

### Eric Holder – Attorney General

Eric Holder was born in 1951 in the Bronx and grew up in New York City. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Columbia University. If Holder is confirmed, he will become the first African-American to serve as U.S. Attorney General.

After working in different capacities in the Department of Justice, in 1988 Holder was nominated by President Reagan to become a judge on Washington DC's Superior Court. He was confirmed by the Senate and served on the court for five years. In 1993, President Clinton nominated him to be the U.S. Attorney for Washington, DC, the nation's largest U.S. attorney office. Serving in the capacity through 1997, Holder was most notably responsible for creating a Domestic Violence Unit, as well as "Operation Ceasefire," an initiative designed to reduce violent crime by combating the proliferation of guns among criminals.

In 1997, Holder was promoted to Deputy Attorney General, the number-two position at the Justice Department, where he served through the end of the Clinton administration. In that capacity, DOJ issued the so-called "Holder Memorandum," which contained guidelines on the criminal prosecution of corporations. He also headed up DOJ's Children Exposed to Violence Initiative.

He is currently a partner at Covington & Burling. While there, among other settlements, he brokered a \$650 million settlement between Merck and the U.S. government over the former's failure to pay Medicaid rebates.

Holder serves on the board of the Save the Children foundation, and is a long-time member of Concerned Black Men, an organization devoted to helping troubled youth in Washington, DC.

Most controversially, while serving as Acting Attorney General, Holder did not attempt to block President Clinton's decision to pardon Marc Rich in January 2001. His official view was on the pardon was "neutral, leaning towards favorable." Holder later testified in front of Congress that he did not spend much time on the pardon, and he made a mistake in using quick judgment.

Sources:

Carrie Johnson, *Eric Holder Said to be Top Pick for Justice Department: He Would be the First Black Attorney General*, THE WASHINGTON POST, Nov. 19, 2008, at A01.

David Johnston, *The New Team: Eric H. Holder, Jr.*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Nov. 11, 2008.

Covington & Burling LLP, *Eric H. Holder, Jr.*, at <http://www.covington.com/eholder> (last visited Nov. 19, 2008).