

Ruby D. Garrett

Attorney/Politician

1882-1969

by Nancy J. Hulston

A war hero, a lawyer, and a politician, Ruby Dwight Garrett led one of the last attempts to breathe life back into the mortally wounded Pendergast machine after Boss Tom Pendergast was imprisoned in the United States Penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Garrett was born in Rock Creek, North Carolina, on July 22, 1882. He received his law degree from the Kansas City School of Law, and from 1910 to 1912 was the Jackson County assistant prosecuting attorney.

From June 1916 to January 1917, Garrett served as Captain of Company A to the Missouri Signal Corps in the Mexican Border Service. During World War I, he served as first a major, and then a colonel and chief signal officer of the 117th Field Signal Battalion of the Rainbow Division of the Signal Corps. In a 1954 interview, Garrett related that the division sailed overseas in 1917 and was among the first to land in France. Rainbow Boulevard in Kansas City, Kansas, is named after the division.

Interested in local politics, Garrett became a candidate for governor of Missouri in 1929, but withdrew from the race before the primary election.

Garrett served on the Kansas City council from 1935 to 1940. When Thomas J. Pendergast was convicted of federal tax evasion and sent to prison in 1939, Bryce Smith, mayor of Kansas City and former machine supporter, attempted to initiate a reform movement in city government. Garrett convinced other council members still loyal to the machine to oppose Smith's reform efforts, hoping to keep Kansas City government in the grip of the weakened democratic organization. Smith soon resigned in disgrace.

Garrett also served as general council for the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, a position that he resigned in 1939. He practiced law for many years and served as a trustee of the Liberty Memorial Museum from 1919 until 1965. Ruby Dwight Garrett died on September 15, 1969.



Sources

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Kansas City Times, 14 July 1954.

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