

# Georgetown Law Journal Cites Seminal Detroit Land Bank Case Successfully Litigated by Renowned Attorney Tina Patterson

*Seminal case argued successfully by notable, veteran Detroit Attorney Tina M. Patterson cited in The Georgetown Law Journal on Poverty Law and Policy.*

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, March 31, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On a snowy Friday morning in February 2020, just weeks before the outbreak of the world-changing Covid-19 pandemic, throngs of concerned Detroit citizens packed the courtroom of the Michigan Court of Appeals to hear a highly anticipated case surrounding the controversial Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA), whose conduct as a public body has faced numerous scrutiny and complaints from residents of one of the nation's largest African American cities.



Tina M. Patterson, Esq., is the Principal Attorney at Patterson Justice Counsel, PLLC in Detroit, Michigan.

That seminal case, *Sharp v Hillery, et al.* unpublished per curiam opinion of the Court of Appeals, issued [February 25, 2020] (Docket No. 347893), which was successfully argued by the notable and veteran Detroit [Attorney Tina M. Patterson](#), has been cited in The [Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy](#), the nation's premier law journal on poverty issues.

The case provides not only an instructive perspective on the work of the Detroit Land Bank Authority, but it also highlights the urgency to reform public institutions that are heavily financed with tax payer dollars, yet find themselves not meeting their stated goals.

For example, this particular case, which provides a foundational understanding of the Detroit Land Bank Authority and its operation, and became a focus of the Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy, involved a dispute over land that Attorney Patterson's clients, the

Hillerys, purchased from the DLBA under full compliance of the rules in effect during the purchase. The Hillerys' ownership was threatened years later after a rules change, when a neighbor sued the Hillerys and the DLBA for ownership of the land.

Although the Hillerys were in full compliance of the rules to acquire ownership of the land at the time of purchase, the DLBA reversed its promises under the contract and instead sided with the neighbor in the suit, insisting that the sale to the Hillerys was a mistake. A lower court ruled in favor of the neighbor and the DLBA, dispossessing the Hillerys of their property, which led to the Hillerys obtaining Attorney Patterson for their appeal.



Attorney Tina M. Patterson is also the President of The PuLSE Institute, a nationally renowned independent, anti-poverty think tank headquartered in Detroit, Michigan.

In reflection of the five-year anniversary of the consequential case, Attorney Patterson, Principal Attorney of Patterson Justice Counsel, PLLC, explained the importance of the case and the verdict that was rendered from the second highest court in the state.

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*Tina M. Patterson, Esq.*

“This case was necessary to take on because it was right. A thorough review of the details indicated that a body vested with government authority was not exercising that authority properly, causing harm to innocent individuals who followed the rules and were punished for their compliance,” Patterson said. “When the rule of law is so flagrantly disregarded by those tasked with safeguarding it, taking on the challenge becomes necessary to restore order, achieve justice, and protect the integrity of the basic

principles of our democracy.”

On appeal, [The Michigan Court of Appeals confirmed](#) that the DLBA did indeed validly contract with the Hillerys in the purchase of land and that all DLBA rules and regulations were followed as required by Patterson's clients, rejecting the DLBA's argument that the sale of the land was done in error. The Higher Court reversed the lower court decision in upholding Patterson's appellate argument, and the Hillerys were reinstated as rightful owners of the property. A subsequent appeal in 2021, *Sharp v Hillery, et al.* unpublished per curiam opinion of the Court of Appeals,

issued [April 22, 2021] (Docket No. 354432), affirmed Attorney Patterson's argument, once again validating her clients as the rightful property owners.

The case against the Detroit Land Bank Authority before the Court of Appeals stood out as one of the few and rare avenues where the higher court weighed in on one of the most compelling public policy issues facing the recovery of Detroit, because it allowed the judges on the court to listen to debate over questions of legitimate public interest regarding how the Detroit Land Bank Authority, which had come under federal investigation, was operating in its dealings and authority as a quasi-governmental agency. Additionally, the prominence of the case attracted significant public attention and motivated throngs of Detroit residents to attend and fill the courtroom, demonstrating the power and effect of an engaged citizenry in cases involving matters of significant public interest.

The importance of Attorney Patterson's case against the Detroit Land Bank Authority continues to have impact and underscores how economic justice issues in Detroit are being closely monitored from around the country. The case becoming a reference point on the intersection of race, class, and public policy in the premier Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy, published by Georgetown Law, one of the nation's most preeminent institutions of legal education is important for future law students, scholars and researchers interested in public interest law.

"The late legendary Charles Hamilton Houston, the legal architect behind the fall of Jim Crow segregation, once stated that a lawyer is either a social engineer or a parasite on society. That quote has influenced my philosophy, my approach, and my responsibility in practicing law," Attorney Patterson said. "In an era where there is a plethora of need for courageous voices, it is even more significant when those voices are authorized with higher levels of access in society, such as lawyers, who have the power and skills to speak louder and stronger than the oppressive forces that would try to make a mockery of justice."

Patterson has long maintained this personal philosophy that informs her practice as a lawyer and a defender of the rule of law.

"Lawyers have tremendous influence in not only the lives of our individual clients, but of society as a whole," Patterson said. "One client's victory can open access for millions to come."



Principal Attorney Tina M. Patterson of Patterson Justice Counsel, PLLC, with her client and dedicated Detroiters who came to hear the case against the Detroit Land Bank Authority at the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Attorney Patterson's work fittingly demonstrates that a lawyer's body of work not only directly affects the clients before them in obtaining results, but it can become a case study for emerging and seasoned legal professionals in higher learning institutions and has the potential to impact millions of lives in decades and even centuries ahead.

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