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PLEASE FIND MATERIAL
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African American Leaders of Maryland

A PORTRAIT GALLERY

Suzanne Ellery Chapelle

&

Glenn O. Phillips

Baltimore

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Hon. Harry Augustus Cole

1921-1999

Harry Cole was a trailblazer: the first African American state assistant attorney general, the first African American in the Maryland Senate, and the first African American judge to serve on the Maryland Court of Appeals. Known for his integrity, steadfastness, and intelligence, Judge Cole's strong commitment was to ^{facilitate} equal justice for all.

Harry Cole was born on New Year's Day, 1921, in Washington, D.C., the youngest of five children of Rosina Thompson Cole, a cook, and Richard Baker Cole, a tailor. His father died when Harry was a baby, and his mother brought the family to a home on McCulloh Street in Baltimore, the city where she had grown up. By age ten, Cole knew he wanted to be a lawyer. He graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in 1939, then worked for a year shining shoes and waiting tables to earn enough to begin his studies at Morgan State College, from which he graduated magna cum laude in 1943. While at Morgan, Cole helped organize a march on Annapolis to protest the state's Jim Crow laws, founded and edited the college newspaper, *The Spokesman*, and served as president of the junior class and the Student Council. By graduation day, he was already in the U.S. Army, training for service as an officer during World War II.

After the war, Cole studied at the University of Maryland School of Law, graduated in 1949, and became associated with the Baltimore law firm of Brown, Allen, and Watts. The following year, at age 29, he campaigned unsuccessfully for a seat in the Maryland House of Delegates and the year after that for a seat on the Baltimore City Council. In 1953, Cole was appointed a Maryland assistant attorney general. Undaunted by two political defeats Cole, a Republican, won election to the Maryland State Senate, where he served from 1954 to 1958. By defeating a rival from Jack Pollack's powerful West Baltimore organization, Cole set an important political precedent. His victory showed that black candidates could win and stimulated other African Americans to run for public office. While in office, Cole worked with Governor Theodore McKeldin to have racial designations removed from the application forms for state jobs and opened up new job opportunities for African Americans. Defeated by a black Democrat in 1958, Cole returned to the practice of law.

Harry Cole was appointed associate judge of the Municipal Court of Baltimore City in 1967 and in 1968 associate judge of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City. He was elected to a 15-year term on that bench in 1970. In 1977, he was appointed to the Maryland Court of Appeals, the highest court in the state, where he became only the fourth African American in the nation to serve on a state's highest court. Cole sat on the Court of Appeals until his retirement at age 70 in 1991. Cole remained a man of the community, always accessible to ordinary people. A thoughtful and knowledgeable protector of a defendant's constitutional rights, he demanded excellence of young lawyers and freely dissented when he disagreed with the court's majority.

Harry Cole married Doris Freeland Cole in 1957. They had three daughters: Susan, Harriette, and Stephanie. After his retirement, Cole chaired the Baltimore City Charter Revision Commission and, in 1995, became chair of the Morgan State University Board of Regents. At Morgan, Cole's first commitment was to the students and their welfare. The Honorable Harry Cole served on numerous boards and commissions throughout his life including the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Baltimore Zoological Society, Union Memorial Hospital, the Baltimore City and Maryland Bar Associations, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He died in Baltimore on February 14, 1999.

S Morgan State University SPOKESMAN N

"The official student newspaper at Morgan State University - Inform, Educate and Stimulate Action"

FEBRUARY 26, 1999

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21251

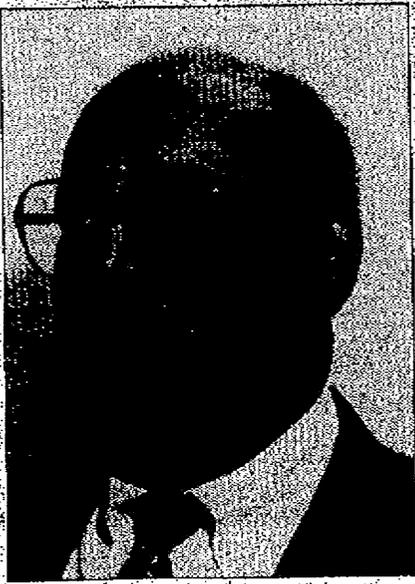
University Remembers Life of Great Alumnus: Spokesman Founder Dies at age 78

