



Senior Judge

[Senior Judges Directory](#)

Senior Judge Kevin S. Burke

Professional Experiences

JUDICIAL

Chief Judge, Hennepin County District Court, 1992-1996 and 2000-2004

Presiding Judge, Drug Court, Hennepin County District Court, 1997-2000

Assistant Chief Judge, Hennepin County District Court, 1998-2000; 1989-1992

Chair, Minnesota Conference of Chief Judges, 1991-1996

Judge, Hennepin County District Court

Sworn in July 26, 1984

Elected 1986, 1992, 1998, 2004, 2010, and 2016

Retired on Sept. 30, 2020

Appointed and assigned to serve statewide as Senior Judge from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2025.

GENERAL

Partner, Chestnut & Brooks, P.A., 1980-1984

Partner, Ranum, Quackenbush & Burke, 1979-1980

Assistant Public Defender, Hennepin County Public Defenders Office, 1975-1979

Student Director, Legal Aid to Minnesota Prisoners (L.A.M.P.), University of Minnesota Law School, 1974-1975

Administrative Assistant to Chairman, Metropolitan Council, 1973

Research Associate, Minnesota Experimental City, 1972

Intern, Congressman Michael J. Harrington, 1972

Intern, Office of Minnesota Senate Counsel, 1971

Education

University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Reflective Leadership Program 1984-85

Ethics and Public Policy Program 1986

University of Minnesota Law School

J.D., 1975

University of Minnesota

B.A. 1972

Summa Cum Laude, political science

Thesis: "New Towns and Urban Growth Policy"

Awards

2014, Chief Justice Richard W. Holmes Award of Merit

2005, Trial Judge of the Year, by the American Board of Trial Advocates

2004, Public Official of the Year, by "Governing Magazine"

2003, National Center for State Courts William H. Rehnquist Award

2003, Hennepin County Bar Association Judicial Professionalism Award

2002, National Center for State Courts Distinguished Service Award

1998, Lifetime Achievement Award, Presented by H.E.A.R.T. for leadership in the cause of freedom for people afflicted with chemical dependency

1997, U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, Director's Community Leadership Award

1996, Toll Fellow, Selected by the Council of State Governments as one of the future leaders of state government

1995, David Graven Public Service Award, by the Minnesota State Bar Association and presented to the lawyer who best exemplifies the high standards of the profession in combination with a commitment to public or community service

1994, Jack Young Excellence in Corrections Award presented by the Minnesota Association of Community Correction Act Counties

1993, Award of Merit presented by the Society of Professional Journalists for distinguished service in the field of freedom of information

Teaching and Consulting

University of Minnesota Law School, Adjunct Faculty Member

Legal Writing, 1986-1991

Trial Practice, 1992-present

University of St. Thomas Law School, Adjunct Faculty Member

Criminal Procedure, 2003-present

National Center for State Courts, Court Executive Development Program,

On-Line Instructor-Judicial Independence, 2001-2004

William Mitchell College of Law, Adjunct Faculty Member, 1977-1997

Trial Skills, Advanced Trial Advocacy

Cross Examination Skills, Basic Lawyer Skills

University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Reflective Leadership Program, 1986-1990

Frequent Lecturer and Consultant with court systems around the nation and in Canada, Ireland, and India on judicial training, court management and court leadership

Regular Speaker at Minnesota Continuing Legal Education seminars

Sample of recent teachings:

Dealing with Self Represented Litigants (2006-2007)

Judges in the Media (2001-2007)

Cross Examination, DRI Annual Meeting, Puerto Rico (2006)

Performance Management in Courts (2006-2007)

New Judges Orientation (2000-2004)

Minnesota's New Felony DWI Penalty, University of Minnesota Law School (2002)

Strategic Litigation for Public Lawyers (2002)

The Role of the Judge in the Court (2002)

Minnesota Evidence (2001)

Ethics and Bias in the Courtroom (2001)

Alternative Dispute Resolution (2001)

Demonstrative Evidence (2000)

Publications

"An Opportunity for Leadership is Lost," Vol. 55, No. 3, *Drake Law Review*, Spring 2007.

"State v. Dettman: The End of the Sentencing Revolution or Just the Beginning?" Vol. 33, No. 4, *William Mitchell Law Review*, 2007.

"The Tyranny of the "Or" is the Threat to Judicial Independence, Not Problem-Solving Courts," Vol. 41, Issue 2, *Court Review*, Summer 2004.

"Moving From Court Management to Court Leadership," Kevin S. Burke and Michael Labrosse, Vol. 21, *The Court Manager*, Spring 2006.

"Another View of Local Legal Culture: More Than Court Culture," Judge Kevin Burke and Frank Broccolina, Vol. 20, No.4, *The Court Manager*, Winter 2005-2006.

"Judging the Courts," Vol. 48, No. 3, *State News: The Council of State Governments*, March 2005.

