

# John F. Ramos Jr.

Physician and School Board Member  
1920-1970

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by Susan Jezak Ford

Dr. John F. Ramos held the distinction of being the first black physician in Kansas City to pass a specialty board examination when he was certified as a radiologist in 1950. He is best known, however, for his role as the first black Kansas City School Board member.

John Francis Ramos, Jr., was born in Boston on August 5, 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Seton Hall College in Newark, New Jersey, and attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. He served his internship and residency in radiology at the old General Hospital No. 2, Kansas City's hospital for African Americans. He was the first resident to complete his training at the hospital and was certified by the American Board of Radiology in 1950.

In 1964 Dr. Ramos was nominated by the Democratic county committee to serve as a member of the Kansas City School Board. Under the system of the time, an equal number of candidates were nominated by Democratic and Republican parties, and then cross-endorsed by the opposing party. Black citizens had tried repeatedly to have an African American named to the Board, but it took the political clout of Freedom, Inc. to ensure the nomination of Ramos.

Dr. Ramos served the school board with a quiet dignity, attending nearly every meeting until he was struck by poor health. He died on December 28, 1970. Upon his death, *The Kansas City Times* eulogized, "He was never an orator, but his remarks could be sharp and to the point. He was very conscious of the need for schools to improve their product and to give special aid to the youngsters whose backgrounds were of little help in the classroom."

In January 1971 the Negro history collection of the Kansas City Public Library was officially named the John F. Ramos, Jr. Collection by the Board of Education. During his tenure on the school board, Ramos was very interested in the library and in the development



of the collection, which contains books, microfilm, records, and films.

### **Sources**

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