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## Richard Bush

Bush was born in 1813. He was a former slave who served as the first African American U. S. Court Bailiff. He served for 27 years in the Detroit court system. He worked for and became friends with U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Henry Billings Brown (also buried in Elmwood).

Justice Brown's oath of office for the Supreme Court was to held in Washington D.C. Noted in *Separate*, by Steve Luxemberg, is the following excerpt:

One member of the group stood out. That was Richard Bush –“Old Bush,” he called himself – a bailiff from Detroit's federal court. He had been in Brown's office when the telegram arrived with news of his appointment. “Richard,” the judge had said, grinning and grasping the colored man's hand, “I will not take my seat on the bench unless you promise to be present at the ceremony.” ... On the morning of January 6, 1891, Bush arrived at the Supreme Court chamber, so crowded with Michigan well-wishers that most could not get in. But arrangements had been made. The court's marshal escorted Bush to his reserved seat, next to Mrs. Brown.

Bush married Ariana Bracy Bush (1819 – 1900) and had at least one child with her, John F. A. Bush who was born in 1844.

Bush died in 1895 and is buried in Section S, Lot 81. There is not a marker at his gravesite.

[Bush is listed in Elmwood's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Self-Guided Tour Map.](#)