



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Justice Thomas McHugh sworn in** For immediate release Thursday, December 16, 2010

**CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Justice Thomas McHugh was sworn in to a two-year term on the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia during a 3 p.m. ceremony today in the Supreme Court Chamber.**

**“This has really been a journey that has taken a lot of turns,” Justice McHugh said immediately after taking the oath of office from Chief Justice Robin Jean Davis, as his wife, Judy, and twin sons, John and James, stood by his side.**

**He said he never could have imagined rejoining the Court when he retired on December 31, 1997. He said he was both honored and pleased when then-Chief Justice Elliott Maynard asked him on September 1, 2008, to sit by Designation as a Senior Status Justice for Justice Joseph Albright during Justice Albright’s illness, and then again when then-Chief Justice Brent Benjamin asked him to continue that service into 2009. Then-Governor Joe Manchin III appointed him to the seat on April 20, 2009, after the death of Justice Albright.**

**Justice McHugh was elected on Nov. 2 to fill the unexpired term of Justice Albright, which ends in 2012.**

**Justice McHugh said it has been a pleasure to serve with all the current justices, whom he said are personal friends.**

**“I do believe so much in the important role of the judiciary in the state today,” he said. “Every member of the judiciary believes very strongly in an independent judiciary and making decisions on the merits.**

**“Impartiality and fairness are not mere words. They really have to be the heart and soul of the judiciary,” Justice McHugh said.**

**“With few exceptions, our judges – the circuit court judges, the family court judges, the magistrates – are really devoted to their constitutional duties. You may be assured, the next two years we will all be diligent to ensure you can continue to take pride in the Supreme Court of West Virginia,” Justice McHugh said.**

**Several speakers praised Justice McHugh.**

**Acting Governor Earl Ray Tomblin talked about Justice McHugh’s honesty and character and said he was an example of a fine public servant.**

**“Congratulations. We appreciate you,” Governor Tomblin said.**

**Chief Justice Davis said Justice McHugh is, “a pillar of the West Virginia legal community and this Court, and he has been a personal mentor to me for many years.”**

**Both she and Justice Margaret Workman said they hope to talk Justice McHugh in to running for a 12-year term on the Court in 2012.**

**Justice Workman said Justice McHugh is “one of the finest individuals I have ever known.”**

**They worked together when he was a circuit judge in Kanawha County and she was a law clerk to the other circuit judges, and then again when they both were Supreme Court Justices during previous terms.**

**“Not only does he have a brilliant legal mind, but he is funny,” Justice Workman said. “He makes all of us better judges.”**

**Justice McHugh’s son, Jackson County Prosecutor James McHugh, recalled going to work with his father both at the Kanawha County Courthouse and the Supreme Court. As a boy, he was impressed with the peacefulness and imposing décor of the Supreme Court and the chaos of the Circuit Court.**

**“I remember you bringing us down here on Saturdays. Yes, he worked Saturdays then. He works Saturdays now,” James McHugh said.**

**He remembers the piles of papers in his father’s office at the Supreme Court and the piles of papers he brought home to read.**

**“I just couldn’t believe anyone could read so much,” he said.**

**Justice McHugh inspired both of his sons to pursue careers as lawyers.**

**He instilled in his children the importance of fairness and integrity, James McHugh said.**

**“He has never been motivated by money. He has been motivated by service to our state and service to our country.**

**“You were a great example for us kids, your grandchildren and those who have come in contact with you,” James McHugh said. “We’re very proud of you, dad.”**

**Justice McHugh previously was elected to the Court in 1980 and was re-elected to a second twelve-year term in 1992. He served as Chief Justice in 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995 and 1996. After his retirement, he practiced law in the Charleston law firm of Allen Guthrie McHugh and Thomas, where he was of counsel.**

**Justice McHugh was born in Charleston on March 26, 1936, and is a 1958 graduate of West Virginia University and a Distinguished Military Graduate, and he is a 1964 graduate of West Virginia University College of Law. In law school he was a member of the Order of Coif, a legal honorary, and was associate editor of the West Virginia Law Review. He served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army from 1958 to 1961.**

**He was a law clerk to West Virginia Supreme Court Justice Harlan Calhoun from 1966 to 1968. He was elected Judge in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County in 1974, re-elected in 1976, and served as chief circuit judge from 1974 to 1980.**

**Supreme Court Administrative Director Steve Canterbury served as master of ceremonies.**

