



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
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Date of Release: January 8, 2018

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

FORMER CHIEF JUDGE JOHN T. PHILLIPS PASSES AWAY



Former Chief Judge John T. Phillips passed away on Saturday, January 6, 2018. Judge Phillips was initially appointed as an Associate Judge in 1993 and served in that capacity until 2006 when he was elected as a Circuit Judge. He served honorably in every division of the 19th Judicial Circuit and was Presiding Judge of the Felony Division from 2010 until 2013. Judge Phillips was an integral part in the formation of the 19th Judicial Circuit's Drug, Mental Health, and Veteran's Courts. He was unanimously elected as Chief Judge by his peers, and served in that position from January 2014 until January 2016 when he retired from the bench.

"On behalf of the 19th Judicial Circuit, I am saddened to hear that our colleague and friend Judge John T. Phillips has passed. He was a man of great integrity, an innovator, and an advocate. He was a tireless public servant whose compassion and leadership left a profound impact on our Court and those we serve. He will be deeply missed," said Chief Judge Jay W. Ukena.

Judge Phillips was a 1969 graduate of Coe College and a 1972 graduate with Distinction from the University of Iowa School of Law. He served as both Active and Reserve Duty in the United States Air Force, and transferred to the Retired Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel after 28 years of service. His last assignment was as the Staff Judge Advocate of the 928th Airlift Wing at O'Hare Air Reserve Forces Facility. Judge Phillips practiced law with the firm of Churchill, Baumgartner, Phillips in Grayslake from 1976 through 1992.

"John Phillips had an insightful vision for our treatment courts. John understood and respected the fact that to end the cycle of recidivism, the criminal justice system had to change. He was that agent of change. The specialty court programs he built: Mental Health Court, Drug Court, and Veteran's Treatment and Assistance Court, have changed and saved countless lives through the combination of tough love and compassion. For me, he was a mentor, a role model, and most importantly a friend. He absolutely made our Lake County communities healthier and better places; what a beautiful legacy to leave all of us with," said Judge Christopher R. Stride.

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