

Jane matilda bolin



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Bolin became the first Black woman to serve as a U. S. Judge. She was the youngest of four children born to Gaius and Matilda Bolin. Her mother, Matilda Emery, was an English immigrant. She died when Jane was only eight years old. Her father, Gaius Charles Bolin, was an African American and, also, part Native American. G. Charles owned a successful law practice in Poughkeepsie, NY. He was the first African American graduate of William College in Western Massachusetts and he was, also, the first African American of the Dutchess County Bar Association.

As a child, Jane often shared passionate conversations with her father about law and his profession. She spent a great deal of time in his law office afterschool and on weekends. This helped Jane to determine early on that she wanted to follow in her father's footsteps and become a lawyer. Having lived a sheltered lifestyle, she was further motivated to pursue a lawcareerwhen she discovered the hardships of Blacks in America at that time. She became exposed to this through her father's involvement in the NAACP and by reading the NAACP bi-monthly magazine, The Crisis.

Theviolence, racism, and prejudice that she uncovered was very much unlike the lifestyle in which she grew up, where her father was respected by both blacks and whites. After graduating from high school at the age of 15, she attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where she was one of only two black students. Both students were picked on and embarrassed daily. This became Jane's first racism experience. She graduated in 1928 as one the top 20 graduates in her class. Because she did not receive much support from her professors, she knew what to expect when it was time for seniors to speak to an advisor about career options.

Her advisor told her that she would never be able to make it as a black female attorney. However, Jane was determined to attend Yale Law School. Jane's father wanted to protect her from the prejudice that he endured while trying to become a lawyer. He tried to persuade her to become a teacher and inspire other young black minds. However, once he learned that she was accepted to Yale Law School, he gave her all of his support. That year she was one of only three women and the only black woman enrolled in Yale. She became the first African American to receive a law degree from Yale.

She returned home, passed the New York State Bar exam, and began practicing law in her father's law firm. In 1933, Jane married Ralph Mizelle. They moved to New York City and opened their own law practice. Jane began a career in public service in 1937 as an Assistant Corporate Counsel for the City of New York. After two years of serving in this position, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia swore Jane in as the Judge of the Domestic Relations Court (Family Court) on July 22, 1939. This made her the first African American to be the judge of any U.

S. court. As a judge, she made several monumental changes. She made it illegal to place individuals with probation officers based on race. She, also, required childcare agencies that received public funds to accept all children, regardless of race. She later founded an integrated center for troubled youth. Jane served as a judge for 40 years. She retired at age 70 in January of 1979. Jane Bolin died on January 8, 2007. She was 98 years-old. Bibliography
http://blackhistory.com/cgi-bin/blog.cgi?blog_id=133098&cid=54