

**United States Courts for the Tenth Circuit
Office of the Circuit Executive
1823 Stout Street
Denver, Colorado 80257
(303) 844-2067**

David Tighe
Circuit Executive
(303) 335-2829

Leslee Fathallah
Deputy Circuit Executive
(303) 335-2641

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Dave Tighe
Circuit Executive
303-335-2829

Shari Akers
Assistant to Hon. Monroe G. McKay
801-898-2367

U.S. Circuit Judge Monroe G. McKay Passes Away

- Judge McKay passed away of natural causes at his daughter's home in Orem, Utah on Saturday, March 28.
- The Judge's passing was not related to COVID-19.
- Judge McKay served as a circuit judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit since 1977.
- A public memorial service will be announced at a later time.

OREM, UT – U.S. Circuit Judge Monroe G. McKay passed away peacefully in his daughter's home on Saturday, March 28, 2020. He had been in good health and continued to work until the end.

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Judge McKay was born in Huntsville, Utah to James Gunn and Elizabeth “Bessie” Peterson McKay on May 30, 1928. After graduating from high school in Ogden, Utah, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1946 to 1948. He served as a missionary in South Africa for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) from 1950 to 1952. He married Lucile A. Kinnison on August 6, 1954, and together they had nine children.

Judge McKay was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit by President Jimmy Carter and received his commission on December 1, 1977. He served as the chief judge of the Tenth Circuit from September 16, 1991 until December 31, 1993. On January 1, 1994 he assumed active senior status and continued as such until his passing.

Chief Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit Timothy Tymkovich said, “Judge McKay was a legend on our court. He epitomized the qualities of a great judge – patience, learnedness, open mindedness, and a strong work ethic. He was a leader in the way he approached his judicial duties and an unsurpassed promoter of collegiality and civility among our colleagues.”

Senior Circuit Judge Stephanie Seymour served on the bench with Judge McKay for forty years. She recalled, “Monroe McKay was an outstanding judge, a brilliant raconteur, a wonderful mentor, and a delightful friend. As a colleague, he was a wonderful combination of academic theoretician, seasoned practitioner, and down-to-earth realist with strong convictions. When asked what he liked about judging, he once said: ‘To be a judge is to be given a chance to play a role in the evolution of our society, to try to resolve disputes, and to write principles that will not only resolve disputes fairly but will also help people in shaping their lives. It’s a great challenge to the mind.’ It was an honor and great pleasure to have been Monroe McKay’s colleague and friend. I will miss him greatly.”

During his time on the bench, Judge McKay taught several Department of Justice courses in appellate advocacy for United States Attorneys. He served on the board of the Federal Judicial Center from 1989 to 1991. He was a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the Judiciary's governing body, from 1991 to 1993.

He graduated from Brigham Young University (BYU) with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1957 and received a Juris Doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1960. After graduating from law school, Judge McKay clerked for Arizona Supreme Court Justice Jesse A. Udall from 1960 to 1961. He was an associate with the firm of Lewis and Roca in Phoenix from 1961 to 1966 and again from 1967 to 1974.

During the interim period, he joined the Peace Corps and served as Director of the Corps in Malawi, Africa from 1966 to 1968. He returned to the continent in 1994 to teach law at the University of Nairobi in Kenya for one summer, and again in 1996 when he and his wife served on an LDS mission in Durban, South Africa for over a year.

In 1974, he accepted an invitation from Dean Rex Lee to join the faculty of the newly formed J. Reuben Clark Law School at BYU. He stayed at BYU Law School until his appointment to the federal bench. In 1993 he received an Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from Capital University Law and Graduate Center, Columbus, Ohio.

The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals hears federal appeals from the states of Colorado, Kansas, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming and Oklahoma. The court's primary headquarters are in Denver, Colorado.

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