



## Judge Viola J. Taliaferro

September 13, 1928 - June 11, 2023

Viola was born in Campbell County, Virginia in 1928. She was the youngest of the eight children of Mary C. Jones, a homemaker, and Richard H. Jones, Sr., a farmer and a dog trainer. Early on she displayed some of the characteristics that those who met her as an adult would immediately associate with her – superior intellect, persistence, humility, integrity, strategic thinking, and a sense of fairness. She also was always in motion but with a purpose.

She graduated from high school at 14 years old and enrolled at Virginia State College (now Virginia State University), where two of her brothers attended after World War II. In 1947, she graduated from Virginia State at 19 years old. Next, she worked first at Tuskegee Institute in the admissions office and then at the Howard University Medical School.

Then she met George Taliaferro, who became a professional football player after a spectacular collegiate career at Indiana University. His professional career in the NFL, where he was a trailblazer, was equally amazing. Marriage and four children followed. As did the moving associated with a professional sports career. In 1954, the family moved to Baltimore Maryland, where he was playing for the Baltimore Colts.

In Baltimore, Vi started working for the Baltimore Department of Welfare. She also started classes at Morgan State University, where she earned a teaching

certificate. For the next seven years she worked, first as a teacher and then as an administrator, in the Baltimore Public School system. Concurrently, she attended Johns Hopkins University, where she earned a Master of Liberal Arts degree in 1969.

In 1972, the family moved to Bloomington, Indiana, where George began a distinguished career at the University. Vi also began her next career. She entered the Indiana University School of Law. In 1977, after graduating from law school, she opened her own firm focusing on family law and criminal law cases.

In 1989, she was appointed a magistrate in the Monroe County Circuit Court. In 1995, she was appointed a Monroe County Circuit Court VII judge. She was the first black person appointed as a judge to serve on the Monroe County Circuit Court. Her focus was paternity, probate, mental health commitment, and juvenile cases. She retired in 2004.

Vi was recognized by her peers as a leading contributor to the law dealing with children's rights. Consistent with her reputation in that field, the Indiana University School of Law named its Family and Children Mediation Clinic after her. In addition, the Indiana State Bar named an award after her – the Viola J. Taliaferro Award - that is presented to an individual or group for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of children.

Over the course of her life Vi received many awards and accolades for her work in her professional life and for her work in the community. Among those are the following: She was given the Indiana University Distinguished Alumni Award, she served on the National Research Council on Juvenile Crime, and she was elected to the prestigious American Law Institute.

A life well lived. She will be missed but not forgotten. She is survived by her

daughters Linda, Reneé, Donna, and Terri, her grandchildren, Ryan, Micah, Joel, Loren, Raimond, Danielle and Laura, her great-grandchildren, Zoe and Audrina, numerous nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews, and her oldest and dearest friend Rebecca (Becky) Griffin.

Rest in peace.

A homegoing celebration service will be held at 6:00pm Monday, June 19, 2023 at the Allen Funeral Home 4155 S. Old St Rd 37 Bloomington. With T. Michael Ford officiating. A visitation will be held from 4:00pm to service time Monday June 19, 2023 also at the funeral home.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **19**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory  
4155 S. Old State Road 37  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(812) 824-5905  
<http://www.allencares.com>

## Homegoing Celebration Service

JUN **19**. 6:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory  
4155 S. Old State Road 37  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(812) 824-5905  
<http://www.allencares.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ I took care of Judge Viola in the assisted living care facility in which she resided. She was one of my favorite residents. She was hilarious, but “put us in our place” when she felt we needed it. Judge Viola was a blessing in my life and I feel honored to have been given the privilege of taking care of her!

Kylee Elder - September 03, 2024 at 05:43 PM

DF

“ John and I would like to extend our warmest sympathies to Vi and George’s family. We were returning this past week from a National Sports Show and were talking about the great times we had with both Vi and George and wondered how she was doing. I did a quick search to sadly find this obit. What a wonderfully, intelligent and caring lady. She also had a quick sense of humor. Your parents, especially you your Mom, left this world a much better place. May your memories of her carry you through your grief. With friendship and love, The Douglas family



Douglas Family - August 10, 2023 at 07:24 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.



June 19, 2023 at 03:48 PM

KD

“ Judge Vi was the cornerstone of Child Protection when I worked there. I had a huge respect for her bordering on fear. I saw her in 2007 after she had retired and asked if she would officiate at my son's wedding. I was so pleased that she said yes. The wedding was at a small park overlooking the spillway at Monroe Lake. As a bonus she brought George! The ceremony was beautiful. As my son presented her honorarium to her, she asked that it be donated to Middleway House. Pure class!

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**Kathie Durkel** - June 19, 2023 at 12:12 PM

KT

“ I am deeply sorrowed by Vi's passing. As an attorney, she was a fierce advocate for her clients. As a judge, she was fair and firm, but always caring and compassionate. On a personal level, she was a wonderful person and a faithful friend and colleague. I immensely enjoyed our friendship and have dearly missed her since her departure from Bloomington.