"A Judiciary That Is as Good as Its Promise: The Best Strategy for Preserving Judicial Independence," Vol. 41, Issue 2, *Court Review*, Summer 2004

"A Court and a Judiciary That Is as Good as Its Promise," Vol. 40, Issue 2, *Court Review*, Summer 2003

""A Court and a Judiciary That Is as Good as Its Promise,"" Vol. 73, No. 1, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, January/February 2004

"Transforming the District Court.",Vol. 72, No. 1, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, January 2003

"The Hennepin County Drug Court: A Progress Report," Vol. 69, No. 5, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, May 2000.

"Drugs and the Legal System," Vol. 72, No. 1, Spectrum, *The Journal of State Government*, Winter 1999.

"That was Then; This is Now," Vol. 62, No. 5, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, May/June 1993.

"Doing the System Justice: Toward the Creation of a More Healthy Judiciary," Vol. 7, No. 1, *Law & Politics*, April 19, 1992.

"New Chief Judge Eyes Courtroom Changes," Vol. 62, No. 2, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, Nov/Dec 1992.

"Misconduct on the Bench, or . . . What to do With Judges Who are Cantankerous," Vol. 49, No. 4, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, Mar/Apr 1992.

"Chief Justice A.M. 'Sandy' Keith," *The Hennepin Lawyer*, Mar/Apr 1991.

"State on New Course for Sentencing: 'Just Desserts,'" Vol. 6, No. 6, *Minnesota Trial Lawyer*, Sept/Oct 1981.

Public Defender Trial Lawyers Manual, published October 1979 by Minnesota Public Defenders Association and Hennepin County Public Defenders Office through L.E.A.A. grant.

"DWI – A New Law – An Old Approach," Vol. 48, No. 2, *The Hennepin Lawyer*, Nov/Dec 1978.

Media

Meet Your Court (1/2 hour television interview show broadcast weekly)

In Chambers with Judge Kevin Burke (20 minute weekly call-in show on WCCO radio)

Professional Association Memberships

Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, University of Denver, 2006-present

American Judicature Society, Board of Directors, 2004-present

American Judges Association, Board of Directors, 2003-present

National Center for State Courts, Board of Directors, 1995-2001; Strategic Planning Committee, 2000-01; Executive Committee, 2000-01; Research Advisory Committee, 2000-present

The Council of State Governments, Drug Initiative Task Force, 1998

Justice System Journal, Editorial Board, 1997-present

State Board of Public Defense, Member, 1983; Chair 1984-1990

Minnesota Supreme Court Task Force on Trial Court Financing, 1988-1991

Governor's Advisory Counsel on State/Local Relations, Trial Court/Public Defender Finance Committee, 1989

State of Minnesota Task Force on Juvenile Programming, Evaluation and Planning, 1994

Metropolitan Council Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Chair 1977-1981, Member 1981-1984

Metropolitan Health Board, Member 1976-1977

Legal Rights Center, Inc., Board of Directors 1978-83; Secretary 1982-83

Minneapolis Employment Task Force, Member 1981

Hennepin County Bar Association Criminal Law Section, Vice-Chair 1982-83; Chair 1983-85

Federal Public Defender Panel, 1980-1984

Hennepin County Commitment Defense Panel, 1979-1984

Legal Advice Clinic, 1976-1984

Federal Pro Se Panel Project, 1983

Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee, 1983

ABA Death Row Representation Project, 1984

Additional Information

Kevin Burke was a District Judge in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Judge Burke was elected for four terms as Chief Judge and three terms as Assistant Chief Judge. From 1991-1996 he served as the Chair of the Conference of Chief Judges. He chaired the State Board of Public Defense, and was a leader in the effort to improve and expand the state's public defender system.

In 1997 he received the Director's Community Leadership Award from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In 2002 the National Center for State Courts awarded him the Distinguished Service Award. In 2003 he was selected as the William H. Rehnquist Award recipient by the National Center for State Courts. The Rehnquist Award is presented annually to a state judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness and professional ethics. He was awarded Public Official of the Year by Governing Magazine in 2004. In 2005 the Minnesota Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates named him trial judge of the year. He presently serves on the executive committee of the American Judges Association and the advisory board of the University of Denver's Institute for the advancement of the American Legal System.

Judge Burke teaches trial practice at the University of Minnesota Law School and criminal procedure at the University of St. Thomas Law School. He has been a speaker in many states as well as Canada, Mexico, China, India and Ireland regarding improvement in judicial administration.

Assignment History

Civil & Criminal, 1/11/2016-9/30/2020

Family, 4/2008-1/10/2016

Civil & Criminal, 7/2004-3/2008

Civil Practice Pointers & Preferences

About the Courts

- About the Courts
- Careers
- Court Holidays
- Publications and Reports
- Minnesota Judicial Council
- Judicial Officer Directory
- State Court Administrator's Office

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- Court Rules
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- Language Access Plan
- Brochures
- Digital Accessibility

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