
Honorable Boce W. Barlow Jr.



BARLOW, Honorable Boce W. Jr. Attorney Boce W. Barlow, Jr., died Monday (January 31, 2005) at Riderwood Village in Silver Spring, ME. He was born in Americus, GA in 1915. He came to Hartford with his parents, Boce W. Barlow, Sr., and Ethel Maddox Barlow, before he reached the age of one. After completing the elementary grades at the Arsenal School, he entered Hartford Public High School from which he graduated in 1933. Attorney Barlow attended Howard University where he was elected senior class president and earned a bachelor's degree cum laude with a major in political science. Following service in the South Pacific Theater during [World War II](#), he enrolled at [Harvard University](#) Law School from which he graduated with a doctorate in juris prudence. Over the years Attorney Barlow sought to improve the quality of life for all Hartford residents through extensive civic participation and political involvement. Underpinning his work was a keen sensitivity to the prejudices and discrimination that were a part of the Nutmeg state's history. He knew first hand the indignities common to black citizens but also found abhorrent all racial, religious and ethnic bigotry. He understood the want of poverty and sought to encourage all he came in contact with to empower themselves through education. After passing the Connecticut Bar exam in 1949, Attorney Barlow applied for employment with Hartford law firms but learned that they were not open to hiring an African-American. Given the employment barriers he and another successful African-American bar applicant, the late Judge William D. Graham opened practices in the same office. He remained in solo practice until forming Barlow & Lewis in partnership with Attorney Paul Lewis in 1967. Attorney Barlow served as a hearing examiner for the State [Civil Rights](#) Commission from 1955-1957 and as prosecutor for the Hartford Municipal Court from 1957-60. Building on the legacy left by his father, the leading African-American Democrat of the thirties and early forties, Attorney Barlow twice made Connecticut history. He was the first African-American appointed to sit as judge in the Municipal Courts. When he was elected to the Connecticut State Senate in 1966, he became the first African-American to serve in the Connecticut State legislature. As a judge he is remembered for his decisions which extended the constitutional protections of the Bill of Rights to the general public long before the Warren Court decided that these rights applied to the States. As state senator Barlow exercised leadership during the turbulent 60's and "earned the respect of his colleagues by sheer force of intellect and humanity." During his senate tenure he helped to write some of the state's pioneering civil-rights laws. In 1981 as a result of a medical mishap precipitated by surgery, Attorney Barlow became an incomplete quadriplegic. It took three years of intense physical rehabilitation for him to return to public involvement. Given the inaccessible design of court houses and other government buildings at the time Attorney Barlow was no longer able to continue his practice as a trial attorney. In 1985 Attorney Barlow retired from the practice of law. Despite this Attorney Barlow continued to be active in political ventures especially working with young candidates. Attorney Barlow remained a fixture in Hartford Democratic politics and was regarded as the godfather of a long line of blacks serving in political office. One of the most significant acknowledgments of his contributions to the Hartford community occurred in 1987 with the naming of Boce Barlow Way, a road and overpass in the north end of Hartford connecting a then emerging North Meadows with Windsor and North Main Streets. It was an appropriate recognition for a man whose "way" was patient, determined and committed to bringing together the diverse people of Hartford. The Hartford community continued to recognize his contributions for many years after his retirement. He received numerous civic awards including a 1986 Nathan Hale Award for distinction in trial advocacy from the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association; a 1988 George W. Crawford Award for leadership in the field of justice; a 1991 Nation Builder Award from the National Black Caucus of State Legislators; a 1992 Black Men's Society of Hartford Excellence Award; a 1998 John E. Rogers History Makers Award; and a 2004 Law Day award for his commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion of all from the Supreme Court of Connecticut. Attorney Barlow was a member of numerous organizations. He was a life time member of the NAACP. He was a member of the Connecticut Bar Association; George W. Crawford Law Association, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Ashanti of Connecticut; Faith Congregational Church; Charter Oak Lodge of Elks No. 67, IBPOE of W. , Inc., of which he was Past Exalted Ruler; Excelsior Lodge #3 F. & M. Additionally, Attorney Barlow was a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut State Prisons; the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Junior Republic; the Board of Trustees of Faith Congregational Church; Hartford Associate Board and Hartford Region Associate Board of the Connecticut Bank & Trust Company; Democratic State Central Committee of Connecticut and the Hartford Democratic Town Committee. Also he was a member and past president of the Hartford Black Democratic Club and the Connecticut State Federation of Black Democratic Clubs. Given his deep love for the City of Hartford it was with great regret that he and his wife relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland in 2000. The move brought him close to his grandchildren but took him away from a city that was home. He continued to read the Hartford papers with relish. He leaves to celebrate his life his wife Catherine Swanson Barlow of Silver Spring, MD; a daughter, Cathy A. Barlow of Philadelphia, PA; a son, Bryon S. Barlow of Adelphi, MD; two granddaughters, Danielle Barlow and Lauren Barlow of Adelphi, MD; a sister, Katherine B. Clark of Jamaica, NY; one niece, Miltrez Vanagher of New Castle, DE; two nephews, Goode S. Clark and Kevin Clark of Jamaica, NY; a godson, Guy Barlow Jacobs of Windsor; two goddaughters, Gwendolyn Dale Simmons of Teaneck, NJ, and Susan Bailey of St. Albans, NY; and a host of beloved relatives and friends. Visitation will be held Monday, February 7, at 12 Noon, followed by a funeral service at 1 p.m., at Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ, 4704 Thirteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in his memory to the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, 500 Morris Avenue, Springfield, NJ 07081 or www.christopherreeve.org.