Reflections from the Court at the Heart of America: Judicial Oral History Project

An Interview with Judge William J. Bauer:

Reflections on a Six-Decade Career in Public Service in the Law

June 13, 2019 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

RSVP requested to Bauer_RSVP@ilnd.uscourts.gov

Courtroom 2141
Dirksen U.S. Courthouse
219 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois

Reception to follow
Court History Museum
21st Floor

If ever there were a transformational figure in our Court, it is Seventh Circuit Judge William J. Bauer. As the Court celebrates its 200th Anniversary, Judge William J. Bauer will reflect on his 65 years as a public servant, including 48 on the federal bench. Please join us for this special interview conducted by his former colleague at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Senior U.S. District for the Northern District of Illinois Judge Charles P. Kocoras.

Judge Bauer is a Senior U.S. Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, to which he was nominated in 1974.

His career is nothing short of extraordinary. Judge Bauer served in the U.S. Army from 1945 to 1947, before earning his undergraduate degree from Elmhurst College and his law degree from DePaul University College of Law. He worked in private practice and served as an Assistant State's Attorney in DuPage County and as First Assistant State's Attorney before first being elected DuPage County State's Attorney. He served as President of the DuPage County Bar Association in the early 1960s.

He also served as a Circuit Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, DuPage County, before being appointed U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois from 1970 to 1971. As U.S. Attorney, Bauer transformed the office, doubling the size of the attorney staff and hiring future U.S. Attorney and Illinois Governor Jim Thompson, future U.S. Attorneys Samuel Skinner, Dan Webb, and Anton Valukas, and future District Court Judge Charles Kocoras. Under Judge Bauer's leadership, the office doubled the number of indictments, placing a new focus on white collar crime and political corruption.





In 1971, he was nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois by President Richard M. Nixon. He served on the District Court until his elevation to the Seventh Circuit three years later. As a trial and appellate judge, he has had a significant impact on the law.

Nicknamed the "Sage of DuPage," Judge Bauer has served as mentor to many and is highly regarded for his thoughtful counsel as well as his colorful storytelling.