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Garland Wedderick Watt
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Papers

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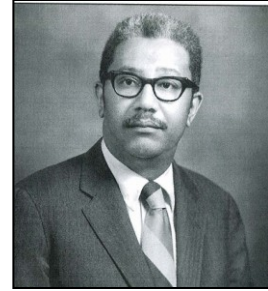
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Biographical Note : GARLAND WEDDERICK WATT was a native of Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Judge Watt was the maternal grandson of Peter Wedderick Moore, who served as Elizabeth City State University's first principal and chief executive officer from 1891 to 1928.



The Honorable Garland W. Watt, a retired judge, attended kindergarten and elementary school at the Teachers Training School on the campus of Elizabeth City State Normal School. Very early, Judge Watt showed precociousness as a student, skipping seventh, eighth, and twelfth grades. He graduated from Washington High School in Reidsville, North Carolina as valedictorian. Judge Watt enrolled at North Carolina College for Negroes, now North Carolina Central University, in Durham, North Carolina at the age of 15. He became president of his senior class and graduated magna cum laude in May 1952.

Judge Watt studied law at the Harvard Law School from September 1952 through June 1954, then transferred to DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, where he earned his Juris Doctor Degree, with honors. He launched his private practice with the law firm of Turner, Cousins, Gavin, and Watt, a pioneer black firm solely comprised of Harvard-educated attorneys who were unable to obtain employment in Chicago law firms because of their color. For fourteen years prior to his appointment to the Circuit Court of Cook County (Illinois), Judge Watt practiced law as a member of the Illinois Bar.

In January 8, 1970, Judge Watt entered Illinois legal history by being the first practicing lawyer selected by appointment to fill a Circuit Court vacancy by the Illinois Supreme Court. After his initial appointment, Judge Watt won the ensuing election for a full term as a judge and served in that capacity until December 1979, when he retired to resume the private practice of law.

During his distinguished career, Judge Watt amassed a long record of pre-judicial governmental experiences, including service as a hearing examiner for the Chicago Police Board; a hearing examiner for the State of Illinois Fair Employment Practices Commission; and a conciliatory and hearing examiner for the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. Also, he served as corporate director and general counsel to Independence Bank of Chicago and as a member of the Advisory Board of Supreme Life Insurance Company of America. Effective January 1, 2000, Judge Watt was reappointed by the Illinois Supreme Court as a member of the committee on Character and Fitness. In addition, he is a member of the National and American Bar Associations, the National Association of Bond Lawyers, and the National Association of Securities Professionals.

Throughout his career Judge Watt has had many firsts, but the ones of which he was most proud are his listing of AV/BR (the highest quality rating available) in the Martindale Hubbell Law Firm Directory and a similar listing in the Bar Register of Prominent Lawyers.

Judge Watt was active in charitable, civic, political, and religious affairs. He was a 33rd Degree Mason. Also, Judge Watt was a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the Sigma Pi Phi

Scope and Content Note:

The Watt Papers consist of a small number of files which contain information about Judge Watt's career and political life. One file of biographical papers exists, along with a file of clippings and periodical articles relating to Judge Watt and a file containing his funeral program. Additionally, the collection contains several photographic portraits

Collection Inventory:

Series	Folder Title	Box One
Biographical	Garland Wedderick Watt Biography	
Biographical	Clippings and articles from Jet magazine	
Biographical	Death of Garland W. Watt	
Public Papers	Garland W. Watt Career	