

F.A. "BANZAI" CURRIE

F.A. "BANZAI" CURRIE, a West Palm Beach attorney and lifelong resident born on 1906, was the first judge of the Small Claims Court of Palm Beach County (which preceded the County Court). The court was created by special act of the 1951 State Legislature. Judge Currie served that court and its successor until retiring in January of 1977.

He chaired the Bar committee that established state-wide procedures for the Small Claims Courts, and also helped launch the state association of small claims court judges, of which he was President for 10 years.

"We are pioneering in this small claims court, plowing new ground and all the courts around the state copied us", Currie recalled in a newspaper interview after he retired.

The initial salary for the new courts judge was \$4500. – per year, required to be earned entirely from court fees collected. Those fees also had to provide money for employing a Clerk and defraying costs of supplies. Fortunately the Small Claims Court proved successful in meeting a need for an everyman's civil court.

Judge Currie was a member of one of West Palm Beach's oldest families, whose name still exists in parks, e.g. Currie Park on North Flagler Drive, and streets, e.g. Currie Crescent, near Palm Beach Atlantic University's campus.

A graduate of Palm Beach High School, he attended and graduated from the University of Florida and its College of Law. As a college student he gained a degree of fame with popular dance band – "Banzai Currie and his Floridians". His lifelong nickname – "BANZAI" was bestowed by a Japanese nannie even before his parents named him. The nickname lasted; the given name by his parents became a secret.

Still a resident to the end of his life, Judge Currie died in 1979.