

Honorable George Howard, Jr. (*Posthumously*) ***United States District Court Judge***

George Howard, Jr. was born on May 13, 1924 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. As a teenager he left home to serve in the United States Navy during World War II, a time when he was subjected to racism that would inspire him to become a lawyer. After his military service he entered Lincoln University, where he graduated with honors from the pre-law program. He then entered the University of Arkansas and became the first African-American to live in campus housing at the school. Howard enrolled in law school at the University and received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1954,

Jude Howard returned to Pine Bluff and established a law practice. During this period he ran his only political campaign, an unsuccessful city council bid. Later he served as president of the State Council of Branches for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Judge Howard's life was marked by a number of firsts – the first black to serve as a judge on the Arkansas Court of Appeals, the Arkansas Supreme Court and the federal bench in Arkansas. Arkansas Governor Winthrop Rockefeller appointed Howard to the Arkansas State Claims Commission in 1967. Arkansas Governor David Pryor named him Arkansas Supreme Court justice in 1977 and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton appointed Howard as a judge on the Arkansas Court of Appeals in 1979. Howard would hold this position only briefly, as President Jimmy Carter appointed him federal judge for the Eastern and Western districts of Arkansas in 1980, a position he would hold until his death in 2007. Howard became the first African-American in the history of Arkansas to serve as State Supreme Court Justice, State Court of Appeals judge, and Federal District Court judge.

Judge Howard played an important historic judicial role in the Whitewater trial, which involved then Arkansas Governor, Jim Guy Tucker and President Bill Clinton in 1998. Judge Howard was known for his fairness and commitment to civil rights. Judge Howard died in April 2007 at the age of 82. Lawmakers quickly introduced legislation to honor the life and career of the late George Howard, Jr., by naming the federal building and courthouse in Pine Bluff in his honor. The three-story brick building is now the George Howard Jr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse.