



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Former Justice Edwin Flowers Has Died

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Former Supreme Court Justice Edwin F. Flowers died Thursday, January 27, in Morgantown. He was 91.

Chief Justice John Hutchison said, “I am terribly saddened to hear of the passing of one of our own. His exemplary career stands as a monument to his personal dedication to the law, as well as to the citizens of West Virginia. He was a true leader and will be sadly missed. I want to extend my sympathies to his family and to all of his friends and colleagues.”

Justice Tim Armstead said, “Former Justice Flowers has left such a tremendous legacy within our state government and judicial system, as well as our nation’s federal court system. He and his wife Ellie have also done so much to improve and advance his beloved alma mater, West Virginia University. Few West Virginians have had such a positive and lasting impact on our state, and he will be missed by so many. My thoughts are with his wife Ellie and his family through this difficult time.”

Justices Beth Walker and Evan Jenkins said they were sorry to hear of Justice Flowers’ death and sent their sincere condolences to his family.

“I knew Ed Flowers as DHHR commissioner, when he was a bankruptcy judge, and, of course, as a Supreme Court Justice,” said Justice William R. Wooton. “He was a friend and a genuinely good man. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends.”

Justice Flowers was born April 26, 1930, on the family farm in New Manchester, Hancock County.

He received a bachelor’s degree (Phi Beta Kappa) from West Virginia University in 1952 and a law degree from the WVU College of Law in 1954. While attending WVU, he served as president of the student body, president of his Sigma Nu fraternity chapter, and Cadet Colonel of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Wing. He was a member of the WVU championship debate team; the WVU Marching Band; and was active in numerous honorary organizations, including Mountain, the highest honor given to WVU students and graduates. He was awarded Most Loyal Faculty & Staff Mountaineer in

1999 and, in 2000, was inducted into the Order of Vandalia, an award for the most loyal servants to West Virginia University.

After law school, he was assigned to active duty in the Judge Advocate General's Corps at Nellis Air Force Base in 1954. The following year, on April 9, 1955, he married Eleanor (Ellie) Ellis, his loving and supporting wife of 66 years.

After his military service, he returned to the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia to practice law.

In 1969, then-Governor Arch Moore appointed him Commissioner of Welfare for the State of West Virginia. In 1975, Governor Moore appointed him to the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Justice James Marshall Sprouse. Justice Flowers' term ended December 31, 1976.

In 1977, Justice Flowers became United States Bankruptcy Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia. From 1983 to 1997, he was Vice President for Institutional Advancement at West Virginia University, a position that embraced the government and public relations of the university and coordinated its communications, publications, alumni relations, and the fundraising efforts of its independent foundation.

He was a commissioner of Volunteer West Virginia, the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service, from 2009 to 2012.

In his retirement, Justice Flowers enjoyed writing and publishing books, attending WVU football and basketball games, being actively involved in WVU alumni organizations, studying the Civil War as a member of the Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable, and mentoring WVU students, especially his great-nephew Jackson Flowers.

He is survived by his wife, Ellie Flowers; daughters, Ann Flowers and Melissa (Ty) Newberry; grandchildren, Adam (Ashley) Flowers and Kathryn (Sean) Hendricks; and great-grandchildren, Matthew Hendricks and Jack Flowers.

Nixon Funeral Home in Newell is in charge of arrangements. Visitation will be from noon to 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 21, at the Erickson Alumni Center at West Virginia University in Morgantown. The funeral will be Tuesday, Feb. 22 at the New Manchester Christian Church in New Manchester, WV.

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