



THE HONORABLE JUDGE

Sterling Johnson, Jr.

Sunrise
May 14, 1934

Sunset
October 10, 2022

“I remember an incident when I was in high school. I told my counselor I wanted to be a lawyer. He suggested that I become a carpenter instead.”

~ The Honorable Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr., Senior U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York (January 2017 New York Law School Review Interview, Vol. 61, Issue 1, Storming The Court).1

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 • 10:00 a.m.

Christian Cultural Center

120-20 Flatlands Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11207

Senior Pastor A.R. Bernard

Order of Service

Opening Prayer Pastor Perry Robinson

Welcome Officiating, S Aisha Vaughn Touré (Niece)

Scripture Reading..... Jessica Barnes (Granddaughter)

Acknowledgements/Messages of Comfort Majida Abdul-Karim (Niece)

Moments and Memories I:

- Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Former Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives
- Honorable Margo K. Brodie, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York
- Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, Former U.S. Attorney General

Musical Selection/Slide Presentation

Moments and Memories II:

- Joseph Davis, Esq., Retired Assistant District Attorney (New York County), Former President of the National Black Prosecutors Association (NBPA) Sterling Johnson Jr. Chapter
- Gregory A. Thomas, Senior Executive for Law Enforcement Operations at the Kings County District Attorney's, Past National President of National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- Bridget G. Brennan, Esq., Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor

Musical Selection/Slide Presentation

Moments and Memories III:

- Honorable Robert L. Capers, Former U.S. Attorney, Chief U.S. Probation Officer for the Eastern District of New York
- Samori Touré (Nephew)
- Lisa Fatimah Vaughn (Niece)

Reading of Obituary..... Majida Abdul-Karim

Moments and Memories IV:

Attiyya Akinwole (Granddaughter)

Eulogy Pastor Perry Robinson

Closing Remarks..... Officiating, S Aisha Vaughn Touré (Niece)

Recessional

Final Disposition
Fresh Pond Crematory
Middle Village, New York

Obituary

The Honorable Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr., Senior U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of New York was the second of five children born to the union of the late Sterling Johnson Sr., a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Susan Howard Johnson of Mount Willing, Alabama. Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr., has been married to the beautiful Barbara “BJ” Jackson Johnson, a Brooklyn native, for 66 years.

Born and raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, New York, Judge Johnson was a star Boys High School student, and streetwise diplomat who moved toward his goals with purpose, persistence, and planning. Known for his acerbic wit, obstacles, resources and disdain were seen as mere inconveniences.

After graduating from Boys High School in Brooklyn, New York, Judge Johnson enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1953 and became a veteran of the Korean War. When his service ended, he joined the New York City police department. While he eventually advanced from patrolman, to detective and sergeant, as a patrolman, even during glacially cold winter nights, he was not allowed to ride alongside other officers or drive a police car due to the ugly echoes of racism. The future federal judge was directed to patrol on foot, and advised that he, and those who looked like him, were not intelligent enough to know how to operate a car radio.

While working as a policeman, Judge Johnson enrolled in Brooklyn College. After eight and a half (8 ½) years of attending school - nights, days, and summers, he graduated from Brooklyn College in 1963. Thereafter, in 1966, he earned his law degree from Brooklyn Law School. He graduated in the top 10% of his class - while employed full-time and raising a young family.

Recruited by former U.S. Attorney Robert Morgenthau, Judge Johnson became an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1967 to 1970.

In 1970, he became the Executive Director for the Civilian Complaint Review Board. In 1971 he was selected as the Executive Liaison Officer for the Drug Enforcement Administration in Washington, D.C.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Judge Johnson was appointed to the position of Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York in 1975. He served for seventeen (17) years. As Special Narcotics Prosecutor, he supervised Assistant District Attorneys and investigators responsible for the preparation and prosecution of more than 7,000 criminal cases.

A retired Captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve, Judge Johnson also served as Naval Judge Advocate General from 1974 to 1991.

