

NAACP laments the passing of the Honorable Matthew J. Perry, Jr

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(Baltimore, MD) – The NAACP laments the passing of Matthew J. Perry, Jr., a federal judge, civil rights attorney, and a former member of the NAACP National Board of Directors. Perry passed away July 31st, 2011 at his home in South Carolina.

“Matthew Perry was a venerated member of the NAACP family,” stated NAACP Chairman Roslyn M. Brock. “He commanded extraordinary respect throughout South Carolina as well as in our NAACP community.”

Born in South Carolina in 1921, Perry served in the United States Army before earning his undergraduate and legal degrees from South Carolina State College. As an attorney, Perry led the legal charge with the NAACP to desegregate Clemson University and the University of South Carolina.

In 1976, Perry was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Perry was later nominated and confirmed to the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, where he served as the first African-American federal judge in South Carolina. In 2004, the federal courthouse in Columbia, South Carolina was named after him.

In addition to his service to the law, Mr. Perry served his community for 16 years as a National Board Member of the NAACP, where he was both a member and chairman of the National Legal Committee.

“Matthew Perry was a true trailblazer for civil rights,” stated NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous. “His legal efforts and accomplishments broke down barriers for so many in the South and across the country.”