

Court of Appeals of Ohio

JUDGES
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CHERYL L. WAITE
CAROL ANN ROBB
DAVID A. D'APOLITO



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PRESS RELEASE

Celebrating Hon. Judge Gene Donofrio

On Saturday, January 28, 2023, the Seventh District Court of Appeals conducted a special session commemorating the dedication and judicial service of Hon. Judge Gene Donofrio. The family of Judge Donofrio unveiled the judicial portrait during the ceremony. The portrait will hang in the Courtroom near previous benchmates and predecessors and alongside Judge Donofrio's father, Hon. Judge Joseph Donofrio, who also served as an appellate judge at the Seventh District Court of Appeals. Judge Gene Donofrio honorably served the constituents of the Seventh District since 1992 when he was first elected to the appellate bench.

Hon. Judge David A. D'Apolito, Presiding and Administrative Judge for the Court, presided over this special session of the appellate court which included guest speakers to highlight the service of Judge Donofrio. The speakers included previous long-time Court Administrator, Atty. Rob Budinsky; former Mahoning County Commissioner, Mr. Edward Reese; Judge Donofrio's brother, Hon. Judge Anthony Donofrio; past colleague and former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Mary DeGenaro; and former colleague and retired Judge Joseph Vukovich; and current members of the Seventh District judiciary, Hon. Judge Carol Ann Robb and Hon. Judge Cheryl L. Waite as well as Judge D'Apolito.

"It was remarkable that without any collaboration, each guest commemorated Judge Donofrio with similar characteristics – integrity, honesty, fairness. Each of these qualities are the cornerstones of a well-respected jurist. And Judge Gene demonstrated these essential traits throughout his long-standing service to this Court," stated Judge D'Apolito. Judge Donofrio was recognized for initiating the "Back to School" program still in action today at the Seventh District where the judiciary travels to local schools within the eight-county jurisdiction to educate students on the judicial branch. In addition, Judge Donofrio was commended for his role as a teacher, mentor and friend.

Judge Donofrio humbly accepted the accolades and in turn, thanked his colleagues and the staff at the Court for their dedication as well. "It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve as a judge on the Seventh District Court of Appeals," remarked Judge Donofrio. In recalling his years on the bench, Judge Donofrio acknowledged the judiciary may not always agree but they took pride in cultivating a congenial and professional culture.

Judge Donofrio was integral in obtaining funding for and overseeing the construction of the Court of Appeals building located at 131 West Federal Street in downtown Youngstown. Those in attendance appreciated and admired the intricate details of the building from the courtroom to the rotunda to the lobby as attendance swelled beyond the Courtroom corridors.

Judge Donofrio will retire from the Seventh District on January 31, 2023.