

## **JOHN OSCAR HARRIS**

### **Court of Criminal Appeals - 1972-1985**

*BORN: September 2, 1910; Macon County, Alabama*

*DIED: December 19, 1990; Montgomery, Alabama*

A native of Macon County, John O. Harris attended the public schools there and graduated from Troy University in 1932. He then attended Jones Law School, graduating in 1934. After being admitted to the Alabama Bar in 1935, he began practicing law in Wetumpka. In 1942 he was appointed assistant attorney general and later became chief of the Criminal Division. Then in 1947 he launched what would become a highly successful criminal law practice in Montgomery with the firm of Hill, Hill, Whiting & Harris. He continued practicing law for 33 years until his appointment in 1970 as legal adviser to Governor George C. Wallace.

In February 1972 Governor Wallace appointed Harris to a newly created special judgeship on the Court of Criminal Appeals. Elected to a full six-year term in May of that year, he served on that court until his retirement in 1985. He was presiding judge from 1977 to 1982.

In 1937 John O. Harris married Ethel Smoot of Wetumpka. They had three sons and six grandchildren.

Judge Harris was named Troy State alumnus of the year in 1972. He was inducted posthumously into the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 1991.

*Portrait by Marguerite Edwards, b. 1943  
Oil on canvas, 1980*

*Note: Portrait presented to Supreme Court and State Law Library  
by John Reid Harris and Thomas Ashley Harris, September, 1997.*