

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Lillian Burke

PERSON

**Burke, Lillian, 1915-2012**

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Lillian Burke;

**Life Dates:** August 2, 1917-March 27, 2012

**Place of Birth:** Upson County, Georgia, USA

**Residence:** Cleveland, Ohio

**Occupations:** Municipal Court Judge

## Biographical Note

Attorney and retired judge Lillian Walker Burke was born in 1915, and grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After graduating from high school, Burke attended Ohio State University, where she received her bachelor's of science degree in education in 1947. In 1951, she received her law degree from the Cleveland Marshall College of Law, now part of Cleveland State University, and was admitted to the Ohio Bar.

While pursuing her law degree, Burke worked as a teacher in the Cleveland Public Schools. After graduating from law school, Burke served three years as the assistant attorney general, specializing in workmen's compensation. Burke was later appointed to the Ohio Industrial Commission by Governor James Rhodes, and served in that capacity for three years. Burke became the first African American woman to sit on the bench in the State of Ohio with her appointment to the Cleveland Municipal Court in January 1969; she was later elected to that office in November 1969, where she served until her retirement in 1987.

Judge Burke worked with a number of community organizations and voluntary associations, including The Cleveland Restoration Society; the City Planning Commission; the Landmark Commission; The Cleveland Foundation African American Outreach Advisory Committee; the National Council of Negro Women; the City Club; the NAACP; and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Burke also established the Lillian Walker Burke Scholarship for students attending the John Marshall College of Law.

Burke passed away on March 27, 2012 at age 94.

## Related Entries

**Oliver School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Crawford School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Duquesne Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Duquesne High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Duquesne University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**The Ohio State University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Cleveland-Marshall College of Law** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Ohio Industrial Commission** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1991 to 1994]

**Cleveland Public Schools** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1947 to 1947]

**Teach**

**Cleveland Municipal Court** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1998 to 1998]

**Judge**

**Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**National Council of Negro Women** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**The Cleveland Foundation** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]