

## Judge Jean Murrell Capers

Born in Georgetown, Kentucky, Capers moved with her family to Cleveland, Ohio in 1919. She went to the Cleveland public schools, graduating from Old Central High School at age 16. As a young woman, she was athletic and received awards in tennis and basketball, even though she was never more than 5'3". A city tennis court is named in her honor.

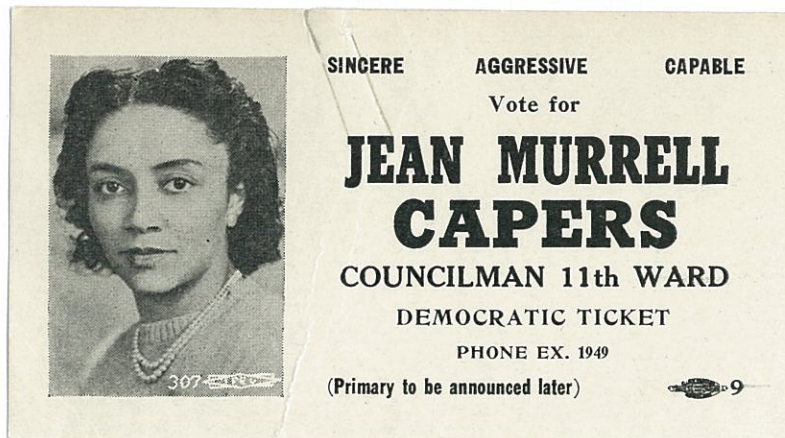
Capers graduated from Western Reserve University, now known as Case Western Reserve University in 1932 as a teacher. She taught until 1937. She eloped with Clifford E. Capers in 1943. They were married for 53 years until his death in 1996. She received her law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1945 and was admitted to the Ohio bar that same year. Capers was an assistant police prosecutor from 1946-49.

In 1949, Capers was the first black woman elected to Cleveland City Council and was re-elected four times, focusing on jobs, housing and recreation programs.

Jean Murrell Capers was appointed an assistant state attorney general in 1959 and served as a Cleveland Municipal Court judge from 1977 until 1986, leaving only because Ohio law required judges to retire at age 70.

She also was known for her activism, which ranged from organizing street clubs in the 1940s to protesting the Chief Wahoo logo in the '90s. Speaking at the City Club in 1998, she noted that she was once among protesters picketing the club, which barred women until 1972.

Judge Jean Murrell Capers lived to be 104 years old. Judge Capers passed away on July 18, 2017.



Election Card is from the Cleveland Public Library Citizens League Collection.

Sources: Cleveland Plain Dealer, Call and Post, and Wikipedia