

Written by Kathy

Wednesday, 19 July 2017 16:19 - Last Updated Sunday, 23 July 2017 07:40



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Ohio's most read Black

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CLEVELAND, Ohio- Retired Cleveland Municipal Court judge Jean Murrell Capers, who was the longest living former or current Black elected official in Ohio, and likely elsewhere, and the first Black woman to serve on Cleveland City Council, is dead at 104, the beloved public servant passing away in her sleep the afternoon of July 17.

Judge Capers, as she was affectionately referred to since judges in Ohio retain such title unless they quit, lose election or reelection or are removed from the bench for malfeasance or other reasons, died with a doctor, a nurse and her guardian, Vel Scott, by her side, a family spokesperson said.

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Funeral arrangements are pending.

An Obama supporter, Capers was elected to Cleveland City Council in 1949, long before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

She was a staunch advocate for Blacks, women, the poor and other disenfranchised groups, and was one of the first members of the Women's Advisory Council for the women's division of what is now called the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

She believed firmly in the application of the Constitution of the United States of America from the free speech clause of the first amendment to the equal protection and due process clauses under the 14th amendment.

After retiring she would frequently rally and march with greater Cleveland community activists on community issues.

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And she would call out Black leaders she felt did not stand up enough for the Black community.

At the age of 62 she was appointed to the Cleveland Municipal Court bench. She later won election to the court, now a 13 -member largely Black court, and remained there until her retirement.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, the city's three-term Black mayor and former council president who for decades represented ward 5, which includes the central neighborhood, said Capers will not be forgotten.

"Judge Capers gave her time and talent to mentoring future leaders and was a tenacious advocate and fighter for the city, the central neighborhood and the people," said Jackson in a press release. " I remember her as a person who required excellence, order and professionalism."

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Jackson said that Capers was "the first 'Negro' female member of city council, but despite her accomplishments, she never forgot where she came from, and stayed in the central neighborhood until just a few years ago. "

"Judge Capers was a colleague, neighbor and a friend, I will miss her dearly," said Mayor Jackson, a Democrat.

She was a community icon and had an enduring personality, said other Black elected officials who knew her.

" To have known her was to have loved her," state Rep. Bill Patmon, a Cleveland Democrat and former city councilman, told Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonline.com during an interview on yesterday. "If there is one icon that shows brightly in Cleveland's historical years, she was it, and we shall miss her."

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11th Congressional District Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, a Warrensville Heights Democrat whose largely Black congressional district includes parts of the majority Black city of Cleveland and several of its eastern suburbs, and one of two Blacks in congress from Ohio, praised Capers too.

"Judge Capers was a role model for women from her competitive days as a tennis and health and physical education teacher, to her advocacy in the courtroom and time on the bench," said Fudge. "She was a tireless worker and our champion, fighting to defend the rights of people."

Born on Jan 11, 1913, Capers has been courted for the last several years on her annual birthday by the Black community of greater Cleveland and area media, among others, the last gathering with community activists, friends and family members on her birthday this year at the Judson Manor assisted living facility where she has lived for the last several years.

At that birthday gathering, which also included her younger sister Alice Murrell Rose, now 100 years-old, and her sister's son, Capers was vibrant and told . Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com that she expected to live many more years.

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" I don't think about dying," Capers told editor Kathy Wray Coleman of . Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com

'
"Ohio's Black digital news leaders. "I think about living."

Also a former school teacher and prior assistant attorney general, and a Black Republican with friends and supporters across partisan lines, she was one of five siblings, and was born in Kentucky, later migrating to Ohio and becoming a legend in her own right.

The outspoken and highly respected Capers was a community activist and until recently remained active in the community.

Until last year Capers was an assistant commentator on the weekly WJMO 1490 am radio show in Cleveland dubbed the Art McKoy University Show of Common Sense, a radio broadcast that features community activists Art McKoy and Al Porter of Black on Crime Inc and addresses urban issues across the spectrum from Black on Black Crime and police brutality to racism, and politics.

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"We loved the judge and we will miss her," said McKoy, a longtime community activist who founded the greater Cleveland grassroots group Black on Black Crime Inc.

Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com , Ohio's most read Black digital newspaper and Black blog with some 4.5 million views on Google Plus alone. Tel: (216) 659-0473 and Email: editor@clevelandurbannews.com. Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief, and who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview, [CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM, OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS](http://Clevelandurbannews.com)

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