

FRANK MINIS JOHNSON, JR., 1918-1999
JUDGE, MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, 1955-1979
JUDGE, U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR FIFTH CIRCUIT, 1979-1981
JUDGE, U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR ELEVENTH CIRCUIT, 1981-1999

Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. was one of the Twentieth Century's significant historical figures. A native of Winston County, Alabama, he graduated in law from the University of Alabama in 1943 and served in World War II. He practiced in Jasper until 1953, when he became U.S. Attorney for Alabama's Northern District. He was appointed by President Eisenhower to Judge Kennamer's seat on the U.S. District Court, Middle District, in 1955, where he was Chief Judge from 1966 to 1979. He was considered for a U.S. Supreme Court seat during the Nixon Administration.



In 1977, President Carter nominated Judge Johnson as Director of the FBI. Those plans were foiled by health problems, and Judge Johnson returned to Montgomery, and to a nomination to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He served there until 1981, when he was reassigned to the newly created U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. He assumed senior status in 1991, but served the court until his death in 1999. Judge Johnson's decisions in many of the cases of the Civil Rights Era changed history. In 1992, the Montgomery courthouse was named the Frank M. Johnson, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

(“Portrait of Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr.” by William Chambers, 2000.)