigration Court in 1990.

Judge Yates credits her parents and step-mother with teaching her the value of high self-esteem, loving others, and respecting others. Understanding that these values need to be nurtured from the time we are very young, Judge Yates calls them indestructible beginnings. They provide the solid foundation upon which we build successful fulfilling lives, which are also an asset to the community.

In 2005, she published, *Indestructible Beginnings: ABCs of Common Courtesy*, a book aimed at teenagers, to teach the fundamentals of common courtesy and the rules of etiquette. Judge Yates sees the correlation between high self-esteem and knowing the proper way to conduct ourselves. Being certain of the protocol in any given situation, we are self-assured and more likely to succeed.



Of the book, she says: “This seems an unusual title for an etiquette handbook, but the name perfectly describes the purpose of this combination handbook/workbook. In our multi-cultural society, we are expected to be spiritually in tune, socially savvy, and possess business acumen. *Indestructible Beginnings* is the vehicle to a solid springboard into a happy and exciting life.”

Filled with invaluable information about being courteous to family, peers, and colleagues; personal hygiene; the appropriate way to dress for all occasions; keeping physically fit; eating healthy; and much more, the book is the perfect manual for

building the self-esteem and sense of community necessary to developing personalities. For example, the following excerpt, taken from the chapter on common courtesies, illustrates the importance of good manners learned at home to the community as a whole:

**IN PUBLIC:** Demonstrate good home training. When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with a soft tissue or handkerchief. Always say “excuse me” to the person next to you. Never spit in public! Never burp loudly in public! Keep your feet out of the public passageway, so you do not trip people as they pass. Never make fun of someone who is handicapped or mentally challenged. Never make fun of a person’s appearance. Always offer your seat to elders and handicapped people. Don’t try to cut into a line.

Not forgetting that we are part of an ever-changing world, there is also advice about using new technology, like this passage covering social media decorum:

**Social Media Courtesies:** Remember, what you put on your Facebook is out there for everyone to see. If you apply for a job or college, your interviewer will have access to everything you have posted. This may not be a big issue when you are just 13, but think long-term.

- Protect your digital footprint
- Be aware of spelling and grammar
- Do not share personal or confidential information online
- Refrain from cyber bullying
- Only use chain emails when appropriate
- Do not post photos, videos or links



that will be embarrassing to you or others

- Only reply to emails from people you know

A certified etiquette trainer for teens since 2011, Judge Yates uses *Indestructible Beginnings* in conjunction with her workbook while conducting her etiquette classes. In 2014, to further develop her expertise as an etiquette coach, Judge Yates completed an intense course at the Protocol School of Washington and is now a certified business etiquette and international protocol consultant.

Not only does Judge Yates believe in her own personal development, she believes in the development of the community and the people in it. Judge Yates is the embodiment of the principles she teaches and lives by: a self-assured highly successful individual whose community has benefited from her achievements. There is no doubt that Judge Yates believes in the continued development and betterment of one’s self and one’s community understanding the two go hand-in-hand.

