



Honorable Judge Frances Pitts

March 27, 1933 - February 12, 2015

Pitts, Frances age 82, passed on February 12, 2015, formerly from Detroit, Michigan.

Frances Pitts was born in Isabella, Pennsylvania on March 27, 1933, to the late Matthew and Beatrice Pitts.

She became a Christian early in life and attended Beulah Baptist Church in Isabella. Frances was an active and dedicated Christian during her entire life. While residing in Detroit, Michigan she was a member of St. John United Presbyterian Church.

Frances graduated from Brownsville High school in June 1951. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Gordon College in Rhode Island, Frances went on to receive a Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Connecticut. With a Master's degree in hand, she pursued her passion of helping the less privileged and oppressed persons. She worked as a parole officer, group therapist, counselor and college instructor.

Frances entered Wayne State Law School in 1972 from which she received her Law Degree.

After a period in private practice, Frances served as a referee for over 10

years at Wayne County Probate Court Juvenile Division. From that position she was appointed by Governor James Blanchard to a judgeship in that court in 1987. She served as presiding judge of the Juvenile Division from 1988-96.

Judge Pitts was not a judge making decisions in isolation; she got out into the community, making frequent visits to schools, churches and community organizations. She was active in a number of law related and professional organizations, both locally and nationally, having served on the State Bar of Michigan -Juvenile Law Section, past President of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan, Detroit Bar Association-Juvenile Court Committee, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges-Board of Trustees, Chairperson of the Youth Sports and Recreation Commission, Life Member of the NAACP and numerous other organizations.

Judge Pitts retired on June 1, 2004 after 17 years as a member of the Probate bench.

It seems that wherever Frances traveled, locally or across the globe, she was sought out for her insight, knowledge and expertise. Just as she showed a willingness to share her skills and time, she had never shown reluctance to voice an opinion and stand up for what she believed was right. She was an advocate of keeping families and youngsters together and was always very concerned about the welfare of youngsters.

Frances loved to travel, she had been to West Africa four times, China, and she traveled extensively in the country of New Zealand. Her community involvement extended to being an Elder at St. John Presbyterian Church, a mentor to a student at Nolan Middle School, Chairperson on the Youth Sports commission along with many other involvements.

Frances is survived by a host of relatives and friends. A life well lived is a life

worthy of distinction and esteem. The Honorable Judge Frances Pitts lived a life that made the world take notice and certainly it was a far better place because she was here.

Visitation Wednesday 12-7 PM at Perry Funeral Home, 5045 Trumbull, Detroit, MI (between I-94 & Warren Ave.). In state Thursday 10:30 AM until the 11 AM Funeral Service at St. John Presbyterian Church, 1961 E. Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48207.

To share a memory, please use the Share A Memory Tab on this web page.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **25**. 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Perry Funeral Home
5045 Trumbull
Detroit, MI 48208

In state

FEB **26**. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John Presbyterian Church
1961 E. Lafayette
Detroit, MI

Funeral Service

FEB **26**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. John Presbyterian Church
1961 E. Lafayette
Detroit, MI

Tribute Wall

BT

“ Although, I recently learned of the transition of Honorable Frances Pitts, I would like to share my memory of this amazing and beautiful human being. I worked as a probation officer at Wayne County Juvenile Court when Judge Pitts served as the Chief Judge. As I became concerned about the inequity and disparity of justice between the sentencing of black and white juveniles, Judge Pitts invited me to share those concerns with her and others. She truly cared about our young people and wanted them to succeed in society. May Judge Pitts rest in peace! Bernadette Taliaferro-Cain

Bernadette Taliaferro-Cain - February 28, 2024 at 09:07 AM



“ Honorable Judge Frances Pitts

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM

SC

“ This comes as such a surprise. This is something that I kept putting off. I was looking her up to finally write her and thank her for saving me (a teenage mom) and my son from an abusive situation when I was not strong enough to stand up for myself. I am sure she would extremely happy to know that my son grew up in a safe home and is a Navy man. I am so sorry for the families loss but I am sure you all were so proud of her she did so many things and touches so many people's lives

Sheridan Clopton - March 19, 2022 at 01:51 AM



Jasmine
Jenkins

“ *This is the woman who gave my great aunt custody of my brother and I. I'm so grateful for her. I'm sorry to hear about her passing.* ”



