



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
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/
Email: Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov
Email: April.Harless@courtswv.gov

Mental hygiene commissioner retires after 40 years of service

For immediate release Friday, March 7, 2014

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Kanawha County Mental Hygiene Commissioner Thomas M. Hayes retired March 1 after serving forty years in the part-time position.

At a retirement luncheon on Feb. 20, Supreme Court Administrative Director Steve Canterbury presented Mr. Hayes with a certificate signed by all five sitting Supreme Court Justices.

It takes a special kind of person to handle mental hygiene cases, especially for so many years, Mr. Canterbury said. “Think of all the lives you have affected. You have made a certain kind of peace for those people.”

Senior Status Circuit Judge Herman Canady noted that he and Mr. Hayes attended law school together more than fifty years ago. “Tom is one of the finest in our class and one of the smartest, if not the smartest,” he said.

Chief circuit judges appoint attorneys to act as mental hygiene commissioners. The commissioners preside over hearings on involuntary hospitalization, guardianship and conservatorship and issue transport orders for voluntary admission of minors to mental health facilities, upon affidavit.

A native of Clarksburg, Mr. Hayes graduated from Fairmont State College in 1959 and West Virginia University College of Law in 1962. His first job was as a law clerk to then-Kanawha County Circuit Judge Frank Taylor, where he met his wife, Donna, who worked for then-Kanawha County Circuit Judge Robert Smith.

They were known as “The courthouse sweethearts,” said Robin Louderback, a Kanawha County Mental Hygiene Commissioner who acted as the master of ceremonies at Mr. Hayes’ retirement luncheon at the Kanawha County Judicial Building. Donna Hayes retired in 2000 as the Fiduciary Supervisor for the Kanawha County Commission. They plan to move to Raleigh, North Carolina, to be near children and grandchildren.

Mr. Hayes also clerked for then-Supreme Court Justice Charles Haden before entering private practice in Charleston. In 1974 then-Kanawha County Circuit Judge Thomas McHugh appointed him to be a mental hygiene commissioner.



Ms. Louderback said Mr. Hayes was the epitome of knowledge and ethics and lent a guiding hand to many lawyers, including herself; he was the first judicial officer she appeared before as a practicing attorney. “We appreciate you,” she said.

Linda Artinez, Director of Mental Hygiene and Treatment Court Services for the Supreme Court Administrative Office, said in a letter to Mr. Hayes, “I will miss knowing that you will no longer be there as a trusted voice of experience. . . . I thank you for your service. I am sure the Court thanks you for your service, and I know that West Virginia is better off for your service.”

##