

2013 Walks of Life Honoree

Judge Richard J. McMonagle



In his 34 years as a Cuyahoga County Common Pleas judge, Richard J. McMonagle has provided innovative leadership to the court, receiving the local Bar Association's highest rating.

He followed in the footsteps of his father, Common Pleas Judge George J. McMonagle, also a highly respected jurist who served on the court for 14 years, but who continued hearing cases until the age of 91.

Judge Richard McMonagle is a graduate of Gilmour Academy and ran track at Villanova University, where two of his teammates became Olympic gold medalists. He obtained his law degree from the school that is now Case Western Reserve University.

He was Presiding Judge of the Common Pleas Court from 1997 through 2005. During that time he founded the Mental Health Court and established and helped secure funding for a Drug Court in Cleveland Municipal Court. He also initiated the placement of all Common Pleas Court civil and criminal cases online.

The judge is one of only eight jurists in Ohio chosen to handle Commercial Dockets involving complex business disputes. In most of the cases the soft-spoken jurist is able to negotiate a settlement before the case goes to trial. He also developed a separate Asbestos docket for the numerous Ohio claimants suffering from Asbestosis. The docket has become the model for all such Asbestos cases in the United States.

Judge McMonagle, 71, has served as chairman of the Judicial Conference in the Eighth Judicial District for the last eight years.

In 2005, he realized that the growing number of foreclosures was beginning to overburden the court. He suggested to other judges that the court create a special projects fund to hire additional employees to speed up the 22,000 foreclosure cases going through the court each year. His suggestion has resulted in the hiring of five magistrates plus additional deputies and clerks resulting in greater efficiency in handling such cases.

He and his wife, Paulette, live on Cleveland's West Side and have five adult children: Matthew, Christopher, Gretchen, Heidi and Helen, and nine grandchildren.