

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Clippings

James W. Silver Collection

December 2018

Witness Claims Attorney Right

David Carpenter

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jws_clip

Recommended Citation

Carpenter, David, "Witness Claims Attorney Right" (2018). *Clippings*. 126.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jws_clip/126

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the James W. Silver Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Clippings by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Witness Claims Attorney Right

Jackson Lawyer Defended For Use Of Name In School Suit

By DAVID CARPENTER

JACKSON, Miss., Aug. 3.—(UPI)—A defense witness told a Federal court Saturday that Mrs. Ruthie Nell McBeth, a Negro woman who has charged that an attorney illegally used her name in an integration suit, has not been telling the truth.

Mrs. Behonor McDonald, secretary of the Leake County Branch of the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People, was testifying in the case against R. Jess Brown, 50, a Jackson Negro attorney who has handled a number of civil rights cases. Brown could be disbarred if found guilty.

"She just hasn't been telling the truth," said Mrs. McDonald. "She knew that Jess Brown was to represent her in the suit."

Brown contends that Mrs. McBeth was one of 13 Negro plaintiffs in a suit to desegre-

gate public schools in Leake County, home of Gov. Ross Barnett, on the strength of a retainer she signed authorizing him to file the suit in her behalf.

But Mrs. McBeth claims she signed the retainer after being told by another woman it was only a petition to re-open a school which had been closed under a statewide consolidation program.

Both sides rested their cases before United States District Judge Harold Cox Saturday. Judge Cox took the matter under advisement and gave opposing attorneys two weeks to file additional briefs with the court.

Brown's attorney, William Ming of Chicago, paraded six witnesses before the court Saturday. All live in the Harmony Community of Leake County near Carthage and each played some part in bringing the desegregation suit.

On two occasions Judge Cox asked witnesses, "Do you know the reputation of Ruthie Nell McBeth for telling the truth?"

Mrs. McDonald, a cousin of Mrs. McBeth by marriage, answered, "I wouldn't know about always but she hasn't been telling the truth in this matter. She knew all along the petition was to integrate the schools."

Another witness, Willie Earl Lewis, also a plaintiff in the suit, testified that two white men who he said were "trying to get us to take our names off the petition" had approached Mrs. McBeth.

James Overstreet, another to

plaintiff, testified that several shots were fired into his home shortly after the desegregation suit was filed. Overstreet said shots also were fired into the homes of several other Negroes who had lent support to the desegregation effort.

Attorney Arnold Pyle, who was appointed by Judge Cox to prosecute the case, tried several times to establish that shots also were fired into the homes of two white families on the same night but Overstreet replied, "There was talk about that but I didn't go to the houses and see any evidence."