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## The Honorable Charles W. Fleming - April 20, 1928-July 11, 1994

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## IN MEMORIAM

THE HONORABLE CHARLES W. FLEMING  
April 20, 1928 - July 11, 1994

This issue of the *Cleveland State Law Review* is dedicated to the Honorable Charles W. Fleming in tribute to his contributions to the Cleveland community.

Judge Fleming was born in Cleveland in 1928. He dropped out of high school to serve in the United States Army from 1945 to 1947. His experience in the Army made him realize the importance of education, so he returned to high school and received his diploma. After graduating from Kent State University, he earned his Juris Doctorate degree from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1955.

Judge Fleming entered the legal profession at a time when Cleveland's major law firms would not hire black attorneys. He and a group of young black attorneys, including Stanley E. Tolliver (Class of 1951), the Honorable Carl Stokes (Class of 1956), Congressman Louis Stokes (Class of 1953), Merle McCurdy and Granville Bradley (Class of 1953), formed the John M. Harlan Club (now the Norman S. Minor Bar Association). Judge Fleming served as the second President of the Club from 1969 to 1973.

After passing the Ohio bar, Judge Fleming and fellow classmate George W. White (now Chief Judge, United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio) formed a law partnership. He subsequently became an investigator for the Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court and later practiced with the Honorable Paul D. White and the late John W. Kellogg. His outstanding litigation skills became widely recognized when, as an assistant county prosecutor, he was among those assigned by then County Prosecutor John T. Corrigan, to handle the most difficult, high-profile cases. After several years as an assistant county prosecutor, Judge Fleming returned to private practice and helped form the law firm of Perry, Young, Fleming, Kellogg and Hamlin. He was a lecturer at Case Western Reserve University from 1969 to 1973.

In 1975, Judge Fleming was successfully elected to the Cleveland Municipal Court. He was reelected in 1981, 1987 and 1993. During his tenure, his fellow judges elected him presiding and administrative judge. As presiding judge, Judge Fleming modernized the Cleveland Municipal Court to make it more efficient and effective. He oversaw the computerization of court records and the development of a variety of alternative sentencing programs.

Judge Fleming was active in many organizations and he received numerous awards, including the Outstanding Judicial Service Award in 1976 and Excellent Judicial Service Awards from the Ohio Supreme Court in 1976 and 1977. Judge Fleming served as the first black president of the Ohio Association of Municipal/County Judges.

Judge Fleming was very active in the Cleveland community. He frequently met with youthful audiences and, relating his own experiences, he encouraged them to continue their education. He was also known for his loyalty and responsiveness to his friends. On June 18, 1994, Judge Fleming delivered a tribute at the funeral of a high school classmate. After leaving the church, he

was in a very severe automobile accident in which he sustained critical injuries. At the age of 66, Judge Fleming passed away on July 11, 1994, from injuries suffered in the automobile accident.

The Cleveland-Marshall College of Law mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished alumni. A scholarship in Judge Fleming's name has been established at the law school in eternal memory of him.