



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1983

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John Strachan, Ex Postmaster Dead At 66

A funeral mass was offered Tuesday morning for John R. Strachan, retired Postmaster/Manager of Manhattan who died last Friday at Beth Israel Hospital after suffering a stroke. He was 66.

The mass was held at Corpus Christ Roman Catholic Church, 529 W. 121st Street. A rosary and musical tribute were held Monday night at Benta's Funeral Home, 141st Street and St. Nicholas Ave.

Strachan became the first Black to head a major post office on the East Coast in 1967, some 26 years after he began working nights as a postal clerk while attending New York University.

He was appointed to head the Manhattan borough's operation, the busiest postal unit in the world, by President Lyndon B. Johnson. He was Acting Postmaster from 1962 to 1966. He retired in 1979.

Son Of A Clerk

A native of Harlem, Strachan was the son of a postal clerk. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from NYU, and also studied at Harvard University and the Brookings Institute.

He was a veteran of the U. S. Army in World War II and was also well-known as a saxophone player, appearing in several clubs in New York City and often sitting in with local bands at social gatherings.

He was an instructor at NUY in 1964 and once taught in the secondary schools of New York City.

He was a member of the Advisory Committee of the Educational Opportunity Center, Manhattan; member of the Federal Executive Board, the Federal Business Association, Catholic Interracial Council of New York, Greater New York Fund, NAACP, Urban League, Colombian Association; Jewish Postal Employees Welfare League, American Legion, and 369th Veterans Association.

Honors Received

In 1970, he received the Postmaster of the Year Award and the Post Office Department Special Achievement Award. He was also a recipient of the Harlem Prep Awards in 1970 and 1971.

He is survived by his son, John R., of Manhattan; two daughters, Mrs. Jacqueline Meadows of Silver Springs, Md., and Mrs. Jo Ann Chiakulas of Chicago; his mother, Mrs. Julia McDougall Gibbs of Manhattan, and three brothers, James and David of New York City and Edward of Hempstead, L. I.

Burial was in Woodlawn Cemetery, the Bronx.

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