

# Penn's Guinier is top candidate for Justice post

The former NAACP attorney confirmed that she has talked to White House officials.

By Henry Goldman  
and Aaron Epstein  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITERS

WASHINGTON — University of Pennsylvania law professor Lani Guinier, a former NAACP Legal Defense Fund attorney who has known President and Hillary Clinton since Yale Law School, is likely to be chosen assistant attorney general for civil rights, administration sources said yesterday.

Guinier, who worked as a special assistant to the head of the civil rights division in the Justice Department during the Carter administration, is the "front-runner and likely choice," said an administration source, who cautioned that an appointment had not yet been firmed up.

Reached at her office at Penn, where she teaches courses in criminal procedure, legal ethics and public interest law, Guinier confirmed that she is under consideration for the job and that she had talked to White House officials about it.

Guinier finished law school in 1974, a year after the Clintons, but she said she had had virtually no contact with them until 1983. That year she filed a voting rights lawsuit naming Bill Clinton as a defendant in a lawsuit she brought against the State of Arkansas.

"I actually sued the President when he was the governor of Arkansas," she recalled in a telephone interview yesterday. "I was working for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and we brought a voter registration case against the state. He was the defendant."

She praised his work to help get the case settled out of court, with a consent decree that liberalized Arkansas' election laws so that voters were not automatically purged from

the registration rolls if they had failed to vote.

She said she had stayed in contact with the Clintons since then.

"I was not active in the campaign, but I have enormous respect for the Clintons," she said.

Guinier lives in Germantown. Her husband, Nolan A. Bowie, who is also a lawyer, teaches communications and public policy at Temple University.

"With Lani, the administration will have someone who is an experienced civil rights attorney who will be able to hit the ground running and won't take a year to figure out what to do," said Frank Parker, of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law.

Guinier, who was born in New York, graduated from Radcliffe College, now part of Harvard College, where her father had been a professor of American history and an early scholar in African American studies.

She has taught at the University of Pennsylvania since 1987 and became a tenured professor last year.

Before teaching law, Guinier headed the voting rights project at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for 7½ years. While there, she litigated the North Carolina case that helped define the 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act.

The case, *Gingles v. Thornburgh*, went to the Supreme Court. The high court's 1986 ruling made it easier for blacks and other minorities to challenge redistricting plans that may dilute their voting power. The court found that nearly all of a North Carolina legislative redistricting plan violated federal law by reducing black voting strength.

The NAACP job followed a Justice Department stint as special assistant to Drew Days, who headed the civil rights division under President Jimmy Carter. Days, a Yale University law professor, has been nominated to be solicitor general.

This article contains information from the Associated Press.

# Clintons invite old friends to private gala

Last weekend the First Couple spent their first dinner party away from the White House among friends they had met more than two decades ago.

Hosting the dinner party were Bill and Hillary Clinton's black classmates at the Yale Law School during the early 1970's.

Lani Guinier, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, one of the dinner's organizers, said the event was "especially memorable" since it showed that the President and First Lady had remained the "open and engaging couple" she had shared time with while at Yale. The Clinton's graduated the Yale law School in 1973, while Ms. Guinier graduated the following year.

Dr. Lila Coleburn, one of the other organizers, said she was also struck by the fact that the Clinton's had chosen to spend their first weekend after the inauguration to share time with their black law school class-



**President Clinton listens intently to one of his dinner hosts.**

mates showed "a special degree of closeness by a head of state with his black peers." The dinner was held at the home of Dr. Coleburn's mother in the Shepherd Park section of Washington.

"This may be the first presi-

dent to have black peers and who appreciates that they are in fact his peers," commented Dr. Coleburn.

Among the nearly 40 guests who joined the Clintons were Roger Wilkins, a professor at George Mason University in

Virginia, John Payton, Corporation Counsel for the District of Columbia; Harlon Dalton, a law professor at Yale and Drew Days, a professor at Yale Law School who is widely rumored to be under consideration to become the next Attorney General.

Dalton, who acted as toastmaster, distributed several humorous gifts to the President and First Lady after all of the guests

