



Abraham L. Freedman

Born: November 19, 1904, in Trenton, New Jersey
Died: March 13, 1971, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Federal Judicial Service:

Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Nominated by John F. Kennedy on September 1, 1961, to a new seat authorized by 75 Stat. 80.
Confirmed by the Senate on September 14, 1961, and received commission on September 22, 1961.

Service terminated on July 7, 1964, due to appointment to another judicial position.

Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

Nominated by Lyndon B. Johnson on April 15, 1964, to a seat vacated by Herbert Funk Goodrich.

Confirmed by the Senate on July 2, 1964, and received commission on July 2, 1964.

Service terminated on March 13, 1971, due to death.

Education:

Temple University School of Law (now James E. Beasley School of Law), LL.B., 1926

Professional Career:

Private Practice, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1926-1952; 1956-1961

General Counsel, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Housing Authority: 1938-1949

Counsel, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Housing Association: 1940-1961

Special Counsel for Housing, Pennsylvania Post-War Planning Commission: 1944-1946

Special Counsel, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Redevelopment Authority: 1946-1947

City Solicitor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1952-1956

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Judicial Biography

* At about the time of Joseph Lord's nomination, President Kennedy also named Abraham L. Freedman to the District Court. He was born in 1904 in Trenton, New Jersey and was a graduate of Temple Law School. Thereafter, he was an associate and later a partner in the law firm of Wolf Block Schorr and Solis-Cohen. He and his brother Maurice coauthored a multi-volume treatise, *Law of Marriage and Divorce in Pennsylvania*. Freedman also taught domestic relations law and Pennsylvania practice at Temple. He was a leader in the Jewish community, where he was the first President of the Federation of Jewish Agencies and served as a member of the Board of the Jewish Publication Society. Included among his other activities was his involvement with the Americans for Democratic Action. Along with William A. Schnader and Robert T. McCracken, Freedman was one of three principal drafters of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter of 1951. In 1952, reform Mayor Joseph S. Clark named him the City Solicitor of Philadelphia, a post he held until 1956.

Unlike Joseph Lord, Freedman was not a favorite of Congressman Green and the regular Democratic organization. In fact, Green at one point blocked his appointment to a vacancy on the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas where Freedman at the time would have preferred to sit rather than on the District Court. He believed a seat on a Common Pleas bench would be a stepping-stone to a state appellate judgeship. By the time of Freedman's selection for the District Court, Clark had been elected a United States Senator, and it was Clark's influence that prevailed over Green's. Within several years, again with Clark's sponsorship, President Johnson named him to the Court of Appeals.

In *MacEwan v. Rusk*, the plaintiffs sought a declaration from the Eastern District to be allowed to travel to Cuba after the State Department had prohibited them from doing so by refusing to provide a special endorsement in their passports. Judge Freedman explained that the President, under the Constitution as well as pursuant to statutory authority, was empowered to conduct foreign policy. As part of that authority, the President could prohibit citizens from traveling to certain parts of the world. Furthermore, Judge Freedman found that the President's power had not been unreasonably exercised given the hostility existing between the Cuban and United States Governments.

Accordingly, he denied the relief plaintiffs had requested. In his opinion, he reminded the reader of Cuba's "avowed . . . solidarity with world Communism and its fraternal relations with the Soviet Union and Communist China." He continued:

Tensions rose to unprecedented dimensions at the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union over the presence of missiles hidden in Cuba. For some days following the declaration of an embargo by the President of the United States the world lived in dread of the unleashing of a thermonuclear war in

* The following material is excerpted from JUDGE HARVEY BARTLE, III, *MORTALS WITH TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITIES, A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA*, 3-12 (Saint Joseph's University Press, 2011). Reproduced with the permission of the author, Judge Harvey Bartle, III, and the publisher, Saint Joseph's University Press.

the immediate vicinity of the United States. The United States Government has since announced many times that it considers Cuba a continuing danger spot because of the ever present threat of the clandestine concealment or return of Soviet Missiles. . . . Our Government has joined with the governments of Latin America to devise means of isolating Cuba and dealing with its threat of Communist infiltration and subversion. Among these measures is the restriction of movement between free world countries and Cuba. . . . Thus the policy of the United States, reflected in congressional and executive action, recognizes the Cuban government, so close to us geographically, as an important and militant link in a movement aimed at the destruction of the influence of this country abroad and of its tranquility at home.

Judge Freedman served on the Court of Appeals from July 2, 1964 until the date of his death on March 13, 1971. He passed away in Philadelphia, at the age of 66.

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Biographical Materials

1. Biographical information.

Judge Abraham I. Freedman

Although perhaps best known for his time on the trial and appellate federal bench, the Honorable Abraham Lincoln Freedman also played a prominent role in the watershed reform period of the early 1950s when the Democratic Party of Philadelphia displaced the Republican Party that had been dominant since the Civil War era. In addition, Freedman, along with William A. Schnader and Robert T. McCracken, drafted a new plan for the City's government. Called the Home Rule Charter, it transferred power from the state to the City, gave a mayor sole executive and administrative power, provided for a comparatively weak city council, and a strong and extensive merit system for other officers, departments, boards, and commissions.

Judge Freedman had attended Temple University School of Law. Following his graduation in 1926, he began practice in Philadelphia with Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen, and quickly became a partner. Although still in practice, in 1931 he returned to Temple for the next 13 years where he taught domestic relations law and Pennsylvania practice. During that time, he also served as general counsel to the Philadelphia Housing Authority and from 1940 to 1961 as general counsel to the Philadelphia Housing Association, a private, non-profit assembly of property owners. For two years, he was special counsel to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

He left private practice and Wolf-Block in 1952 to become Mayor Joseph F. Clark's city solicitor, a post he held until 1956 when he returned to the firm and private practice. During this time, he was also a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1961, Judge Freedman was nominated by President John F. Kennedy to be a member of this court. Senate confirmation quickly followed and he entered into service on September 22, 1961. His tenure on the district court was brief, for in 1964 Judge Freedman was named by

President Lyndon B. Johnson to fill a vacancy on the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Established in 1975, the Abraham L. Freedman Teaching Fellowship Program at Temple Law School provides experienced lawyers who intend to become law professors with two years of quality scholarship and writing experience. Lawyers admitted to the Freedman program are paid an annual stipend and receive a master's degree in legal teaching. In their final semester, Fellows teach an upper-level course in Temple's curriculum. The program has produced outstanding law school teachers, with graduates found at accredited law schools throughout the United States.

Judge Freedman and his brother, Maurice, were authors of a multi-volume treatise, *Law of Marriage and Divorce in Pennsylvania*. Freedman was also a leader in the Jewish community: the first president of the Federation of Jewish Agencies and a member of the Board of the Jewish Publication Society.

Judge Freedman died in 1971. The Temple University Library archives contain a collection of books, journals, and edited manuscripts documenting his career as legal scholar, judge, civil rights advocate, and reformer as well as his efforts to combat anti-Semitism.

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