



For Immediate Release

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REMEMBERING JUSTICE DONALD C. HUDSON

With a heavy heart, Chief Judge Clint Hull of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit (Kane County) announced the passing of Justice Donald C. Hudson of the Illinois Appellate Court, Second District on Tuesday, April 11, 2023.

Justice Hudson steadily rose through the ranks of the Kane County legal community, ultimately being assigned by the Illinois Supreme Court in January 2009 as a Justice in the Illinois Appellate Court, Second District. Once assigned, Justice Hudson shared “it’s absolutely the pinnacle of my career.” This is a role he held until his death.

Chicago born, Donald Hudson received his undergraduate degree from DePaul University and his Juris Doctorate from John Marshall Law School. What few know is that prior to going to university, while in high school during the 1960’s, Donald Hudson was a rock ‘n roller. As lead guitarist in the band **Edges of Wisdom**, they played to crowds as large as 500 people and even recorded and released a 45 RPM of Hudson’s song, “That Lonely Road.” Though he was always hesitant to speak of his band days, when he did speak of them, he could not hide the broad smile that would sneak across his face.

Nearly a decade after his band days ended, Donald Hudson was hired as an assistant state’s attorney in Kane County. Only one year after that, in 1976 under then State’s Attorney Gene Armentrout, he was promoted to the first assistant state’s attorney position. He stayed with the Kane County State’s Attorney’s Office until 1980 when he chose to try his hand in private practice where he remained for the next thirteen years.

April 1993 heralded another promotion for Donald Hudson when he was appointed as an associate judge in Kane County. He eventually rose to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division. Then in 1996 he became the only associate judge assigned to hear major felony trials. Former Kane County State’s Attorney Gary Johnson remembers Justice Hudson as an “outstanding trial lawyer. Everyone learned something from him. And he led by example – he wasn’t afraid to mix it up in the courtroom.” More importantly, Gary remembers him as a “One of the good guys. A wonderful human being.”

Retired Kane County Chief Judge Judith Brawka, in remembering Justice Hudson, shared that “Sadly, the Kane County Justice system has lost three decades of judicial wisdom with the passing of Justice Don Hudson. As a colleague, he was always supportive of his fellow judges and never hesitated to share his

time and knowledge. Justice Hudson was just as fair, thoughtful and even-tempered in the trial court as he was on the Appellate bench. He did not create or tolerate drama in any legal proceedings, and he demanded no more of the lawyers and parties than he did of himself. Little known personal fact: Don was a music trivia genius. So, he would hopefully appreciate this riff on the closing line from "The End" being sung about him - 'And in the end, the respect he was given, was equal to the respect he gave others...'"

As retired Judge Brawka noted, Justice Hudson lived by his own words. He mentioned in a Chicago Daily Law Bulletin article published on December 18, 2002, "there are two good qualities a judge should have, and that's having respect for yourself, and having respect for those people who appear before you."

This philosophy served him well. In December 2000, Judge Hudson was elected as a Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court Judge. Earlier in this same year, the Illinois Committee for Honest Government recognized then Associate Judge Donald C. Hudson for his work on behalf of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit. By 2004 now-Circuit Judge Hudson had risen to be chosen by his fellow Circuit Judges as Chief Judge, who then in 2006, elected him as Chief for a second term.

Under his term as Chief Judge in 2006, Hudson proudly established the Treatment Alternative Court (Mental Health Court) to help treat people in a more holistic social services nature with addiction and mental health issues, in an effort to keep them out of the jail system and get them back on their feet. In March 2014, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) gave him an award, recognizing his initiative and dedication in creating the Kane County Treatment Alternative Court.

Chief Judge Hull shared one his memories of Justice Hudson, "In 1993, my first assignment as a new prosecutor was traffic court and Judge Hudson was the judge assigned to the courtroom. I look back at those years so grateful that Judge Hudson was the first judge I appeared in front of. He was respectful to all those that appeared before him, always prepared, and so helpful in teaching me and countless other young attorneys the skills necessary to be successful attorneys. Now a Chief Judge, I always knew Justice Hudson was only a phone call away if I needed advice. He cared deeply about the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit and all the people that worked in its behalf. His impact will be felt for years to come. He will be missed."

Visitation will be taking place on Sunday, April 16, 2023 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Malone Funeral Home, 324 East State Street, Geneva, Illinois.

For further information, contact:

Nancy Feely, Administrative Assistant

Office of the Chief Judge and Court Administrator

Phone: 630-232-3440

Email: FeelyNancy@16thCircuit.IllinoisCourts.gov