



Thomas N. O'Neill, Jr.

Born: July 6, 1928, in Hanover, Pennsylvania
Died: January 16, 2018, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Federal Judicial Service:

Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
Nominated by Ronald Reagan on June 21, 1983, to a seat vacated by Edward R. Becker.
Confirmed by the Senate on August 4, 1983, and received commission on August 5, 1983.
Assumed senior status on July 6, 1996.
Service terminated on January 16, 2018, due to death.

Education:

Catholic University of America, A.B., 1950
University of Pennsylvania Law School (now Carey Law School), LL.B., 1953

Professional Career:

U.S. Naval Air Reserve: 1948-1953
Law Clerk, Hon. Herbert F. Goodrich, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit: 1953-1954
Law Clerk, Hon. Harold H. Burton, Supreme Court of the United States: 1954-1955
Fulbright Scholar, London School of Economics: 1955-1956
Private Practice, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1956-1983

* * *

Judicial Biography

Judge Thomas N. O'Neill, Jr. was appointed to the Court by President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Judge O'Neill served in the United States Navy Reserve from 1948 to 1953. He received his A.B., magna cum laude, from The Catholic University of America in 1950 and his LL.B., magna cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1953 where he served as Articles Editor of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Order of the Coif. Judge O'Neill served as Law Clerk to Judge Herbert F. Goodrich (U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit) from 1953 to 1954 and to Justice Harold H. Burton (U.S. Supreme Court) from 1954 to 1955. He was a Fulbright Scholar at the London School of Economics from 1955 to 1956, when he also had a desk in Chambers in Lincoln's Inn. In 1956 he joined the Philadelphia law firm of Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads where he served as Chairman of the Litigation Section and as a member of the firm's Management Committee, and specialized in business litigation and the defense of lawyer malpractice cases. Judge O'Neill was counsel to the First and Second Pennsylvania State Legislative Reapportionment Commissions. He was an instructor in Appellate Advocacy at the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1973. He was Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association in 1976 and a member of the American Bar Association House of Delegates in the same year. He was a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a Life Member of the American Law Institute. He was a member of the Governors Trial Court Nominating Commission for Philadelphia County; President of the Pennsylvania Conference of County Bar Officers; President of the University of Pennsylvania Law Alumni Society and President of the University of Pennsylvania Chapter of the Order of the Coif. Judge O'Neill served as a member of the Board of Overseers of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and a Board member of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law. He was an incorporator and a Board member of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia. Judge O'Neill was the founding Chairman of the University of Pennsylvania Law School American Inn of Court. He served on the Codes of Conduct Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States from 1995 to 2001. Judge O'Neill's diverse interests and civic involvement included, among others, serving on the Board of Trustees of the Gladwyne Library Committee, as a Board member of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution, and as President of his beloved Edgemere Club at Silver Lake in Pike County, Pennsylvania, singing in both the Savoy Company and the Counterparts (an a cappella singing group), fishing for trout, playing tennis and being an all-around bon raconteur of very long jokes. Judge O'Neill was a lifelong Anglophile.

*One of the more noteworthy cases he handled involved the government prosecution of Nicodemo Scarfo, the powerful and feared head of the Mafia in Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. In one trial in the Eastern District before Judge O'Neill in 1987, where the Government's main witnesses were convicted murderers, Scarfo was acquitted.

* The following material is excerpted from JUDGE HARVEY BARTLE, III, MORTALS WITH TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITIES, A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, 3-12 (Saint Joseph's University Press, 2011). Reproduced with the permission of the author, Judge Harvey Bartle, III, and the publisher, Saint Joseph's University Press.

Judge O'Neill assumed senior status on July 6, 1996 and continued to serve in that capacity until he passed away on January 16, 2018 at the age of 89.

* * *

Biographical Materials

1. Philadelphia Bar Association Board of Governors Board Resolution – In Memoriam: Thomas N. O'Neill, Jr.