

CHARLES B. WATKINS, CHIEF CLERK OF U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR 31 YEARS

Plain Dealer, The (Cleveland, OH) - July 24, 1992

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- Edition: FINAL / ALL
- Section: STATE & REGION
- Page: 4C
- Column: Obituaries
- Readability: 6-8 grade level (Lexile: 1000)

Charles B. Watkins was chief clerk of the U.S. District Court for Northern Ohio for 31 years. He was the longest serving clerk in the federal court system when he retired and was a past president of the Federal Court Clerks Association.

He also served as purchasing director for Westlake for 10 years.

Mr. Watkins, 93, of Westlake, died of congestive heart failure Tuesday at Lakewood Hospital.

He was born in McClure, O., and attended Defiance College and Bowling Green State University. He was a graduate of the American Institute of Banking and earned a law degree through a correspondence course.

Mr. Watkins taught school for two years, then became assistant cashier of the Napoleon State Bank in Napoleon, O. He joined the court as a deputy clerk and was in charge of the Toledo office for six years.

He then transferred to the court in Cleveland. He made his home in Lakewood and served six years as chief assistant clerk. He was promoted to clerk on the last day of 1936, when he was 38. He was the eighth and youngest person to hold the position since the court was established in 1853. He served until 1968, when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70.

Mr. Watkins' office was responsible for summoning juries, issuing passports, disbursing funds resulting from court actions and recording all court activities. He was considered a national authority in his field and his advice was often sought.

He served in all official capacities at Lakewood's Faith Lutheran Church. He was on the board of the Lutheran Service Society of Northern Ohio and the Lutheran Businessmen's Club.

He belonged to the Cleveland Bar Association.

Surviving are his wife of 64 years, Emma; sons, Carlos of Mount Vernon, O., and H. William of Westlake Village, Calif.; four grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

Services will be 8 p.m. today at Faith Lutheran Church, 16511 Hilliard Rd., Lakewood.

- Dateline: WESTLAKE
- Record: 06706136
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