

JOHN MALCOLM PATTERSON

Court of Criminal Appeals - 1984-1997

BORN: September 27, 1921; Goldville, Alabama

John Patterson, son of the late Agnes Louise Benson and Albert L. Patterson, attended public schools in Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Russell counties and graduated from Central High School in Phenix City in 1939. From 1940 to 1945 he served in the United States Army in the North African, Sicilian, Italian, Southern French, and German campaigns of World War II.

Patterson studied political science, public administration, history, and subsequently law at the University of Alabama, received his law degree in 1949, and returned to Phenix City to join his father's law practice. He was recalled into military service in 1951 during the Korean Conflict. After his discharge, he served in the United States Army Reserve until retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After his service during the Korean War, Patterson returned to Phenix City to practice law and to help his father campaign for the office of Attorney General of Alabama. Although the elder Patterson won the Democratic nomination, he was assassinated on June 18, 1954. John Patterson then became the Democratic nominee and was elected Attorney General that same year. He played a leading role in investigating the murder of his father, in prosecuting those responsible, and in eradicating organized crime in Phenix City.

In November 1958, John Patterson was elected Governor of Alabama. After leaving office in 1963, he practiced law in Montgomery, operated a cattle farm in Tallapoosa County, and served on the faculty of Troy State University. Appointed by Governor George C. Wallace to the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals in April 1984, he continued in that service, including a term as Presiding Judge from 1990 until 1992, until his retirement in January 1997. Simultaneously, he served as Chief Judge on the Court of the Judiciary from April 17, 1989.

John Patterson is married to the former Tina Brachert. He has two children, Albert L. Patterson III and Barbara Patterson Scholl.

*Portrait by Richard Miller, b. 1931
Oil on canvas, 1997*