



Irish American Archives Society

Judge John J. Donnelly

Judge John Donnelly has been Presiding Judge of the Cuyahoga County Probate Court since 1991. With a Juris Doctorate degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, he joined the probate court in 1969 and subsequently served as a trial referee, court administrator and chief trial referee.

A graduate of St. Edward High School, Judge Donnelly has a bachelor's degree in accounting from LaSalle College in Philadelphia. He and his wife, Ellen Spitzer Donnelly, have a daughter and two sons, Colette, Michael and Timothy.

A member of the Greater Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Ohio Bar Associations, he also belongs to the National College of Probate Judges and the American Judicature Society.

He is a past president of the Ohio Probate Judges Association and has chaired the Ohio Judicial Conference and the Judicial Conference of the Eighth Judicial District. For the Ohio Supreme Court he has served on the Visiting Judges Committee and the Continuing Legal Education and Professional Commissions. Further service has been with the Ohio Judicial Conference Rules and the Ohio-Ukraine Rule of Law Committees.

Judge Donnelly has been a trustee of St. Edward High School; St. Augustine Manor, for which he also has been president; Catholic Social Services Advisory Board and the Association for Retarded Citizens. Other memberships have included the Cleveland Developmental Center Citizens Advisory Board and the Cleveland State University Visiting Committee.

Through the years, his talents as a lecturer on probate law and procedure have been utilized by eight higher educational institutions and associations.

Judge Donnelly's most recent recognition was the 2008 Ohio Guardianship Association Distinguished Service Award. Earlier honors were five consecutive awards for Superior Justice Service (1981-85); the Bar Association of Greater Cleveland Presidential Award (1984); Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Outstanding Alumnus Award (1988); Who's Who in American Law (1990); St. Edward High School Alumnus of the Year (1994); and the LaSalle University Michael DeAngelis Award (2007).

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