By Shonda Gladden
Features Editor

The Morgan community remembers Retired Judge Harry Augustus Cole, class of 1943, who suffered death through complications from pneumonia on February 14 at Church Hospital in Baltimore. Born in Washington D.C. and relocated to Baltimore at a young age, Judge Cole lived a fruitful and accomplished life. He will be remembered fondly by all.

Judge Cole was perhaps one of the most distinguished of Morgan alumni. Among his achievements, Judge Cole was the first African American to win a seat in the Senate, as well as the first to be appointed to the Court of Appeals of Maryland. He paved a path for all African Americans in government, but more importantly he was a tangible model of the epitome of Morganite success.

As a student at then Morgan State College, Judge Cole was extremely active in campus organizations. In addition to Judge Cole's extra-curricular activities, he was an academician and a scholar. Judge Cole earned a full tuition scholarship into the university and was inducted into the Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society. His leadership as president of the Debating Society, Junior class, and Student Council provided a stepping stone for his future endeavors. During his sen-



ior year he laid the foundation for "his child", the Spokesman newspaper. As the founder and first Editor-in-Chief of the Spokesman, he birthed one of the campus' most prominent organizations. Even after his graduation, Judge Cole showed his compassion and love for the newspaper and the staff. According to Lonnie Morris, former Spokesman Editor-in-Chief (95-97), Judge Cole was very warm and enlightening. There seemed to be a pleas-

ant duality in his personality, he could be both abrasive and comforting. I loved Judge Cole and I will always carry him in my heart."

Following Judge Cole's graduation, Magna Cum Laude, from Morgan, he went on to "[make] a career out of shattering the glass ceiling of legal, political and social racism", according to Cheryl Hitchcock, President of Morgan State University Alumni Association. Judge Cole broke through color barriers as he became the first African American assistant State Attorney in Maryland. Community leaders acknowledge Judge Cole's brilliance as a milestone for African Americans. Former Baltimore Mayor, Clarence H. DuBuis said "he was a leader for black folks"; and former city councilwoman and state legislator Victorine Q. Adams said "Harry Cole

continued on page 9

Tribute to Judge Harry A. Cole



Judge Harry A. Cole (seated, far left) and his wife (seated) with President Earl S. Richardson at the 1995 Morgan State Gala.

continued from page 1

opened the floodgates because his victory proved we could do it".

Although Judge Cole was a political powerhouse, he was a deeply compassionate man. His main objective was to insure the well-being of others. As the first Morgan graduate to chair the Board of Regents, Judge Cole was concerned about the students first and foremost. According to President Richardson, "whenever we talked about bricks and mortar issues, the Judge would want to know how projects to improve university programs and facilities would benefit students." Student and for-

mer acting Editor-in-chief of the Spokesman, Percy Elhossain, remembers Judge Cole as always being "real helpful".

Judge Cole has gone on to the final stage in his life, but his legacy will linger on. In the words of President Earl S. Richardson "there is no question that all of us have lost a true friend and supporter, however we feel privileged to have served under such a distinguished leader, and we vow to continue his great legacy". Surviving Judge Cole is his wife of 41 years, Doris Freeland Cole, three daughters, a sister, two grandchildren, and a host of Morganites whose lives he impacted during his lifetime.

THE SPOKESMAN

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AN EDITORIAL

VICTORY MEANS STUDENT SUPPORT

This first publication of "THE SPOKESMAN" represents a great victory in the history of the struggle of the student body to have a permanent student publication. It represents the means through which the spirit of Morgan, its ideals and aims, opinions and views, may be voiced to Morganites, Alumni, and friends. The actual success of this project, however, has not been realized. It can not be realized without the unmitigated support, cooperation, and criticism of each student. This is an enterprise which necessarily embraces the entire student body. Each student has a definite part to play in its perfection.

