



Hon. Jean Murrell Capers

January 11, 1913 - July 18, 2017

Judge Jean Murrell Capers passed away Tuesday, July 18th at the age of 104, leaving a legacy in the city that many believe will continue to inspire for years to come. She is survived by her devoted sister, Alice Rose, a host of dear nephews and nieces and loved by many other relatives and countless friends. Judge Capers was the first black woman elected to Cleveland City Council, who also served as an assistant state attorney general and a Cleveland Municipal Court judge. She grew up in Cleveland's central neighborhood and graduated from Western Reserve University with a teaching degree; later on she went to Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, passing the bar in 1945. Jean had no children of her own, but nonetheless became one of the leading maternal figures of this town.



Hon. William H. Corrigan

November 29, 1923 - February 1, 2017

William (Bill) Howard Corrigan was a WWII veteran who survived a life-threatening gunshot wound in World War II's Battle of the Bulge and received a Purple Heart. Bill began his career as an attorney in the law office of his father, renowned Cleveland criminal defense attorney William J. Corrigan. Bill assisted his father in defending Dr. Sam Shepard in his infamous murder trial in the 1950s. Corrigan's mother was groundbreaking Cleveland journalist Marjorie Wilson, whose career included stints at the Plain Dealer and other Cleveland newspapers. In the wake of the Civil Rights movement, Bill left a successful career in law to become a public-school teacher and counselor at Cleveland's Glenville High School where he taught during the historic riots in that community. Next came service as a consultant to the Cleveland Diocese Commission on Catholic Community Action, and then a return to law practice. In 1984 Bill was ordained a deacon and served at St. Patrick Parish on Bridge Avenue and then at the nearby St. Colman Parish. In 1989, Bill was elected Cleveland Housing Court Judge. He served only one 6-year term as he was ineligible to run again since he was over 70 years old. Bill and his wife of 60 years, the former Judy Sweeney, were longtime residents of Cleveland's near west side and they dedicated their lives to advocating for peace and justice. They challenged both church and state to bend toward justice. Bill was preceded in death by his son, Michael, who died in 1963. He is survived by his wife Judy, eight children, 24 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.



Hon. Raymond L. Pianka

August 4, 1951 – January 21, 2017

Educated in Cleveland public schools, Judge Raymond Pianka graduated from the old West High, where he met Karen Olson, who later became his wife; they have one child, Kirsten Pianka. Ray graduated from Cleveland State University with a B.A. in political science in 1973, and then attended Cleveland-Marshall College of Law while helping start Detroit-Shoreway Community Development Organization in 1973; he became the organization's first executive director. Pianka became a key player in many economic development and community projects, and was instrumental in saving the Gordon Square Arcade building from demolition which today is the centerpiece of the thriving Gordon Square Arts District. He received a J.D. degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1977, and was admitted to the Bar on April 28, 1978. Pianka was elected to Cleveland City Council in 1985. As Councilman, his hallmark was his accessibility to residents; but his other equally important hallmark was his commitment to pass legislation and implement policies that strengthened Cleveland's neighborhoods. He was first elected to the Cleveland Housing Court in 1995. As judge, Ray implemented numerous innovative programs to help people comply with Cleveland's building, housing, and health codes. These programs included requiring negligent landowners to pay neighbors for the blight their properties cause and imposing daily fines on landowners who didn't show up in court for housing code violations. Judge Ray Pianka once wrote, "Nothing I have done or could do to serve my community is more important, or more fulfilling, than being the Housing Court Judge."



Hon. Pauline H. Tarver

November 10, 1953 – July 26, 2017

Judge Pauline H. Tarver was a champion of the, down trodden and less fortunate, a lover of humanity and the law, which is why she spent her life as a public servant. Pauline graduated with a Political Science degree from John Carroll University, in University Heights, Ohio, in 1975. Graduating from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, in December 1990, Pauline would be admitted to the Ohio Bar Association in 1992. Starting her career as a Justice System Coordinator at the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, as well as acting Executive Director there, Pauline trained Law Enforcement and Grand Juries in rape evidence collection and counseled victims. Upon leaving the Rape Crisis Center, Pauline jumped in with both feet as the Executive Director for the Cleveland Branch of the NAACP. Here, Pauline would fight for the civil rights and justice, for not only African Americans but for people of all colors. In June of 2000, Pauline would lead a peaceful protest against the KKK and also spear headed a voter registration campaign, registering 10,000 new voters for the Presidential election. During her tenure at the NAACP, Pauline also designed a HIV/AIDS educational program, expanding public awareness of the devastation of HIV/AIDS in the African American community. When Pauline's childhood dream of being a Judge was fulfilled in 2003, her reputation for being a compassionate, committed, fair and firm jurist earned her a second term on the Cleveland Municipal Court bench, where she affectionately and lovingly known as "the People's Judge." Pauline had many accomplishments while on the bench, but the two that were most near and dear to her heart, were Project H.O.P.E (Holistic Opportunities and Preventive Education), a court solicitation/prostitution intervention program, and the Mental Health Docket, a program designed to help local courts offer treatment and recovery instead of incarceration. As all-encompassing as these achievements were, first and foremost, Pauline loved the Lord. There was nothing more important to her than the love of God and her family. At the age of 8, Pauline accepted the Lord and was baptized in Cleveland at Bible Way Baptist Church, eventually making Antioch Baptist Church (Cleveland, Ohio), her church home. Scripture states "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6 KJV). The Master had to say, "Pauline, good and faithful servant job well done." Pauline is survived by her surrogate daughter, Victoria Thurman; siblings, Robert E. Tarver Sr., Irene E. White, Valerie Glendell and Dorothy A. Pitts; and a host of nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.