



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Supreme Court Mourns Passing of Former Justice Thomas E. McHugh

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia today mourns the passing of distinguished former Justice Thomas E. McHugh, who died Tuesday morning, Jan. 14, at the age of 88.

“Our Court is deeply saddened by the passing of Justice McHugh, and we send our sincere condolences, thoughts and prayers to his family, colleagues and friends at this difficult time,” said Chief Justice Bill Wooton. “Tom McHugh is one of the truly outstanding justices of the West Virginia Supreme Court. His example is revered by all current members of the Court. His impact on the jurisprudence of West Virginia is indelible.”

Justice McHugh was [once quoted as saying](#) he “retired twice” from the Court, having served two distinct tenures as a justice. He was first elected to the Court in 1980, re-elected in 1992 and served until he retired on Dec. 31, 1997. He served as chief justice in 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995 and 1996, and upon his first retirement, then-Justice Joseph Albright [told him](#), “Chief Justice McHugh, you will always be my Chief Justice.”

When Justice Albright became ill in 2008, Justice McHugh returned to the court as a senior status justice. Upon Justice Albright’s death in March 2009, Justice McHugh was appointed to the Court by then-Gov. Joe Manchin. Justice McHugh was later elected in 2010 to serve the remainder of Justice Albright’s unexpired term and fully retired from the Court when that term ended in 2012.

“Justice McHugh was universally loved and respected by lawyers, judges and everyone in our Court family,” Justice Beth Walker said. “He was a model of distinguished service and civility, and generous with his time when I sought his advice.”

“Justice McHugh was a tremendous example and mentor to judges throughout West Virginia,” Justice Tim Armstead said. “He was not only a giant within our state’s judiciary, but a kind and humble gentleman. It is difficult to imagine anyone who has engendered greater respect and admiration within the legal community.”

“Justice McHugh spent his entire life leading by example as a scholarly jurist, devoted public servant and mentor to so many lawyers and judges,” Justice Haley Bunn said. “His legacy and contributions to West Virginia’s judiciary will live on through the many who were touched and influenced by his service.”

“Justice McHugh left an indelible mark on the administration of justice for the citizens of West Virginia and set the standard that we all aspire to follow,” Justice Charles Trump said.

Born in Charleston on March 26, 1936, Justice McHugh was a 1958 graduate of West Virginia University and a Distinguished Military Graduate. He served in the U.S. Army from 1958 to 1961, achieving the rank of First Lieutenant. He then attended the WVU College of Law, graduating in 1964. During law school, he was a member of the Order of the Coif, a legal honorary, and was associate editor of the *West Virginia Law Review*. He went on to serve as law clerk to state Supreme Court Justice Harlan Calhoun from 1966 to 1968.

Prior to becoming a Supreme Court justice, McHugh was elected circuit court judge for Kanawha County in 1974 and re-elected in 1976. He served as chief circuit judge from 1974 to 1980.

He is survived by his wife, Judy, their four children – Karen, Cindy, James and John – and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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