



2020 Walks of Life Honoree
Hon. Leo M. Spellacy

In his 44 years as a judge, Leo Spellacy has presided over hundreds of cases in Northeast Ohio and has received national recognition for his judicial service. He served as president of the 290-member Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association and has conducted seminars on judicial administration throughout Ohio.

After graduating from St. Ignatius High School and Georgetown University, Leo enrolled in Case Western Reserve University's School of Law in the mid-1950s. While he was a law student, his older sister, Margaret Spellacy, was elected a judge in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, which, he said, influenced his decision to become a judge.

He served eight years as an assistant to the legendary Cuyahoga County prosecutor John T. Corrigan prior to his election to Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court in 1968. He was elected to the Common Pleas Court to four consecutive terms, serving from 1968-1990, and was Presiding Judge from 1975-1990.

In one of his most noteworthy cases, he presided over the second trial of Sam Sheppard, who had been found guilty 10 years earlier of killing his wife, Marilyn, in their Bay Village home. In the second trial, the jury found Sheppard not guilty.

In 1990, the judge was elected to the Eighth District Ohio Court of Appeals and was re-elected in 1996. After his retirement in 2001, through 2013, the Ohio Supreme Court assigned him to help oversee the Asbestos Docket, which directed and combined cases from throughout the country to the Eighth District court in Cleveland.

He served on the boards of the St. John and West Shore Hospital and the Greater Cleveland Hospital Association. He also served as president of the St. Ignatius High School Board of Regents and was recognized by his alma mater with the Cardinal Robert Bellarmine Award for a lawyer alumnus and (twice) with the Father Gerald Garvey Award for outstanding alumnus. He was chairman of the Judicial Conference of the Eighth Judicial District and served as a trustee of St. Mary's Seminary.

He and his wife, Zita, are residents of Rocky River. Their sons, Kevin, John, and Leo Michael, are all lawyers, while their daughters, Mary Stilphen, Megan McCuen, and Kathleen Mangan, are all physical therapists.

2020 Walks of Life Award of the Irish American Archives Society, Cleveland OH.