

## STATEMENT



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET, #2548  
CHICAGO, IL 60604**

**Release Date:**  
January 6, 2012

**Contact:** Chief Judge James F. Holderman  
(312) 435-5600

### **STATEMENT OF THE CHIEF JUDGE ON THE PASSING OF DISTRICT JUDGE FRANK JAMES MCGARR**

Judge Frank James McGarr, who served as Chief District Judge of the Northern District of Illinois from 1981 to 1986, passed away on January 6, 2012. He was 90 years old.

Judge McGarr was honored by his colleagues as an accomplished jurist with incisive legal reasoning, a legendary sense of fairness, and an exemplary record of collegiality and professionalism during his 18 years on the federal district bench.

Chief Judge James F. Holderman stated, "Frank McGarr was an outstanding and beloved judge, lawyer and person. His sense of fairness and justice were unsurpassed. He had a calming presence and regality about him that words cannot describe."

Judge McGarr was nominated to the federal bench on September 22, 1970, by President Richard Nixon following a long and distinguished career in private practice and as a government attorney. His legal career began when he enrolled in law school at Loyola University Chicago following his service in the U.S. Army during World War II. In addition to studying law, Judge McGarr worked as an assistant to the President of Loyola University Chicago, allowing him to pay his own way through law school.

Following his graduation from law school in 1950, he entered private practice in Chicago. Four years later he joined the U.S. Attorney's office in the Northern District of Illinois as the First Assistant U.S. Attorney and Chief of the Criminal Division and served in that position until 1958. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he also served as the First Assistant Attorney General of Illinois from 1969-70.

As a jurist, Judge McGarr was renowned for his careful and deliberate legal reasoning. He issued his most notable opinion in 1988, when, in a 459-page ruling, he awarded \$85.2 million against Amoco Corporation for the 1978 oil spill from the supertanker *Amoco Cadiz* off the coast of France. The award was, at the time, the largest ever assessed in an environmental case.

Following his retirement in 1988, Judge McGarr returned to private practice in Chicago with a focus on mediation and arbitration. He lived in the Chicago area with his widow Margaret until his death. His son, Bill, is a respected member of the bar.