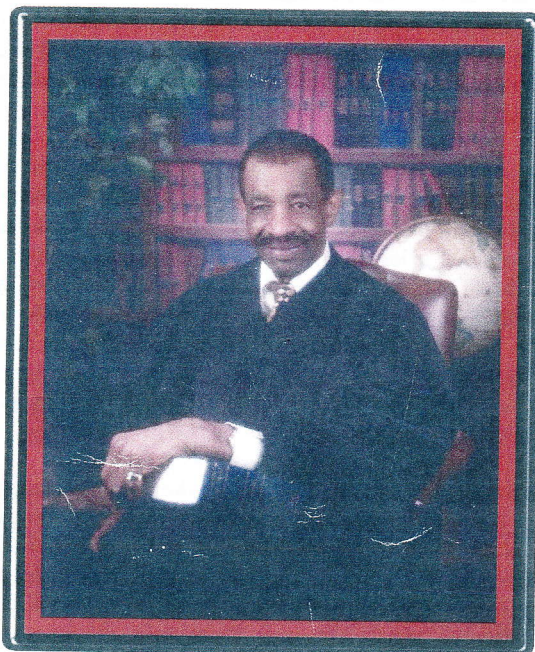


*In
Loving Memory of*



Judge Robert W. Penn

November 6, 1921 - April 30, 2015

Tuesday, May 12, 2015
11:00 a.m.

Grace Presbyterian Church
1171 Oakwood Avenue
Toledo, Ohio

Reverend Andy J. Hill
Officiant

IN LOVING MEMORY

Robert W. Penn, a native of rural Athens, Alabama, was one of nine children born to the deeply spiritual Roswell William and Nellie Floy Penn. His parents instilled a love of God in their children by attending church regularly as a family, contributing financially, and providing service. The son of a well-respected sharecropper, he credited his longevity to the sixty miles he walked each week to attend Trinity School, a private missionary school initially established in 1865 to educate former slaves, but subsequently was instrumental in educating blacks denied a public school education by the State of Alabama after the sixth grade.

He attended Tuskegee Institute and enrolled in ROTC, but a shoulder problem prevented him from becoming an officer. He enlisted in 1943 and served five years in the U.S. Army, including several years in the European Theater as a logistics and supply sergeant. After spending three years in a military hospital in Denver, he was honorably discharged with a service-connected disability, which ultimately contributed to his death. He returned to Tuskegee to complete his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, but was determined to leave the South, in search of the respect he experienced during his military service in Europe.

After his discharge, he moved to Toledo where his brother Paul and Aunt Winnie lived. He bought a grocery store on Ironwood and Girard on Toledo's East Side, which he and his brother operated together. Determined to pursue a career in law, he applied to the law school at Western Reserve (now Case Western Reserve University). After graduating in 1953, Attorney Penn and classmate James B. Simmons, III, the son of Toledo's first black councilman, joined the elder Simmons' law firm, located at City Park and Indiana.

In September 1954, Robert Penn married the love of his life, the beautiful and talented Mary Louise Cowell of Toledo. He was a loving husband and referred to her as his soul mate. A few years later, he opened his own law practice. During the time he had his own firm, two attorney members, Joseph Flores and Charles Doneghy, subsequently became judges. Active in public service, he served as Chief Legal Counsel for the NAACP during the late 1950's and 1960's, President of the Civil Service Commission of the City of Toledo from 1971 to 1984, and member of the Administrative Board of Zoning Appeals from 1962 to 1978, and its president for five years. When he was appointed to the Municipal Court, he sold his law firm to another future judge, C. Allen McConnell. Judge Penn also nurtured and mentored recently retired Federal Magistrate Judge Vernelis Armstrong and his law clerk, Myron Duhart, a current Lucas County Common Pleas Court judge. Judge Penn served on the Toledo Municipal Court bench from 1984 to 1995, and subsequently as a visiting judge until the mandatory retirement age.

He was considered by prosecutors and defense lawyers to be one of the most astute judges to sit on the bench. Although he was sometimes referred to as "Penitentiary Penn" because he didn't hesitate to hand down jail time when warranted, he had a soft spot for hardworking defendants who struggled to maintain several jobs to support themselves and family. From time to time Penn encountered a former defendant who thanked him for his strict sentencing and it pleased the Judge that he turned his life around.