Morganites should never lose sight of the fact, that, heretofore, they have been satisfied and content to accept as representation of their work of very mediocre character. This is, indeed, a sad commentary but, nevertheless, true. With earnestness and perseverance this stigma of incompetence can be removed. "THE SPOKESMAN," representing the dawn of a new era, shall devote every effort toward the complete eradication of this mark at which all true Morganites look with indignation.

EDITORS ESTABLISH POLICY

The sacred trust and confidence which the student body has placed in the Editors shall be revealed in a set policy, and they—the Editors—shall be undaunted in their resolution to see its fulfillment. "THE SPOKESMAN" shall not only constructively criticize every and any phase of Morgan's life, not only voice student opinion and describe campus news, but attempt to awaken the student body from the lethargy in which it exists and to broaden and raise to its highest level the cultural tone of Morgan's college. ~~It shall not be a mere organ of persons or group of persons to use this student organ for his own selfish interests. It is now, and~~ shall be the expression of the student body.

The staff regrets to mention that it is unable to place in print every article received but is grateful to those who have made contributions.

Remembering the Honorable Harry A. Cole

By Lonnie Morris, Jr.
Advisor

"Judge Cole dies at age 78." That's all I saw. I dropped to my knees, laid my head on the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper stand and cried.

I had just spent the last two days in Nashville, Tennessee, telling students and professionals at the Third Annual HBCU Newspaper Conference how historic the inaugural event at Morgan had been, primarily because the founder and first editor-in-chief of our Spokesman had surprisingly joined the group for lunch. I recounted for them the insight he shared and how monumental his presence had been because most of the student journalists in attendance had never met the founder of their publications.

As I was singing judge Cole's praises to the high heavens he was taking his last precious breathes; the irony of that weekend makes me tremble. It comes as no surprise that such a celebrated life is polarized by national holidays: January 1st and February 14th. January 1 connotes a new beginning, a fresh start, a commencement. On this particular New Year's Day in 1921, a sunrise; the world is blessed with Harry Augustus Cole. February 14, as always, symbolizes a gala of love and endearment, a festival of passion, a carnival of emotion. Valentine's Day 1999, the wake of our mourning, we were awed by Harry Cole's sunset as it permeated the land.

Prospective students and their parents often ask me "what makes Morgan State University stand out?" From this day forth, maybe my response will take the form of a question: Did you know that the first African American senator in Maryland graduated from Morgan? Or Did you know the first Black assistant attorney general in Maryland was a Morgan graduate? Or did you know the first Black on the Maryland Court of Appeals was an alumnus of MSU? Or shall I simply ask, did you know the



Photo courtesy of Frankie L. Douglas, Public Relations

Honorable Harry A. Cole

Regardless of my response, I am sure that nothing I say will capture the good old Morgan spirit of Harry Cole. His name could have been easily substituted for any accolade, honor or award garnered by Morganites — "Visionary," "Outstanding Morgan Man" or "Second Mile Recipient." He truly set the benchmark for accomplishment and progress.

I am sure Judge Cole was called Home during Black History Month purposely. I have no doubts that the Heavenly Board of Regents that govern this earth were enjoying our jamboree of greatness, and someone blurted out, "Let that man rest! Leave some rock unturned. Leave some ceiling unshattered. Leave some barrier unbroken. Leave some door unopened. Leave some injustice unchallenged. Give someone else an opportunity to contribute, to make a difference." I am sure they could see that Harry Cole was not mentally tired, but physically exhausted, and he deserved to be at peace. He earned that luxury.

Harry Augustus Cole was a mentor, a confidante and an advocate. Meeting him was the ultimate reward. I will continue to love his legacy and cherish his life. I am grateful that you and I— we— were touched by such an angel.