

# Historic Milestones

BY ELVA P. DEJARMON

1937

WILLIAM H. HASTIE confirmed as Judge of Federal District Court in Virgin Islands, the first Black Federal Judge, March 26. (A native of Knoxville, Tenn. Judge Hastie has had a distinguished legal career. He served as Assistant solicitor, Dept. of Interior; Judge of District Court of Virgin Islands; Dean of Howard University School of Law; as a Civilian Aide to the Secy. of War, 1940-42; as Governor of Virgin Islands; 1946-49; Judge of Third U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals since 1949; Trustee of Amherst College, Phi Beta Kappa; and other professional affiliations.)

Joe Louis defeated James J. Braddock for heavyweight championship, June 22.

Death of Ms. Bessie Smith, Clarksdale, Mississippi, September 26. (Bessie Smith, often called the "Blues" singer of the world. George Hofer has written that "Her Blues" "could be funny and boisterous, gentle and angry and bleak, but underneath all of them ran the raw bitterness of being a human being who had to think twice about which restroom she could use. It is said she bled to death in Mississippi, because she was unfortunate to have an auto accident in that state and was unable to receive hospital aid because she was black.) Her early jazz collection is found in the James Weldon Johnson Collection donated to Yale University by the late Carl Van Vechten. Housed in Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University.

1938

Death of Joe (King) Oliver, pioneer Negro jazz star, Savannah, Ga. April 10.

First Black woman legislator, Ms. Crystal Bird Fauset of Philadelphia, elected to Pennsylvania House of Representatives, November 8. (She was one of the only women serving in the legislature at that time. She was formerly a teacher and social worker and concentrated her political interests on 1965 in Philadelphia at age 71.)

Supreme Court ruled that State must provide equal educational facilities for Negroes within its boundaries, December 12. In the case of "Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada" (305 U.S. 337 (1938) reasons advanced against Gaines's claim to be admitted to the University of Missouri Law School was the limited demand from Negroes in that state for legal education. In addition to stressing the "personal" nature of petitioner's right, the opinion made the point that the granting of equal opportunity to petitioner Gaines could not be deferred "for an indefinite period" to give the state authorities the time necessary to establish a law department at the Black university. (The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the judgment of the Missouri Courts which had rejected petitioner's mandamus action to compel the curators of the State University to admit him to the law school. The rejection was based on the ground that petitioner Gaines had been offered tuition to study outside the state of Missouri pending establishment of a Negro Law school in Missouri. The Supreme Amendment to give petitioner (Gaines) an opportunity equal to those given white persons to study law, by making available educational facilities outside of the state.

All doubts in this respect disappeared when the Supreme Court published its "per curiam opinion in Sipuel v. Board of Regents (332 U.S. 631 (1948) upholding the Negro petitioner's right to be admitted to the School of Law of the University of Oklahoma, the only state institution for Legal Education—the Court said: "The State must provide (legal education) for her (Sipuel) in conformity with the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and provide it as soon as it does for applicants of any other group. (Legal Aspects of Civil Rights Movement Education pp. 37-38 By Paul Hartman).

(These sections are particularly important to blacks in North Carolina as one has witnessed the many attempts to close the Black Law School within the state and in South Carolina where the lone Black Law school, located on State College campus, Orangeburg, was closed; Florida A. & M. Law School and Lincoln University Law School was closed as well. (A complete synopsis of these Law School closings will be given at a later date as the Historic Milestones continue).

\*\*\*Lloyd Gaines, the plaintiff in this historical landmark case disappeared and has never been located.

1939

Ms. Jane Bolin appointed Judge of Court of Domestic Relations, New York City, by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and became the first Black Woman Judge in U.S., July 22. (The Poughkeepsie, N. Y. native was a graduate of Wellesley and Yale University Law School. Received Honorary LL.D. from Morgan State College and Western College for Women. Served on many national Black boards such as NAACP, Urban League, Harlem Lawyers Association, etc.

NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE and EDUCATIONAL FUND incorporated as a separate organization, October 11. Such a change afforded it a tax saving as a non profit corporation.



**AWARD RECIPIENT** — Velma M. Strode, director of the U. S. Labor Department's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, is the recipient of an award for outstanding work in the field of public administration from the Conference of Minority Public Administrators. The award was presented by Floyd McKissick at a recent ceremony.

## from HISTORY'S SCRAPBOOK

DATES AND EVENTS FROM YESTERYEARS

- March 26, 1875—Birthday of Robert Frost, American poet.
- March 27, 1933—Japan resigns from the League of Nations.
- March 28, 1797—Nathaniel Briggs of New Hampshire receives a patent for a washing machine.
- March 29, 1932—Jack Benny makes his radio debut as a guest on the Ed Sullivan show.
- March 30, 1867—Secretary of State William Seward agrees to purchase Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million.
- March 31, 1870—Thomas Peterson-Mundy, Perth Amboy, New Jersey, votes in a municipal election and is thus the first Negro to vote in the United States.
- April 1, 1945—American forces began the invasion of Okinawa during World War II.

## Strategy In Africa

LONDON, (Hsinhua) — British papers have denounced Soviet strategy in Africa as gunboat diplomacy and pointed out that the Soviet involvement in Angola is aimed at turning that country into a foothold for subverting other countries on that continent.

"The Scotsman" in an article entitled "Russia's African Strategy: Gunboat Diplomacy" said on February 10, "Since the Russians are hardly likely to declare publicly their overall strategy in Africa, it has to be worked out from the evidence." "The record of Soviet activities in Africa over the past decade is probably the best guide to their present aims. It turns out to be a series of widely separated initiatives, with bases...as their usual goal," it adds. "In almost every case, the Soviet Union has bought its influence in an African state with lavish supplies of arms," it states.

The Russians are seizing bases in East and West Africa by arms shipment, the article declares. "The idea of a major Russian naval base in Luanda (Angola) worries a lot of people, it adds.

"Daily Telegraph" said in an article on February 6 that the priority aims of Soviet intervention in Angola are strategic rather than economic. Their aim "is to turn that country into an invulnerable base for further subversion against Southern Africa." In Angola, the article says, "one

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## Durham City Schools

### OPEN HEARING

For

### Public Input

(Parents, Educators, Students, Citizens)

ON

### IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 31, 1976

7:30 p.m.

### SHEPARD JR. HIGH SCHOOL

Speakers may call 688-2361 for priority on the program or register at the door

Ben T. Brooks, Superintendent