

# MANY MOURN THE PASSING OF PAUL JOHANNSEN

**Called City's Most Impartial Magistrate in Recent Years.**

**"I DO MY BEST"**

**Served 18 Years in Colored District.**

Magistrate Paul Johannsen, who was completing his 22nd year, and was the oldest magistrate in point of service, sitting on the bench of Baltimore's minor courts, died, early Monday morning in the Marburg Clinic of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. Magistrate Johannsen was 60 years old.

He was a member of the Baltimore bar for 31 years, and it was often remarked that his legal training went far in seeing that all who appeared in his court in the Northwestern district, where he served except for a few short periods since his appointment by Governor Crothers in 1909, were given a fair and impartial trial.

#### **Did His Best**

Recently he remarked to an AFRO-AMERICAN reporter who thanked him for his impartial conduct of the trial of a colored prisoner who was being prosecuted by a number of whites for an alleged theft, "I make mistakes, but I do the best I can."

#### **Human**

Serving in the Northwestern district with its almost overwhelming colored population, Magistrate Johannsen got to know the people as did no other in the city. He was sympathetic and kindly in the trial of misdemeanors and other petty offenses, but punished with severity those whom the evidence pointed to as being guilty of major violations or open law affrontry.

#### **Ruled on Evidence**

On one occasion he told a too vigilant police official who sought to introduce a prisoner's record, "I could not face my wife and daughter tonight or my Creator hereafter, if I convicted this man on anything other than the evidence before me." It was also significant that officers were not permitted to persecute a prisoner because of his color; but when they were right they had no stronger ally than Judge Johannsen.

#### **No Name Calling**

He permitted no name calling in his court, and woe to him or her who referred to a prisoner in any other than the accepted and proper terms. The Monumental Bar Association had nothing but the kindest respect for his legal training, and humane treatment of his fellows. Throughout the city, news of his death brought deepest expressions of sympathy and regret.

#### **Opposed Common Law**

Magistrate Johannsen was bitterly opposed to common law marital couple and bitterly scored those who came before him for hearings. He held that the children of such unions were the worst sufferers, and frequently through his good offices the unholy alliances were solemnized by marriages.

#### **Wanted Him Back**

When rumor had it that it was probable that he would not be re-appointed by Governor Ritchie for the last term, members of the Monumental Bar Association circulated a petition in the Northwestern district which got thousands of signers asking for Magistrate Johannsen's retention. When the appointments were announced it was found that he had been returned to his old post. The request is believed to have decided Governor Ritchie's action.

#### **Born in Germany**

Magistrate Johannsen was born near Husun, in the province of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, and came to this country in 1888. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Cora V. Johannsen, and a daughter, Mrs. J. C. Philips, of Harrisburg, Pa. Funeral services were held from his home, 221 Mondawmin Avenue, Thursday morning.

## ONE MAN LYNCHED