



John J. Harding

Born: 1920 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Died: November 19, 1979 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Clerk of Court: 1964-1979

Education:

St. Joseph University, B.A., 1950

Temple University School of Law, J.D., 1953

Mr. Harding served as Clerk from 1964 to 1979, a period of fifteen years. At the time of his appointment as Clerk, the following newspaper article was published about the news of his appointment:

Havertown Man Named Clerk of District Court¹

John J. Harding, 44, an attorney who lives at 329 Brookline blvd., Havertown, was appointed clerk of the U.S. District Court, it was announced Wednesday by Chief Judge Thomas J. Clary.

Harding returned to private practice last May after serving 14 months as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Federal Building in Philadelphia.

Judge Clary said Harding's appointment is a departure from the normal procedure of promoting a senior assistant clerk to the post, and it is the first time in 50 years that an attorney was selected.

¹ *Havertown Man Named Clerk of District Court*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Feb. 27, 1964), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/179078475>

“The work is becoming so legally technical that we felt it was preferable to select a lawyer for the position. We have fine people working in the clerk’s office, but we feel that a lawyer should have the job,” the judge said.

The post pays \$18,500 a year.

Harding is a 1952 graduate of Temple University Law School and received his B.A. degree from St. Joseph’s College. A native of Philadelphia, Harding is married and the father of four children. He served with the army medical corps in the Pacific for 41 months during the Second World War.

Harding succeeds W. Halton Span[n], who died last October 11.

At the time of his death in 1979, the following obituary notice appeared that summarized his life and career:

J. Harding, former clerk of U.S. court ²

John J. Harding, 59, an attorney and former clerk of U.S. District Court, died Monday in Lankenau Hospital after a lengthy illness. He lived in Havertown.

Mr. Harding served in the court’s Eastern Pennsylvania District from 1964 until last March.

His appointment broke a tradition of nearly 50 years of filling the clerk position with senior assistant clerks rather than with practicing attorneys.

Mr. Harding served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Philadelphia in 1962 and 1963. He left that post for private practice, then took the court clerk’s job a few months later.

A member of the Delaware County, Pennsylvania and American bar associations, Mr. Harding maintained a private practice at his home for many years.

He was a graduate of St. Joseph’s Preparatory School, St. Joseph’s University and Temple University Law School. He served in the Army during World War II and received five Bronze Stars for his service in the Pacific theater.

He was active in the Knights of Columbus and was a member of the Cardinal Dougherty General Assembly, Fourth Degree.

² *J. Harding, former clerk of U.S. court*, THE PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA) (Nov. 21, 1979), <http://www.newspapers.com/image/167983060>

Surviving are his wife, Edna Hayes Harding; three sons, Dr. John J., Mark E.J. and Justin; a daughter, Pamela Chambers; four brothers, four sisters and three grandchildren.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 11 a.m. Friday at Annunciation BVM Church, 401 Brookline Blvd., Havertown. Interment will be private.