Jasmine Jenkins - May 16, 2016 at 10:07 PM

JS

“ *Dear Pitts Family you have my extreme sorrow for the Death of your Beloved Judge Frances. Remember JESUS Words "Happy Are Those Mourn, Since They Will Be Comforted. Matthew 5:4.* ”

James Saunders - March 20, 2015 at 09:48 AM



Bridget
Williams

“ *Frances was always so kind and loving! She showed such love and support when my children were born! Frances always had a peaceful spirit! God bless her and God truly has a new angel!* ”

Bridget Williams - February 26, 2015 at 01:00 PM

JR

“ *Ja Vonne Ransom lit a candle in memory of Honorable Judge Frances Pitts* ”



Ja Vonne Ransom - February 25, 2015 at 01:26 PM

TC

“ I first met Judge Francis Pitts when I was in Juvenile court in 1987. My mother had put me out of the house and we did not get along. I was a wayward youth. Wild child. From 1987 until 1992 I went before Judge Pitts for a number of offenses. She was always compassionate yet professional. She would hear all of these bad things about me but it never swayed her as a Judge. One time I was charged with assault. I had punched another boy while in a boys shelter. One staff member "hated" me, so unlike the other incidents that occurred regularly, she tried get me a criminal record and press charges for the boy I punched (this is a true story). So we went to court. The staff member, who was a grown women showed up like I hit her. She huffed and puffed on the stand. When the questioning was over and it was time for her to get off the stand and leave, she added that I was vicious. Most people would have been swayed. Especially coming from another Black women. Judge Pitts wasn't buying it. She could tell something else was going on. Judge Pitts stood impartial and seen through the smoke and mirrors, knowing that two kids getting into it doesn't always require legal intervention. Case dismissed. Since then I've grown up, graduated from college, got married and had children-and left the knuckle head stuff alone. But I will never forget Judge Pitts. I would like to extend my deepest condolences to her family. Sincerely Todd

Todd Caver - February 24, 2015 at 09:05 PM

KR

“ *Frances and I were both appointed to the Probate bench in 1987 and went through new judges school together. It was a pleasure getting to know her and sharing the similarities and differences of our time on the bench over the years. I always looked forward to visiting with her, enjoyed her company, respected her practical wisdom, and appreciated her sense of humor. She will be missed. Frances and her family are in my prayers.*

*Kathryn J. Root
Oscoda County Probate Judge*

Kathryn J. Root - February 24, 2015 at 04:16 PM

JH

“ *My deepest condolences to Judge Pitts' family. My prayers embrace you during this time. Frances was a loving, caring person and judge. I practiced in front of her for many years at Wayne County Juvenile Court. She treated everyone who appeared before her with patience, dignity and respect no matter how emotionally charged the case.*



You never replace a fine jurist like Judge Pitts, but I was fortunate to have succeeded her on the bench. Rest in Peace Frances. You will be missed.

*Judge Judy A. Hartsfield
Wayne County Probate Court*

Judy Hartsfield - February 24, 2015 at 03:36 PM



“ Ngozi Kemp lit a candle in memory of Honorable Judge Frances Pitts



Ngozi Kemp - February 24, 2015 at 09:29 AM



“ Ngozi Kemp lit a candle in memory of Honorable Judge Frances Pitts



Ngozi Kemp - February 24, 2015 at 09:28 AM



I hadn't seen my Godmother in over 20 years as a teenager. I often wondered how she was and how she was doing. There was a couple of times I would try to search the internet in order to reach out and call her but I couldn't find her telephone number. I just want to say thank you for all you've done to help me . You will truly be missed.

Ngozi Kemp - February 24, 2015 at 09:36 AM



“ *I still have a painting that she had bought while on one of her trips to Lagos , Nigeria. She gave it to me as a birthday gift over twenty years ago. My lady friend lived across the hall from her in the Jean Rivard apartments near the Chrysler Freeway in Detroit With warmest thoughts and deepest sympathy. My prayers go out to Frances Pitts, May she rest in peace. Sincerely, Ty Morris*

Ty Morris - February 22, 2015 at 08:34 PM

MG

“ *Melvin Green lit a candle in memory of
Honorable Judge Frances Pitts*



Melvin Green - February 22, 2015 at 08:07 PM