In addition to his many civic-minded appointments, board memberships, and affiliations, Judge Penn faithfully served Grace Presbyterian Church many years as an elder and advisor. He also loved the arts and served as president of the Toledo Opera Association and board member of the Toledo Symphony. He credits his teachers at Trinity School for cultivating his interest in opera and classical music at an early age. Robert and Mary loved to travel making annual trips to the Shakespearean Festival in Stratford, Ontario, a memorable trip to Vienna, Salzburg, and Italy, and a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Israel and the Holy Land in 2000.

Judge Robert W. Penn passed away at the age of 93 on April 30, 2015 hand-in-hand with his daughter and caregivers at Ebeid Hospice after succumbing to COPD.

Throughout his life, Robert W. Penn valued education, determination, and excellence. He expected and instilled those values in those close to him. He encouraged his daughter, his nieces and nephews, siblings, colleagues, and friends to further their education and to always try their best. He was an active member of Sigma Pi Phi (Boule) Fraternity for many years, and loved to go fishing with his daughter, brother, and friends. He could be demanding, had an unwavering sense of right and wrong, but he was well-loved by many, always ready to share a joke or funny personal experience.

He leaves to cherish his memory his daughter, Crystal W. Penn of Philadelphia, PA, a source of great pride to him. Crystal holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from MIT and has worked in both the airline and pharmaceutical industries. He is also survived by his dearly loved siblings: Hattie Wall and Charles Penn of Huntsville, AL, Paul (Delores) Penn of Toledo, and Oliver (Minnie) Penn of Dayton, OH, several cousins, and many beloved nieces and nephews, and a host of special friends, dedicated caregivers and colleagues. He joins in eternal rest his cherished wife of nearly 57 years, Mary Louise Cowell Penn, who died in 2011, parents Roswell and Nellie Floy, and siblings Roswell Penn, Jr., Evelyn Martin, Gloria Hall, and Nellie Floy Penn.



ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional.....Musical Prelude..... Kelly Miller

Greetings and Invocation.....Rev. Andy J. Hill

Hymn.....
"Blessed Assurance"

Scripture Readings.....Rev. Andy J. Hill
Psalm 23
John 14:1-6

Reflections and Memories.....
U.S. Magistrate Vernelis Armstrong, retired
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

Judge Myron Duhart
Lucas County Common Pleas Court

Obituary.....(silently read)

Musical Selection.....Stanley Cowell, solo piano
"Revelation 21:1-6", by Stanley Cowell

Reflections and Memories.....Dr. Joseph Sommerville,
Personal Friend, member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity

Dr. Paul Penn, Jr.
Family

Acknowledgement of Condolences.....Rev. Andy J. Hill

Musical Selections.....Kisma Jordan, soprano
Stanley Cowell, piano

"Walk Together Children" and
"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"
both arranged by Moses Hogan (1957-2003)
Ms. Jordan appears courtesy of the
Toledo Symphony Orchestra

Words of Comfort.....Rev. Andy J. Hill

Hymn.....
"How Great Thou Art"

Recessional.....

Postlude.....Kelly Miller, piano
"Well With My Soul"

PALLBEARERS

Gary Franklin
Myron Duhart
Nicholas Hirt

Jeff Schroeder
Richard Jackson, Sr.
Paul Penn, Jr.

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Oliver Penn
Charles Penn
Paul Penn, Sr.
Dr. Joseph Sommerville

Delbert Duckins
Nathan McCain
Dr. Jason Ofori
William Hirt, deceased

INTERMENT

Ottawa Hills Memorial Park
Toledo, Ohio

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With sincere appreciation, we would like to thank our many friends for their expressions of kindness during our bereavement for our loved one. May God bless each of you. -THE FAMILY

Memorial donations can be made to Grace Presbyterian Church or the Robert, Mary, and Crystal Penn Fund at the Toledo Community Foundation.

ARRANGEMENTS ENTRUSTED TO

Dale-Riggs Funeral Home, Inc.
572 Nebraska Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43604

"Over 100 years of Funeral Service."
419-248-4254

Program By: Bob The Printer
