



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Senior Status Judge Herman Canady Has Passed Away

For immediate release Wednesday, June 12, 2024

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Senior Status Judge Herman G. Canady, Jr., passed away on Tuesday, June 11.

Judge Canady was born and raised in Kanawha County. He attended State High School in Institute but became the first African American student at Charleston High School when he attended a summer session there during eleventh grade. He later received a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a law degree from West Virginia University College of Law. He was the only African American enrolled during his three years at the law school and was the second African American graduate.

He began his legal career as the first African American attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Charleston. He then worked as an assistant Kanawha County prosecutor for about seven years.

In March 1982, then-governor Jay Rockefeller appointed him to the circuit court bench in Kanawha County, making Judge Canady the first African American to hold that position in Kanawha County. He was subsequently elected in 1982, 1984, 1992 and 2000. He was chief circuit judge in 1989 and 1998. He retired in 2002 and became a mediator and senior status judge.

He received the "Fairest Judge" award from the West Virginia Trial Lawyers Association for 1985-1986. He was president of the West Virginia Judicial Association in 2001 and had previously served as secretary/treasurer of that association.

"Judge Canady was a trailblazer who treated everyone with fairness and respect. He was a model judge, and he will be greatly missed by everyone in the legal profession in West Virginia. My condolences to his family, colleagues and friends," said Chief Justice Tim Armstead.

Judge Canady served on the boards of Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Charleston, and the West Virginia Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled. He was a lifelong member of the NAACP.

Judge Canady was married to Barbara L. Canady, and they had three children.

Arrangements are not yet available.

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