



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

Administrative Office  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East  
Bldg. 1, Room E-316  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305  
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy  
(304) 340-2306 April Harless  
(304) 558-4219 / TTY  
(304) 558-1212 / FAX  
Web Site: [www.courtswv.gov](http://www.courtswv.gov)  
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)  
Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/)  
Email: [Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov)  
Email: [April.Harless@courtswv.gov](mailto:April.Harless@courtswv.gov)

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### **Family Court Judge Mike Kelly Celebrated at Retirement Lunch**

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Eleventh Family Court Circuit (Kanawha County) Judge Mike Kelly was hailed as honest, hard-working, ethical, a mentor and a leader who will be missed by those who spoke at this retirement lunch at noon on Tuesday, Aug. 26, in the ceremonial courtroom of the Kanawha County Courthouse.

Judge Kelly will retire on August 31.

Judge Kelly has a bachelor's degree from West Virginia University and a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He worked in the civil rights division of the West Virginia Attorney General's Office and was in private practice before becoming a family law master and then a family court judge.

"The last fifteen years have flown by," Judge Kelly said. "It's not everyone who gets to get up every day and try to do justice."

"He is the first one to get here in the morning and the last one to leave," said Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper.

"He is an honest, good, decisive person," said Kanawha County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Mike Rutherford.

Supreme Court Family Court Services Director Lisa Tackett said Judge Kelly was a mentor to her when she practiced family law. "As a practicing family court attorney, what you look for in a judge is consistency in rulings and respect for your clients as well as enforcement of the family court orders, and that's exactly what you get with Judge Kelly," Ms. Tackett said.

As a court administrator, she could always count on him to take on extra, unpaid duties designed to improve the court system as a whole, like serving on committees and presiding over the Kanawha County Domestic Violence Court pilot project.

Circuit Judge Jennifer Bailey praised Judge Kelly's work on that project as well as his efforts as presiding judge of the Kanawha County Juvenile Drug Court. Judge Kelly also served as Judge Bailey's backup as presiding judge on the Kanawha County Adult Drug Court. Juveniles, domestic violence victims, substance abusers who want to change, and families in Kanawha County have benefited from his service, Judge Bailey said.

"He has a heart for service," said his longtime case coordinator, Sandi Moles.