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THE HONORABLE JUDGE ROBERT F. COLLINS

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# PROFILE/FEATURES

## JUDGE ROBERT F. COLLINS

Robert Frederick Collins, son of Irma Anderson and the late Frederick Collins, was born January 27, 1931 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He received his early education in the New Orleans public and parochial schools. He is a graduate of the Gilbert Academy High School. He graduated from Dillard University with honors in 1951 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1954, he received his LL.B. degree from Louisiana State University Law School.

Collins entered the private practice of law in New Orleans in June 1954 and was associated with the firm of Augustine, Collins, Smith and Warren until 1959. He was the senior partner in the firm of Collins, Douglas and Elie and also served as an Instructor of Law at Southern University School of Law in Baton Rouge.

During the sixties and early seventies Collins was involved in civil rights litigation throughout Louisiana, representing the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He also served as cooperating attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. During this time, he practiced extensively in the federal courts handling criminal cases, cases of discrimination in public accommodations, employment discrimination and school desegregation cases. Three of Collins' cases were won before the United States Supreme Court, *Lombard v. Louisiana*,<sup>1</sup> *Cox v. Louisiana*,<sup>2</sup> and *Brown v. Louisiana*.<sup>3</sup>

Collins also served as Consultant to the Southern Region of the Legal Services Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity and as Attorney for the Housing Authority of New Orleans. He was appointed Assistant City Attorney and Special Legal Advisor to the Police Department of the City of New Orleans. In 1969, he was appointed by Mayor Victor Schiro as Judge-Ad-Hoc of the Traffic Court of New Orleans. He was again appointed to serve in this capacity by Mayor Moon Landrieu to fill temporary vacancies in 1970, 1971 and 1972. He served as a member of the State Welfare Board by appointment of Governor John J. McKeithen.

In 1972, Collins was appointed to the newly created position of Magistrate-Judge for the Criminal District Court by Governor Edwin Edwards; in November 1974, Collins was elected to that position for an eight year term. In the fall of 1977, Robert F. Collins was nominated by President Carter to the position of United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, making him the first Black federal judge in the Deep South. As a federal judge, Collins has decided several particularly significant cases, including *Treasury Employees v. Von Raab*,<sup>4</sup> *Major v. Treen*,<sup>5</sup> *Concerned Citizens for a Better Gretna v. City of Gretna*,<sup>6</sup> *Margaret S. v. Edwards*,<sup>7</sup> and *Margaret S. v.*

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1. 373 U.S. 267 (1963).

2. 379 U.S. 536 (1965).

3. 383 U.S. 131 (1966).

4. 649 F. Supp. 380 (E.D. La. 1986) (drug testing of government employees).

5. 574 F. Supp. 325 (E.D. La. 1983) (voting rights).

6. 636 F. Supp. 1113 (E.D. La. 1986) (voting rights).

*Treen*.<sup>8</sup> Judge Collins continues to teach at Southern University School of Law.

From 1970 to 1978, Collins served as an Assistant Bar Examiner by appointment of the Supreme Court of Louisiana. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Loyola University of the South (New Orleans) and he is listed in *Who's Who Among Black Americans* and *Who's Who in American Law*.

He is married to the former Aloha Collins, and they are the parents of four children: Francesca, Lisa, Nanette and Robert.

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7. 488 F. Supp. 181 (E.D. La. 1980) (abortion).

8. 597 F. Supp. 636 (E.D. La. 1984) (abortion).