

Chester K. Gillespie

Chester K. Gillespie was born in Home City, Ohio. His family moved to Cleveland about 1909. After attending Ohio State University, Gillespie earned a law degree from Baldwin Wallace College Law School in 1920.

He was an Assistant Law Director for Cleveland in 1921 and soon became a prominent civil-rights attorney in Cleveland, bringing antidiscrimination suits against theater, restaurant, and amusement park owners.

Although many of Gillespie's antidiscrimination suits were unsuccessful, they were influential to him as he served his 3 terms in the Ohio General Assembly (1933-1934, 1939-1940, 1943-1944). He sponsored legislation extending Ohio's Civil-Rights Law to prohibit discrimination in retail establishments, and included in the liquor laws a provision making racial discrimination grounds for revoking a liquor license. He was President of the local chapter of the NAACP (1936-1937); and led the fight for downtown office space for black lawyers and other professionals in the 1930's and 1940's. During World War II, he served in the U. S. Army.

Gillespie was a member of the Republican State Central Committee and a delegate to national conventions (1948, 1968). He was appointed to the State Board of Education in 1963, and later won an election to complete that term. In 1965, he was appointed to fill an unexpired term to the municipal court position of Chief Justice. Unfortunately, the appointment came too late for him to file for the election. After much debate and opinionating, the election board ruled he could not be considered as a write in, so he was left keeping the seat for a very short time. Gillespie retired from law and politics in 1971 and moved to Los Angeles, California.

He passed away in 1985 at the age of 88.

Chester K Gillespie served Cleveland Municipal Court from October 20, 1965 to December 1, 1965.

