

## Court Information Release



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION  
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### **FORMER CHIEF JUDGE JAMES HOLDERMAN TO RETIRE ON JUNE 1, 2015 AFTER 30 YEARS ON THE COURT**

Chief Judge Rubén Castillo announced today that Judge James Holderman has decided to retire from the court on June 1, 2015. Chief Judge Castillo noted that May 1, 2015 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Judge Holderman’s joining the court in 1985. During his 30-year judicial career, Judge Holderman has resolved thousands of cases in all areas of federal jurisdiction, and has conducted hundreds of jury and non-jury trials in both civil and criminal cases.

Among Judge Holderman’s first noteworthy criminal trials in the 1980s were cases from the “Greylord” investigation. Judge Holderman presided over cases in which former Cook County Judges Raymond Sodini, Martin Hogan and James Oakey, as well as a number of lawyers were convicted. In the 1990s, he presided at multiple trials stemming from the prosecution of Chicago street gang members, along with criminal indictments charging Chicagoland organized crime bosses, Albert “Caesar” Tocco and Frank Calabrese, each of whom Judge Holderman sentenced to a prison term in excess of a hundred years, saying each had forfeited his right to live in a free society.

During the early 2000's, Judge Holderman, in addition to handling his assigned civil and criminal cases, served as the judicial coordinator of the court's conversion to the electronic case filing system the court currently uses. He also, at that time, oversaw the education and orientation programs for new judges and law clerks joining the court. Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer succeeded him in that position in 2006.

On July 1, 2006, Judge Holderman became the court's eleventh chief judge, when his predecessor Judge Charles P. Kocoras stepped down. Judge Holderman served as the court's chief judge for the maximum statutory term of seven years until June 30, 2013. As chief judge, he chaired the court's Executive Committee, the court's Security Committee and the court's monthly district judges' meetings. At the national level, for several years he chaired the large-court chief district judges' group at the Annual Conference of Chief U.S. District Judges in Washington, D.C. While serving as chief judge, Judge Holderman oversaw the construction and dedication of the Stanley J. Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse in Rockford, and renovations to the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago. Toward the end of his chief judge term, he guided the court through difficult financial and budgetary times. Throughout his seven-year term as chief judge, he presided during the selection of more than a dozen of the district's grand juries, and he ruled on the United States Attorney's Office's applications for the use of wire taps in specific criminal investigations, including the applications seeking the electronic recording of phone conversations during the investigation of then Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich.

Among the court programs implemented or expanded during Judge Holderman's tenure as chief judge were the expansion of the Settlement Assistance Program on a court-wide basis, the establishment of the Judge James B. Moran Second Chance Re-entry Program, and the dedication of the Judge William J. Hibbler Help Desk at the court. Also, the Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkow Day Care Center was deservedly named in Judge Lefkow's honor during

Judge Holderman's tenure as chief judge. The court's Local Patent Rules, which were drafted by a committee of judges and lawyers chaired by Judge Matthew Kennelly, were promulgated and supplemented during Judge Holderman's tenure as chief judge. Additionally, Judge Holderman, as the court's chief judge, worked to enhance the court's relations with all other branches of local, state and national government, and he was instrumental in the court being designated as a pilot district for the national "Cameras in the Courtroom" project and the ten-year Patent Pilot Program.

Eight of the court's twenty-two active district judges were sworn in during his seven-year chief judge term, including Judges Frederick Kapala, Robert Dow, Gary Feinerman, Sharon Johnson Coleman, Edmond Chang, John Z. Lee, John J. Tharp, and Thomas M. Durkin. Additionally, all of the court's current magistrate judges were either appointed or reappointed while Judge Holderman served as the court's chief judge.

During his judicial career, Judge Holderman was selected multiple times by the United States Judicial Panel on Multi-District Litigation to be the designated U.S. district judge to oversee, consolidate and coordinate pretrial proceedings in MDL cases filed throughout the country. Judge Holderman presided over class actions and multi-district litigation cases involving: antitrust, *In Re: Sulfuric Acid Antitrust Litigation*, (MDL 1536); consumer protection, *In Re: Kentucky Grilled Chicken Coupon Marketing & Sales Practices Litigation*, (MDL 2103), and *In Re: Capital One Telephone Consumer Protection Act Litigation*, (MDL 2416); products liability, *In Re: Aqua Dots Products Liability Litigation*, (MDL 1940); as well as intellectual property, *In Re: Innovatio IP Ventures, LLC, Patent Litigation*, (MDL 2303), an area in which Judge Holderman gained a substantial reputation for his expertise, during his time on the court.

Judge Holderman was honored by Chief Justice John G. Roberts. Jr., in 2011, when Chief Justice Roberts appointed him to serve on the eight-member Federal Judicial Center Board,

overseeing educational programs and research for the federal courts, headquartered in Washington, D.C. and chaired by Chief Justice Roberts. Judge Holderman completed his term on the FJC Board and as Chair of the FJC Board's Research Committee in early April 2015.

Clerk of Court Tom Bruton, who was appointed by the district judges during Judge Holderman's tenure as chief judge, said: "It has been an honor and a privilege to work with Judge Holderman. During his accomplished career, Judge Holderman used his great energy to devote his life's work to being a public servant. He consistently demonstrated his leadership and tirelessly fought to protect those who worked with him and for him. Those of us who are fortunate enough to have worked with Judge Holderman know his passion for standing up for what is right, no matter if it is unpopular or difficult. Judge Holderman's dedication to the court has been remarkable." Bruton concluded, "On behalf of all of the staff of the Clerk's Office, I want to thank Judge Holderman for the friendship, dedication, and guidance he provided us through the years."

Chief Judge Rubén Castillo stated, "Judge Holderman has had an indelible impact on the Northern District of Illinois. He was a great innovator, leader, and trial judge who was widely respected by all the judges who served this court. Judge Holderman's technological savvy was shown in leading our court into the era of electronic filing and in establishing our court as one of the premier districts to litigate complex patent cases. Judge Holderman also showed true compassion to criminal defendants by insisting that federal prosecutors meet the highest ethical standards in the prosecution of criminal cases and by establishing our district's Second Chance Reentry Program." Castillo further stated, "One of Judge Holderman's real passions was education and teaching. He was responsible for leading numerous legal education programs, which enhanced the relationship between the bench and the bar in our district, nationally, and internationally. This talent was recognized by Chief Justice Roberts when he appointed Judge

Holderman to serve on the board of the Federal Judicial Center, which oversees the training of all of our country's federal judges.”

Chief Judge Castillo went on to say, “On a personal note, Judge Holderman did his level best to allow for a smooth transition when he stepped down as Chief Judge and, to his credit, kept actively involved in ensuring the effective operation of our court on key matters, such as electronic discovery and complex patent trial management. In fact, Judge Holderman was recently cited by the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals for his expert handling of a complex patent damage issue.” Castillo concluded, “Our Court will greatly miss Judge Holderman's strong contributions on multiple levels. We wish him well as he takes his unique skills and energy to the private sector.”