



# Crusader for Justice: Federal Judge Damon J. Keith

*Trevor W. Coleman, Peter Hammer*

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The Honorable Damon J. Keith was appointed to the federal bench in 1967 and has served as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit since 1977, where he has been an eloquent defender of civil and constitutional rights and a vigorous enforcer of civil rights law. In *Crusader for Justice: Federal Judge Damon J. Keith*, authors Peter J. Hammer and Trevor W. Coleman present the first ever biography of native Detroiter Judge Keith, surveying his education, important influences, major cases, and professional and personal commitments. Along the way, the authors consult a host of Keith's notable friends and colleagues, including former White House deputy counsel John Dean, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and industrialist Edsel Ford II for this candid and comprehensive volume.

Hammer and Coleman trace Keith's early life, from his public school days in Detroit to his time serving in the segregated U.S. army and his law school years at Howard University at the dawn of the Civil Rights era. They reveal how Keith's passion for racial and social justice informed his career, as he became co-chairman of Michigan's first Civil Rights Commission and negotiated the politics of his appointment to the federal judiciary. The authors go on to detail Keith's most famous cases, including the Pontiac Busing and Hamtramck Housing cases, the 1977 Detroit Police affirmative action case, the so-called Keith Case (United States v. U.S. District Court), and the *Detroit Free Press* v. Ashcroft case in 2002. They also trace Keith's personal commitment to mentoring young black lawyers, provide a candid look behind the scenes at the dynamics and politics of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and even discuss some of Keith's difficult relationships, for instance with the Detroit NAACP and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Judge Keith's forty-five years on the bench offer a unique viewpoint on a tumultuous era of American and legal history. Readers interested in Civil Rights-era law, politics, and personalities will appreciate the portrait of Keith's fortitude and conviction in *Crusader for Justice*.

More information can be found at [crusaderforjustice.com](http://crusaderforjustice.com)



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