

Abe Berkowitz

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Abraham Berkowitz (born November 26, 1907; died December 1985) was an attorney, notable for his leadership in representing African American defendants, attacking the Ku Klux Klan and promoting the change from Birmingham's City Commission form of government.

Berkowitz earned his degree at the University of Alabama School of Law, where he roomed with Albert Boutwell. He began practicing in Birmingham in 1928. He partnered with Arnold Lefkovits in the firm of Berkowitz & Lefkovits in 1950. The firm soon began receiving attorneys, such as David Vann, who were forced out of other firms due to their Civil Rights advocacy. In 2003 the 60 member firm was acquired by Baker Donelson of Huntsville, Tennessee.

Berkowitz was also a notable supporter of the Zionist movement. He convinced the Alabama legislature to pass a resolution in support of the creation of a Jewish state in 1943, and served as president of the Birmingham Zionist Organization in 1945. That July he attended a meeting of 18 Zionist leaders at Rudolf Sonneborn's penthouse in New York to plan methods of arming Jewish settlers in Palestine in advance of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. He led efforts to gather war materiel in Birmingham, which was smuggled to New York in the inner tubes of a truck full of tires.

Berkowitz and Lebanese attorney Mansoud Zanaty co-owned the Lotus Restaurant.

References

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