

Court Information Release



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Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
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Statement of Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer On the Passing of Judge Blanche M. Manning

Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer announced that Judge Blanche M. Manning passed away on September 20, 2020.

“From the classroom to the courtroom, Judge Manning dedicated her life to serving the community. She made history when she was the first African American woman elected to serve on the Illinois Appellate Court. Throughout her career, she worked closely with young people in underserved communities and lived a life that demonstrated her personal commitment to making the world a better place,” said Judge Pallmeyer

Judge Manning was nominated by President William J. Clinton on May 5, 1994, to a seat vacated by Milton I. Shadur, was confirmed by the Senate on August 9, 1994, and received her commission on August 10, 1994. She assumed senior status on February 1, 2010. Judge Manning retired in 2012.

Judge Manning was born in Chicago in 1934. She earned a Bachelor of Education from Chicago Teachers College in 1961 and her law degree from John Marshall Law School in 1967, a Master of Arts from Roosevelt University in 1972, and a Master of Laws from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1992.

She attended law school while working as a Chicago Public School teacher. Judge Manning served as an Assistant State's Attorney, Cook County, from 1968 to 1973. Starting in 1973 until 1977, Judge Manning served as a supervisory trial attorney at the U.S. Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission. From 1977 until 1978, she worked as a general attorney at United Airlines. From 1978 to 1979, she served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from the Northern District of Illinois. From 1979 until 1986, she served as an associate judge and as a circuit judge from 1986 to 1987, in the Illinois Circuit Court, Cook County. In 1987, she became a Justice for the Illinois Appellate Court, First District, until 1994, when she joined the federal bench. She was the first African American woman to be elected to and to serve on the Illinois Appellate Court.

She also taught at Malcolm X Community College and DePaul University College of Law at various points throughout her career. She was driven by a personal commitment to improving the community and society at large, working closely with youth from underserved communities throughout her career

Judge Manning was an avid jazz musician, playing the bass saxophone and clarinet in several jazz bands. She assembled the band, Diversity, composed of musicians of diverse backgrounds, and was a member of the the Chicago Bar Association Orchestra.

Judge Manning loved her husband William, who passed away in 2004. Our hearts and prayers are with Judge Manning's family and loved ones. We will miss her but are inspired knowing many will continue to follow the example she set of living a life in generous service to community.

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