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Prentice Marshall, 77, Federal Judge, Dies

 By JO NAPOLITANO
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Prentice H. Marshall, who as an activist federal judge in Chicago presided over cases that changed the makeup of the Chicago police force and sent the head of the Teamsters union to prison, died on Monday in Ponce Inlet, Fla., where he had lived for 14 years. He was 77.

The cause was cardiac-pulmonary failure and cancer of the bladder, his former law firm, Jenner & Block, said.

Judge Marshall, who was drawn to the law after reading Clarence Darrow's autobiography when he was 11, served as a federal district judge for the northern district of Illinois from 1973 until 1996. He was one of the few Democrats to be nominated for a federal judgeship by President Richard M. Nixon.

In 1976, ruling in a discrimination suit, he ordered the Chicago Police Department to hire women as officers on the beat and to open its doors to more blacks and Hispanics. When the city failed to comply, Judge Marshall directed the United States Treasury to withhold federal money until the department changed its policies.

One of his most widely publicized trials was in 1982, when he presided over the case of the Teamsters union's president, Roy L. Williams, who was charged with conspiring to bribe a United States senator, Howard W. Cannon of Nevada, to use his influence to block a bill to deregulate the trucking industry. Mr. Cannon, who was not indicted, always denied that any bribe was offered.

The jury returned a guilty verdict, and Judge Marshall imposed a sentence of up to 10 years. Mr. Williams, who suffered from severe emphysema, served three years in a federal prison hospital.

Judge Marshall also ruled in a 1982 case that the random interrogation and detention of Hispanics by what was then the Immigration and Naturalization Service was unconstitutional. His ruling led the agency to change its policies drastically.

In 1986, a federal jury found a Cook County Circuit Court judge, Reginald J. Holzer, guilty of extorting \$200,000 from lawyers and litigants who appeared before his court over a 10-year period, ending in 1984. Judge Marshall presided over that case, which was part of a broader investigation into court corruption called Operation Greylord.

In another ruling, Judge Marshall ordered the Stateville Correctional Center to establish better medical care for inmates -- including proper medicine and diet for diabetics -- as the result of a lawsuit filed on behalf of an inmate there.

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