

David N. Wecht

David N. Wecht was elected to a ten year term on The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in November 2015, and began his service as a Supreme Court Justice in January 2016.

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court is the oldest appellate court in the United States of America, and predates the nation's independence by several decades. The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania was established by the Commonwealth's Judiciary Act of 1722, and traces its roots to the Provincial Appellate Court created in 1684.

Prior to joining the Supreme Court, Justice Wecht served as a Judge of The Superior Court of Pennsylvania from January 2012 to January 2016, and as a Judge on The Court of Common Pleas for Pennsylvania's Fifth Judicial District from February 2003 to January 2012.

From January 2009 to January 2011, Justice Wecht served by appointment of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as Administrative Judge of the Fifth Judicial District's Family Division, which encompasses both domestic relations cases and cases of juvenile dependency and delinquency. As Administrative Judge, Justice Wecht designed and implemented several reforms and innovations, including the Unified Family Court, the local rule on parenting coordination, and improved conflict counsel appointments in juvenile cases.

Prior to taking the bench, Justice Wecht was twice elected as the Allegheny County Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans' Court. In that capacity, he pioneered innovations that included creation of a free will consultation program for seniors and authorship of a state law that prevents accused murderers from controlling their victims' estates.

Justice Wecht is a 1984 *Summa Cum Laude*, *Phi Beta Kappa* graduate of Yale, where he was a National Merit Scholar and earned Yale College Distinction in both history and political science. At Yale Law School, Justice Wecht was selected as Notes Editor of the Yale Law Journal, and as an Editor of both the Yale Law & Policy Review and the Yale Journal of International Law. While a law student, he also volunteered as a certified legal intern in the Office of the State's Attorney in New Haven, Connecticut, and provided pro bono legal assistance to inmates of the Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, New York.

After graduating from Yale Law School in 1987, Justice Wecht served as Law Clerk to U.S. Circuit Judge George MacKinnon on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in Washington, D.C., and received the Award for Distinguished Service in that position. From January 1989 until taking the bench in February 2003, Justice Wecht continuously practiced law, first at Williams & Connolly in Washington, DC, then at Katarincic & Salmon in Pittsburgh, PA, and finally at The Wecht Law Firm in Pittsburgh, PA. He was licensed to practice in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., and was admitted to the bar of numerous state and federal courts, including The Supreme Court of the United States.

A frequent lecturer to bench, bar, and community groups throughout Pennsylvania and in several other states, Justice Wecht also has served for many years on the faculties of the Duquesne University School of Law and the University of Pittsburgh. He has taught at universities in China and in Israel, where he visits regularly to instruct law students. Justice Wecht's extra-judicial writings have appeared in a number of publications, including the Yale Law Journal, Gonzaga Law Review, Widener Commonwealth Law Review, Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, Pennsylvania Bar Quarterly, Pennsylvania Lawyer, Pennsylvania Family Lawyer, Pittsburgh Legal Journal, Tablet, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle, Midstream, and others. Justice Wecht also serves or has served as a Fellow or Member of several professional organizations, including the American Law Institute, the Allegheny County Bar Foundation, and the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges. He has volunteered his time to a number of governmental, civic, and community boards and groups, including the Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership Center, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Domestic Relations Procedural Rules Committee, the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee of the Community College of Allegheny County, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges Commission, and others.

Justice Wecht was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He grew up in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill section, and graduated from Shady Side Academy in 1980. Justice Wecht and his wife Valerie were married at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Congregation, on whose Board of Trustees he served. Justice Wecht and his wife continue to live in Allegheny County, where they raised four children, all of whom are now adults.

(7/18/24)