

RICHARD P. ROBBINS

Having served 37 years as County Judge of Palm Beach County, RICHARD P. ROBBINS was probably Palm Beach County's longest serving judicial officer.

Judge Robbins commenced his service on the bench in 1923 and continued until retirement in 1961. Over the years of his tenure, he was obliged to deal with such a varied menu of jurisdictions as criminal matters, civil litigation, probate and guardianships, mental health, juvenile matters and wildly miscellaneous matters such as marriage and hunting licenses. To say the least all of this required a talented Judge to manage such a menagerie.

A native Floridian, he was born in Titusville on December 14, 1893. He graduated from Stetson University's College of Law in 1914. Additionally his education included attendance at Rollins College, Harvard Law School and MIT.

He commenced practicing law in 1914 in Titusville and in 1917 became an Ensign in the U S Navy and a seaplane pilot in the Navy's then fledgling air wing.

Completing his military service in 1919 he commenced practicing in West Palm Beach, representing the Town of Palm Beach, among others. Additionally, he was the second President of the Palm Beach County Bar Association.

In 1923 he was appointed County Judge to succeed Curtis Chillingworth who had been elevated to a Circuit Judgeship. Serving continuously for the next 37 years, Judge Robbins had political opposition only three times.

Coincidentally, Judge Robbins older brother, RUFUS McLELLAN ROBBINS had been Palm Beach County's County Judge from 1916 until 1920, he being the predecessor of Curtis Chillingworth in that office.

Although Judge Robbins was a very modest, polite and restrained personality, he was very affable and well liked in the community. He belonged to a large number of civic and professional organizations and frequently held leadership offices. Not the least of which was also serving as a Captain in the local unit of the Civil Air Patrol during World War II.

Judge Richard Robbins passed away at West Palm Beach on July 18, 1966. The local press noted that: "Honorary pall bearers will be judiciary members of the Palm Beach County Bar Association." A fitting end for a fine Judge.