In 1983, Judge Johnson joined hands with other visionary African-American prosecutors from across the United States to establish the National Black Prosecutors Association. He also helped to promote N.O.B.L.E - The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

On Monday, September 9, 1991, Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr. was appointed to the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York by the 41st President of The United States, George H. W. Bush. Haitian Centers Council, Inc. v. Sale was one of the first cases over which he presided.

As a Senior U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, Judge Johnson was instrumental in developing sentencing policies for the federal judiciary. From 1999 to 2002, he served as a member of the United States Sentencing Commission. In 2001, Judge Sterling Johnson was one of three final candidates selected to succeed Louis Freeh as Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr., lectured throughout the United States and globally.

When the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic began to cripple the nation and the world, Judge Johnson still had an active case load. As an exemplary example of his enduring dedication to the law, he rose early, often arriving at court at 2:30 in the morning to begin the day. On May 12, 2022, The National Black Prosecutors Association presented Judge Johnson with a lifetime achievement award, and honored him by renaming the New York City Chapter after him.

Mr. Ronald Aubourg: “Judge Johnson, I know at times you wanted to quit. You wanted to quit the police department. You wanted to quit law school. Who or what kept you going?”

Judge Johnson: “If I had to say one person who kept me going, it would be my mother. I was born and raised prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*. As I mentioned earlier, in high school, a counselor told me not to become a lawyer, but a carpenter, because they make good money. So, I went home and I told my mother that story and she said, ‘If God gave you the talent to drive a cab, drive a cab. If God gave you the talent to wash windows, wash windows. But if God gave you the talent to be a lawyer, be a lawyer. All I ask of you is that whatever you do, be the best there is.’ This is a woman who never had a high school education.”

Judge Sterling Johnson Jr., leaves to mourn: his wonderful wife, Barbara “BJ” Johnson, son, Sterling Johnson, III, daughter, Jennifer Johnson, granddaughters, Jessica Barnes, and Attiyya Akinwole, sister, Muriel Gamble, son-in-law, David Daniels, daughter-in-law, Wendy Johnson, grandson-in-law Josiah Barnes, first cousins John and Susan “Gwen” Taylor, goddaughter, Nancy Lyons, nephew, Theodore “Teddy” Gamble, nieces: Majida Abdul-Karim, S. Aisha Vaughn Touré, and Lisa Fátimah Vaughn. Great-nephews: Samori Touré J.D., Jabari Touré, Ibrahim Jihad, and great-nieces: Nasheena McKnight, Sibongile Touré, Milán Armorer, and Assata Jihad.

Judge Sterling Johnson Jr., was preceded in death by his beloved eldest daughter, Alicia Daniels Johnson J.D., sisters, Aliyah Abdul-Karim (Sylvia Johnson) and Joyce Johnson, brother William “Billy” Johnson, and niece Kim Gamble.

In addition to Judge Johnson’s immediate family, mourners include an extended family of great-grand nieces, nephews, cousins, and an ocean of enduring, lifelong, local, national and international friends, executive assistants, staff, law clerks, and colleagues from around the world.







Family

By Joyce Johnson

Written Sunday, 18 August 1996

*Should not the ultimate family's goal be
love from beginning to end -*

whether it be blood relative or friend?

*You, my father, mother, sister, brother,
my collective family - we all have common similarities.*

There is the smile that comes from within.

And the sadness we've shared from places we've been.

When we support our loved ones, right or wrong -

The love for family will make us strong.

The focus of the family should be total for all.

For if bad times take root, the family may fall.

*Trust and honor should always be part of the family's soul,
so future generations are proud when their history unfolds.*

*A united family knows that their foundation is strong
because love has made them secure, and they belong.*

*So when you see others without families or friends,
remember you are blessed, for their plight in life, also
could have been your quest. Belonging to a family that has
shown much love, makes one humble, by always giving
thanks to God above.*

~JJ

Acknowledgements

*The family wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the many
expressions of love, concern and kindness shown to their family during
this hour of bereavement. May God Bless and Keep You!*

Professional Services Provided By:

Roy L. Gilmore's Funeral Home, Inc.



Angela Gilmore-Manning, *President*

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