

## Lloyd O. Brown



Lloyd Odom Brown was the first African-American elected as a Cleveland Municipal Court Judge and the second to sit as an Ohio Supreme Court Justice. He was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1928, and his family moved to Cleveland when he was two. When he was five, his father, a firm believer in the work ethic, gave him five copies of *The Call and Post* newspaper to sell each week in the old Woodland Market. Brown was 12 when his father died and during his teen-age years, he worked in the press room of *The Call and Post* and at a shoe store owned by his uncle.

He graduated from East Technical High School in 1946, and joined the Coast Guard, spending four years stationed in New England. Using his veterans' benefits, he attended Ohio State University and worked part time in a potato chip factory. It was in Columbus where he met his wife, Phyllis. She took a job in the university's Air Force ROTC department to help her husband finish school. Graduating in 1955 with both a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a law degree, he was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1956.

Returning to Cleveland, his legal career began in the office of then-Councilman Charles V. Carr & Associates. Brown served as an Ohio Assistant Attorney General in 1958 and 1959, and as a trial lawyer in the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, from 1959 to 1967. Over those eight years, he was busy with several major cases.

In 1967, a solid base of black voters mobilized at the polls to elect Carl B. Stokes as the nation's first black mayor of a major American city. Brown was elected to the municipal court on that same wave of voter enthusiasm. While on the bench, he instituted a \$5 reduction in fines in traffic court for those found wearing a seat belt at the time the citation was issued, the first such program in the country.

Governor John J. Gilligan appointed him to the Ohio Supreme Court in 1971. When Lloyd Brown ran to keep his seat in 1972, he faced no opposition in the Democratic primary. However, he was defeated by Paul W. Brown in the general election in November. This may have been a clear case of voter name confusion.

The next year, Gilligan appointed him as a judge in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court. There would be no confusion in the next election. Voters retained Brown on the bench through subsequent elections until 1986, when he declined to run. He retired from the bench and went into private practice.

He had plans to retire when he passed away May 3, 1993 at the age of 64.

Lloyd O. Brown served Cleveland Municipal Court from January 3, 1968 to December 20, 1971.