

John Preston Davis, Civil Rights Leader

John Preston Davis, 68, a leader in the struggle to win civil, political, economic and social rights for the American Negro, died Monday in New York.

He had served as executive secretary of the National Negro Congress, lobbying through that organization to secure such rights.

Mr. Davis, who was editor of special publications at the Phelps Stokes Fund from 1963 until ill health forced his retirement in 1968, also edited The American Negro Reference Book, used in schools and colleges as a source of information about American Negroes.

A native of Washington, Mr. Davis was a graduate of Dunbar High School. He attended Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and as president of its debating team went to England and Scotland to debate at such leading universities as Oxford and Cambridge. After further study at Harvard University, he graduated from Harvard Law School in 1933.

From 1945 to 1956, Mr. Davis was editor and publisher of Our World Magazine, which reported on the interests and activities of Negroes.

He worked as a fund-raiser, traveling abroad, for the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City from 1958 to 1961.

He is survived by his wife, Marguerite DeMond Davis, of the home in New York; two sons, Michael DeMond, of New York and Baltimore, and John Preston, of New York; two daughters, Miriam J. Davis, of Washington, and Marguerite D. Wylie, of San Diego, and a sister, Mrs. McKinley Taylor, of Washington.



JOHN PRESTON DAVIS