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Phillips, Fitzroy Donald [1]

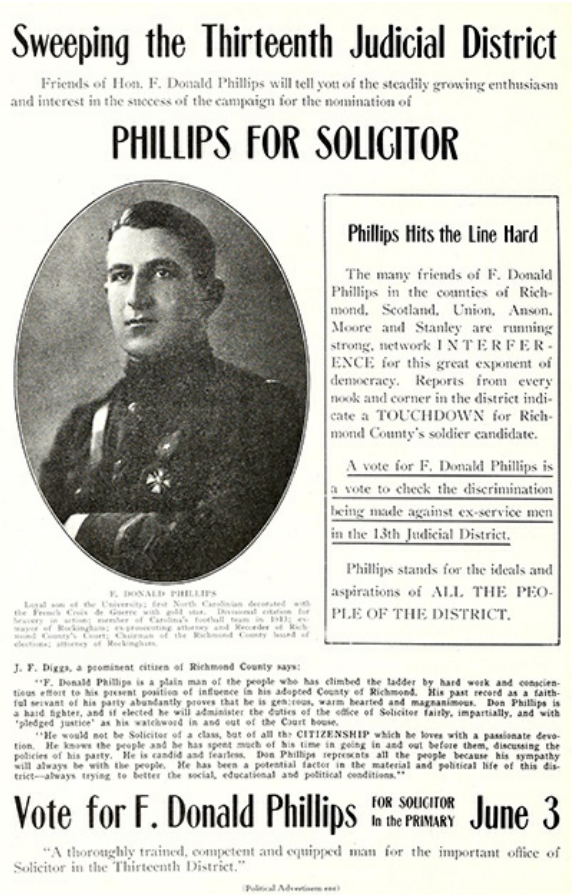
Phillips, Fitzroy Donald

by F. Craig Willis, 1994

23 May 1893–19 July 1982



A photograph of Judge Fitzroy Donald Phillips at the Milch Trial in Nuremburg in 1946. Image from the University of Missouri. [2]Fitzroy Donald Phillips, attorney and judge, was born in Laurinburg, the son of Robert D., a lumberman, and Anna McLean Phillips, a first cousin of Governor Angus W. McLean [3]. He received his early education in the public schools of Florida, where the Phillips family engaged in manufacturing and merchandising lumber. After attending the Georgia Military Academy, Phillips entered the University of Georgia in 1911, studied at the University of Florida for a brief time in 1913, and enrolled as a law student at The University of North Carolina [4] for the year 1913–14. In both Georgia and Chapel Hill he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, and at The University of North Carolina he also played football—he was the last surviving member of the team of 1913. Although he had not completed the law course, he applied to the state law board; after examination, he was admitted to the state bar in 1914. He returned to Laurinburg and entered the practice of law with W. S. Thomas in 1915.



Sweeping the Thirteenth Judicial District

Friends of Hon. F. Donald Phillips will tell you of the steadily growing enthusiasm and interest in the success of the campaign for the nomination of

PHILLIPS FOR SOLICITOR

F. DONALD PHILLIPS

Phillips Hits the Line Hard

The many friends of F. Donald Phillips in the counties of Richmond, Scotland, Union, Anson, Moore and Stanley are running strong, network INTERFERENCE for this great exponent of democracy. Reports from every nook and corner in the district indicate a TOUCHDOWN for Richmond County's soldier candidate.

A vote for F. Donald Phillips is a vote to check the discrimination being made against ex-service men in the 13th Judicial District.

Phillips stands for the ideals and aspirations of ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT.

J. F. Diggs, a prominent citizen of Richmond County says:

"F. Donald Phillips is a plain man of the people who has climbed the ladder by hard work and conscientious effort to his present position of influence in his adopted County of Richmond. His past record as a faithful servant of his party abundantly proves that he is generous, warm hearted and magnanimous. Don Phillips is a hard fighter, and if elected he will administer the duties of the office of Solicitor fairly, impartially, and with 'pledged justice' as his watchword in and out of the Court house.

"He would not be Solicitor of a class, but of all the CITIZENSHIP which he loves with a passionate devotion. He knows the people and he has spent much of his time in going in and out before them, discussing the policies of his party. He is candid and fearless. Don Phillips represents all the people because his sympathy will always be with the people. He has been a potential factor in the material and political life of this district—always trying to better the social, educational and political conditions."

Vote for F. Donald Phillips FOR SOLICITOR In the PRIMARY June 3

"A thoroughly trained, competent and equipped man for the important office of Solicitor in the Thirteenth District."

(Political Advertisement)

A 1922 political ad for F. Donald Phillips for solicitor of the 13th Judicial District. Image from Archive.org.

[5]In May 1917 Phillips volunteered for military service [6] and in September was commissioned second lieutenant in the infantry. Ordered overseas, he saw action of five fronts. While attached to the 125th Infantry, 32nd Division, in the region of the Alsace-Lorraine, he took part in the Battle of Chateau Thierry. He later was in battles in the Soissons sector and on the Meuse. At the Argonne offensive, he fought for twenty-one days in a continuous battle. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government and cited by the American commander for bravery. In 1919 he was discharged following service with the Army of Occupation.

Phillips returned to Rockingham, where he discovered that he had been elected mayor in his absence. He filled this post for two years before resuming his law practice with Thomas. When his partner was elected clerk of court, Phillips formed a new partnership with J. C. Sedberry in Rockingham for the general practice of law. In 1923 he was elected solicitor of the Thirteenth Judicial District, composed of Richmond, Anson, Union, Scotland, Moore, and Stanly counties—a post he held for twelve years. In 1934 he was elected a superior court judge and remained in that post until his retirement in 1962. Except for the time in Nuremberg, Phillips served his district for twenty-eight years.

In 1946–47, after World War II [7], the United States participated in the International Military Tribunal that tried twenty-two Nazis in Nuremberg. President Harry S Truman designated F. Donald Phillips one of the judges. The jurists were divided into six courts of three judges each with four alternate judges. Sitting at the head of his court, Phillips tried all of the war criminals at Nuremberg assigned to it; nineteen were convicted and twelve were sentenced to death.

A Democrat, a member of the Methodist church [8], and an active Mason [9], Phillips was married on 12 Nov. 1925 to Octavia S. Scales, daughter of Walter Leak and Panthier Stauback Scales of Rockingham. They were the parents of two children, F. Donald, Jr., and Octavia Scales [10]. He died in Rockingham and was buried in Eastside Cemetery.

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1 January 1994 | Willis, F. Craig

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