

ANNOUNCEMENT
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

Peter W. Hall, a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, a former United States Attorney for the District of Vermont, a prominent figure in the Rutland, Vermont, community, and a beloved colleague, family member and friend, died on March 11, 2021 in Rutland. He was 72 years old. His passing was announced by Chief Judge Debra Ann Livingston.

Speaking on behalf of the Court, Chief Judge Livingston said, “Judge Hall was our beloved colleague, and this is a grievous loss for our Court and for all of our judges. Over the course of nearly seventeen years on the Court of Appeals, Judge Hall distinguished himself as a thoughtful and humane jurist. He was generous with his colleagues and ever considerate in matters both big and small. Judge Hall was committed to public service and taught us all by his example. He was a kind and very dear friend. This is a sad day for the judges of the Court of Appeals.”

Judge Hall was nominated to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by President George W. Bush and he entered judicial service in July 2004. He served with distinction on that Court, which hears appeals from the federal district courts in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont. The Court of Appeals is regarded as one of the nation’s finest courts, with special prominence in commercial and financial cases, as well as criminal cases on appeal from the districts that the Court serves. Judge Hall brought to the Court a wealth of relevant experience.

Judge Hall was born on November 9, 1948, in Hartford, Connecticut, at Hartford Hospital, where his grandfather was chief of staff. His father was an educator whose responsibilities took him to the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut, and on to Montclair Academy in New Jersey, where he served as headmaster. The family took up residence in Vermont when Judge Hall was eleven and Judge Hall, whose great-great-grandfather, Peter Washburn, served as the State’s governor, always considered himself a native Vermonter. Judge Hall attended Hotchkiss and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Morehead Scholar. After graduation and a year as a high school teacher, he returned to the University for a master’s degree and a stint as assistant dean of students.

Judge Hall attended Cornell Law School where he served as president of the Legal Aid Clinic. He graduated *cum laude* in 1977. The next year, he served as law clerk to Judge Albert Coffrin of the District of Vermont. Following his clerkship, Hall joined the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Vermont. The office then had four attorneys (including the United States Attorney). After three years, the office grew to eight attorneys and Judge Hall became First Assistant United States Attorney. In 1986, after eight years as a prosecutor, Judge Hall left government service to form Reiber, Kenlan, Schwiebert, Hall and Facey P.C. The firm eventually grew to fourteen attorneys—large by Vermont standards. Its practice included commercial and tort litigation, attorney malpractice defense, the defense of

state prosecutors accused of ethical violations, as well as a significant mediation practice. During this time Judge Hall served as president of the Vermont Bar Association and of the Rutland County Bar Association. In 1997 he was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers.

In the fall of 2001, Judge Hall was confirmed by the Senate as United States Attorney for the District of Vermont. During his three-year tenure, as the office thrived, he was proud of its significantly expanded community outreach and particularly its work to help address the State's growing substance abuse problems. Stephen Flynn, a dear friend of Judge Hall's from his days in government service commented: "As I have gotten older, I have found that I have fewer heroes in my life—the inevitable outcome of becoming more skeptical with age and with the inability of most of us to keep doing the right thing year after year. But Peter Hall has always been and will always be one of my true heroes." And Judge Hall was equally dedicated to the work of the Court, to its obligation of evenhanded service to all and to its commitment to professional excellence. Judge Hall knew who he was and he knew what was important.

One of Judge Hall's passions was service to the international judicial community. From 2007 to 2016 he was a delegate from the Federal Judge's Association to the International Association of Judges. In this capacity he traveled the world, working with foreign judiciaries on matters of administration, independence, continuing education and governmental relations.

Judge Hall left a lasting mark on a generation of law clerks. The bonds were close and the affections were mutual. One recently reminisced: "One winter morning we were working away in chambers and he had not turned up. Not unusual but we were all wondering if something had happened. He rolled in midday with his dirty work pants and torn flannel shirt—in other words, no more haggard than usual. He explained that he had taken his truck through the woods that morning after taking care of the horses, but had gotten stuck. Luckily he had an axe, so it was only a matter of chopping down a few trees to put under the truck tires for traction. He freed himself and made his way into chambers like it was nothing: just another day on the Second Circuit."

Judge Hall is survived by his beloved wife, Maria Dunton, by five children, and five grandchildren.

Peter Hall lived a life of fidelity to principles, kindness to individuals, and service to the human community. He will be greatly missed.