



225th Anniversary
1789-2014

Frank Joseph Coleman

Born:

March 24, 1886
New York, NY

Received Commission:

December 19, 1927

Died:

March 14, 1934
New York, NY

Educated in the public schools of New York City, Frank J. Coleman was awarded an A.B. degree in 1906 by the City College of New York, and earned his LL.B. in 1909 at New York Law School. He began his professional career in 1911 as secretary to Justices McLaughlin and Finch of the New York State Supreme Court. From 1914-1916 Judge Coleman served as an Assistant District Attorney for New York County. Following this, he was appointed a justice of the New York City Municipal Court, but took a hiatus during World War I to serve in the artillery, having waived the exemption to which he was entitled as a justice.

Judge Coleman resigned his Municipal Court position in 1923, and spent the next three years (1924-1927) as a Republican leader of the Fifteenth Assembly District, New York County, New York, until his appointment to the S.D.N.Y. There he presided over several prominent criminal cases of the day and personally developed a reputation of fair dealings with prosecutors and defense attorneys alike. He was not in favor of prohibition and during his first two years on the District Court became known for his lenient sentences of violators. However, with the passage of the increased penalties of the Jones Act, he reversed his position and imposed more severe sentences.

The pallbearers at Judge Coleman's funeral were his colleagues on the S.D.N.Y., and other attendees included Judges Manton and Augustus Hand from the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and many judges from the New York courts. In his eulogy, former Governor Nathan Miller described Judge Coleman as having "good judgment, impartiality and a deep sense of justice."

Sources:

"Frank J. Coleman, Jurist, Dies at 47, New York Times, March 15, 1934, pg. 23

"Funeral Tomorrow for Judge Coleman", New York Times, March 16, 1934, pg. 21

"Jurists at Mass for F.J. Coleman", New York Times, March 18, 1934, pg. 35

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, available at <http://www.fjc.gov/>