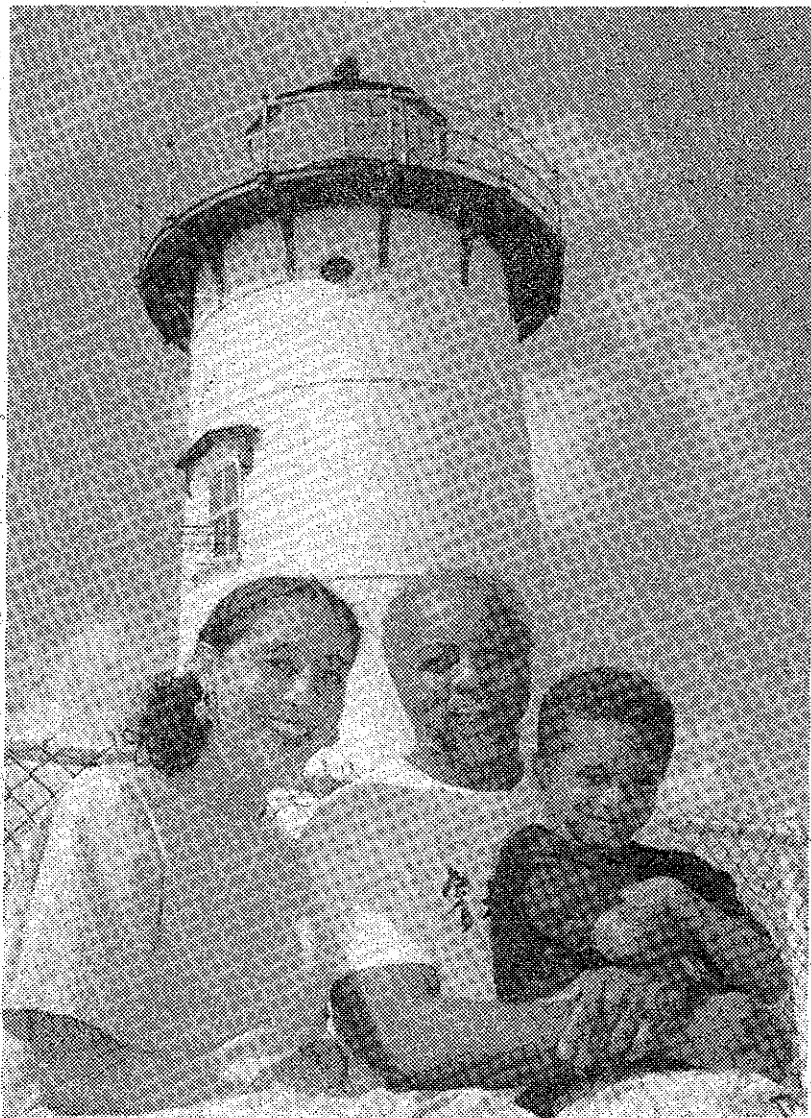
had dined on a menu of poached salmon, smoked turkey and brisket of beef.

"They were so relaxed that you almost forgot you were talking to someone who had just gotten sworn into the highest office of the land," remarked Nancy Gist, Deputy Chief Counsel for the Public Counsel of the State of Massachusetts, who also helped organize the dinner.



**Hillary Clinton and Nolan Bowie share a laugh at last week's dinner party. Temple professor Bowie and his wife, Lonnie Guinier, helped organize the private reception.**

...new city budget means cuts for poor



Stephen Rose for The New York Times

Lani Guinier, a longtime vacationer in Martha's Vineyard whose nomination for the Justice Department was withdrawn by President Clinton, has not received any invitations from Mr. Clinton, a former law school classmate. She sat with her husband, Nolan Bowie, and son, Nikolas, by the East Chop Lighthouse in Oak Bluffs.

## Two Old Friends Share Island, but Nothing Else

By SARA RIMER

Special to The New York Times

OAK BLUFFS, Mass., Aug. 23 — The last time Bill Clinton was on Martha's Vineyard it was to attend the wedding of a Yale Law School classmate, Lani Guinier. That was seven years ago, when he was the Governor of Arkansas. Now he is here again, and she is here with her family, as she is every summer.

This time the two have not seen each other.

Reporters have been asking Professor Guinier whether the President has called, or whether she has been included in the social whirl around Mr. Clinton and her other law school classmate, Hillary Rodham Clinton. He has not called, and Professor Guinier has not been invited to anything, not even to Saturday night's party at Sheldon and Lucy Hackney's. Mr. Hackney, who was recently confirmed to head the National Endowment for the Arts, was the president of the University of Pennsylvania, where his friend Lani Guinier is a law professor.

Professor Guinier said she had not spoken to the President since June 4, when he telephoned to tell her he was withdrawing her nomination as assistant attorney general for human rights. "I'm not bitter," Ms. Guinier said Saturday night, talking on the terrace of her mother's home in East Chop, a peninsula on the other side of the island from where the President is staying. "I'm not in hiding. I don't want to be seen as a victim."

Asked about the President's friendship with Ms. Guinier today, Mr. Clinton's spokeswoman, Dee Dee Myers, said, "He made clear during that incident that she is someone whom he clearly respects and cares a great

deal about and has always considered a friend."

Ms. Guinier declined to talk about the President's social calendar. "I would rather talk about my ideas for empowering all voters to build cross-racial coalitions," she said.

Her 6-year-old son Nikolas shows less equanimity.

After tennis the other day, Nikolas and his father, Nolan Bowie, wandered near the 14th hole of the Farm Neck Golf Club, where the President was teeing off. A crowd had gathered. Nikolas, who taught himself to read before he was 3, said he had prepared a short speech for just such an occasion.

"I was going to say, 'Why did you dump Lani Guinier?'" he shouted, jumping up and down on the terrace. "She's my mother!"

But the little boy decided it was best to keep quiet. "I was afraid the Secret Service would arrest me," he said. And then Nikolas and his mother and his friend Alison McGill, also 6, went off to ride the carousel and eat ice cream at Mad Martha's in Oak Bluffs.