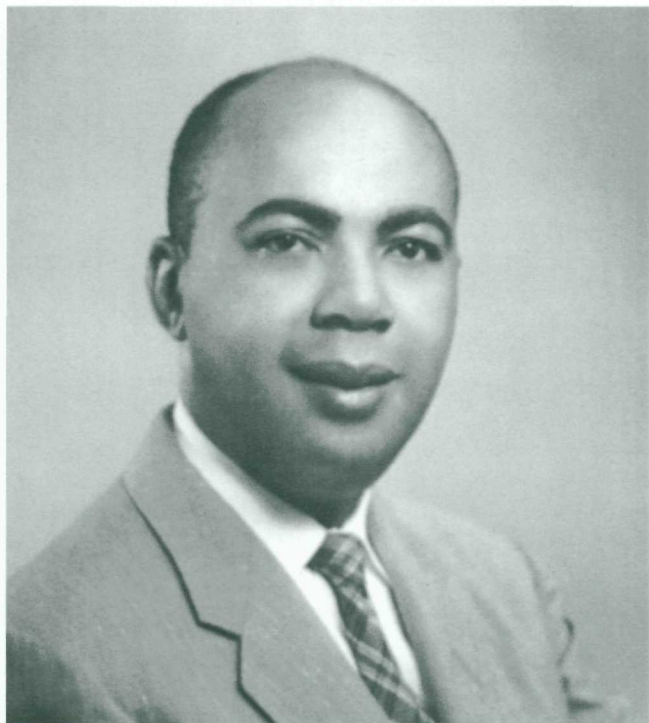


---

*"[Our nation] cannot afford the luxury of stagnation of intellectual, cultural or economic developments, nor can you as individuals permit those around you to fall into patterns of indifference, apathy, or lack of concern for ourselves or fellow men."*

- Gerald A. Lamb



Gerald A. Lamb was the first African American elected to the Waterbury Board of Aldermen, the first African American to serve on the Waterbury Board of Park Commissioners, the first African American in the nation to be elected state treasurer, the third African American in the nation to be elected to any state office, and the first African American to serve as state bank commissioner.

Lamb was born August 25, 1924 in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, the son of Thomas and Addie Lamb. His father was a high school principal. After serving in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, he graduated from the Kerpel School of Dental Technology in New York City. He came to Waterbury in 1948, as a dental technician at the Waterbury Dental Laboratory, where he became general manager.

Lamb served on the boards of the local Red Cross and NAACP and was president of the boards of the Pearl Street Neighborhood House and the Waterbury Negro Business and Professional Men's Association. He was a member of the Connecticut Hospital Planning Association and the Goodwill Lodge of Elks and a recipient of its Lovejoy Award in 1963. He was a vestryman of St. John's Episcopal Church and served as the lay deputy to the Diocese of Connecticut at the 62nd annual convention of the Episcopal Church in Seattle in 1967.

As a Democrat, Lamb was elected to the Waterbury Board of Aldermen in 1959 and re-elected in 1961. As president pro tempore, he served as acting mayor on several occasions. He also served on the Waterbury Board of Park Commissioners from 1959 to 1962.

With W. Reed Smith, Jr. he organized Meadow Homes, Inc. in 1960 and built an integrated housing project.

In 1962, Lamb was elected treasurer of the state of Connecticut, receiving the fourth highest number of votes. He served until 1970, when he was appointed state bank commissioner by Governor John Dempsey. In 1971 he became vice president of loans for Connecticut Bank and Trust Co., eventually becoming a senior vice president and director of public affairs. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson named Lamb to the U.S. delegation attending the inauguration of Venezuelan president Raul Leoni. He was also designated an honorary vice president at that year's Democratic National Convention.

Lamb was the state's official representative to the 1965 Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. He later spoke at a Civil Rights rally on the Waterbury Green and before the state legislature's General Law Committee, advocating for stronger Civil Rights laws.

In 1967, President Johnson appointed Lamb to the Consumer Advisory Council. In 1969, Lamb met with and advised the first African American mayor of Fayette, Mississippi. In 1971, he assisted in the development of a program to help prevent banks from discriminating against inner city neighborhoods when granting mortgages. The program was scuttled when banks realized it could expose them to state fines.

Lamb spoke frequently on the importance of education for African Americans and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from North Carolina Central University in 1971. He helped spearhead the establishment of the Prudence Crandall Museum in the Canterbury house where Crandall defied Connecticut law by teaching African American women during the 1830s. In the 1970s he served on the Board for State Academic Awards which awarded associate and bachelor degrees to nontraditional students. The program became Charter Oak College in 1980 and was accredited two years later, while Lamb was chairman of the board.

In 1974, as chairman of the Hartford Chamber of Commerce's Special Committee on Minority Business Analysis, Lamb instituted a program to encourage chamber members to patronize minority-owned businesses. During the 1970s, Lamb served on the boards of the Episcopal Church Foundation, the Connecticut Hospital Planning Association, CPTV, Stanley Works, the NAACP, the United Fund, Connecticut Blue Cross, Hartford's Model Cities program, and the United Negro College Fund. He was campaign treasurer for governors William O'Neill and Ella Grasso and treasurer of the Ella T. Grasso Foundation established after her death.

Lamb married Verna I. Grier of Waterbury who became the first African American teacher in the Waterbury school system. The couple had one daughter. He died in Chesapeake, Virginia on March 24, 2014.