*Vi and George were exceptional people of exceptional achievement, pillars of their community, and examples to us all. Their indelible imprint will long remain on the lives of all who knew them.*

*Due to circumstances beyond my control, I will regrettably be unable to attend Vi's memorial service, but I and my family offer our deepest sympathies and sincere condolences to her wonderful family.*

*Ken Todd*

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**Ken Todd** - June 19, 2023 at 11:54 AM

TR

“ A women before here time! She approved our children’s adoptions over 20 years ago during a time where same gender parents was not widely accepted. We will always remember how gracefully she stepped from the bench after the court proceedings to speak to us. Her message was simple: “all children deserve a two parent family regardless of the family make-up.”.

*A life well lived. We are eternally grateful to you for our children.*

*RIP. Our deepest sympathy to your loved ones.*

*Dr. Terry Ridge and Mr. John Anderson*

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**Terry Ridge** - June 18, 2023 at 10:00 PM

TZ

“ The Middleton Family & Zoe purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.



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**The Middleton Family & Zoe** - June 18, 2023 at 07:06 PM

MG

“ I saw Mrs. Taliaferro, in action, many years ago, as an attorney. I was so impressed with her that I never forgot her.

*She was so amazing.*

*Wish I would have had an opportunity to meet her.*

*I have watched her career from afar.*

*Please accept my sincere condolences at her passing.*

*She will be missed.*

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**Marva Graves** - June 17, 2023 at 02:30 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.*



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June 16, 2023 at 10:26 PM



“ *Judge Taliaferro is in the pantheon of amazing/legendary/compassionate juvenile judges. I learned so much from Vi that I carry to this day. Words can not adequately describe the generations of lives that she positively impacted. Thank you Vi, for your legacy of both grace and action on and off the bench. Peace and blessings to your family. Chief Justice Loretta Rush*

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**Loretta Rush** - June 16, 2023 at 02:07 PM



“ *Monroe County Probation Department Staff purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.*



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**Monroe County Probation Department Staff** - June 16, 2023 at 12:30 PM

RF

“ We became acquainted with Vi through the Indiana Bar Association and continued when I became a state legislator and we served on a study committee together and became friends. I treasured her friendship and her genuine warmth. Although opposite political parties, we always found common ground. Through Vi we met the man who never knew a stranger- George Taliaferro! I have missed our conversations and frank discussions on issues. I recall laughing when she told me the best thing about being judge was George introduced as simply her husband instead of her as simply ‘and his wife!’  
Rest with the Lord sweet lady and reunion. with your George. Ralph and Ann Foley-Martinsville

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**Ralph and Ann Foley** - June 16, 2023 at 11:06 AM

NS

“ Always a highlight when Judge Taliaferro came to Lawrence County. I always enjoyed her stories and of course, sometimes George came along as a special treat. A fair and impartial jurist who will be missed by all.

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**Nicol Rae Sargent** - June 16, 2023 at 08:57 AM

JR

“ Jill, Chris & Alice Robertson purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.



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**Jill, Chris & Alice Robertson** - June 16, 2023 at 08:21 AM

LS

“ I will never forget Judge Taliaferro. Many years ago she awarded us guardianship of a young man who was in an abusive, chaotic home. He has flourished in his adulthood and has brought us untold joy! Over the years when I would run into her at a community event, she would always ask about our son. I'm sure that we are not the only family out there who is thankful for a wise decision. May this amazing woman rest in peace.

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**Linda Scott** - June 16, 2023 at 07:25 AM

SD

“ Governor Kernan

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**Steve DeMougin** - June 16, 2023 at 07:17 AM

SD

“ I met the Judge while serving as the Division of Family and Children Director under Governor Keenan. She was a fascinating individual and focused on the benefit of children and their families who came into her purview. A more dedicated jurist one could not find. My deepest condolences to the family.

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**Steve DeMougin** - June 16, 2023 at 07:16 AM

LH

“ In putting together the first Board of Directors for the Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame in 2009, I reached out to George Taliaferro because of his vast knowledge of Monroe County and his impact over the years. Little did I know that George's wife, Vi, was every bit the force that he was. Needing legal advice to get our organization incorporated, we asked Vi for help and she guided us through the difficult legal process of becoming a 501(c)3 entity. She volunteered many hours to this process and made it happen. Throughout the process my wife Pat and I got to know her and George better, and what an amazing couple. The Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame is still thriving to this day, thanks to them.

Lynn Houser  
Founder and First President  
Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame

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Lynn Houser - June 16, 2023 at 07:05 AM

PA

“ In my years as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Bloomington I would often look out and see Judge Taliaferro in the congregation on Sunday Morning. Joy! Joy - In part because I could count on the fact that if I saw her in the following week she would tell me the truth, critiques and compliments always artfully and truthfully shaped. She was a treasured friend and gift in my life and work. As Vi moves to Light Eternal I celebrate her gifts to me and to our community.

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Philip Amerson - June 15, 2023 at 07:47 PM

TT

“ *The Blueline Team purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.*



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**The Blueline Team** - June 15, 2023 at 02:32 PM

JT

“ *I was truly blessed for our paths to cross first through the MCCSC, then again through COTA. RIP Judge! I'm sure we will hear God say, Well done, good and faithful servant!*

*Jackie Tate*

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**Jackie Tate** - June 15, 2023 at 07:05 AM

LE

“ *She was a wonderful CASA judge and a cherished friend.*

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**Lana Eisenberg** - June 14, 2023 at 07:06 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.*



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June 14, 2023 at 03:49 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Judge Viola J. Taliaferro.*

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June 14, 2023 at 03:49 PM