

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Delaware Superior Court's senior Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr. retires
after nearly 30 years on the bench.

The Honorable William C. Carpenter, Jr., who is currently the most senior judicial officer on the Delaware Superior Court, will be stepping down from the bench on Dec. 31, 2022, after nearly 30 years as a Superior Court judge.

"While it is always difficult to walk away from a job that you have found so rewarding, my time has come," wrote Judge Carpenter in his October letter to Gov. John Carney, stating his intention to retire, after more than 47 years of public service as a judge and federal prosecutor. "I want to thank you for the confidence you have shown in me and for allowing me the privilege of serving as a jurist in what I believe is the best judiciary in the nation."

During his tenure Judge Carpenter presided over a number of significant criminal and civil cases including the recent prosecution of Delaware State Auditor Kathleen McGuinness for official misconduct, the cases against 19 individuals accused in the 2017 riot at the Vaughn Correctional Center that resulted in the death of Sgt. Steven Floyd and the 2011 prosecution of pediatrician Earl Bradley for the rape and sexual abuse of his young patients.

Judge Carpenter also oversaw a number of death penalty cases including the prosecution of Brian Steckel, who was executed in 2005 and was the last person put to death by the state before Delaware's death penalty law was declared unconstitutional in the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2016. He also served for six years in the Superior Court's Complex Commercial Litigation Division, handling cases involving significant corporate disputes.

"Judge Carpenter has devoted decades of his life to the administration of justice," said Superior Court President Judge Jan R. Jurden. "He has served this Court, the Judiciary and our State with the utmost distinction, and his legacy will be one of selfless service, leadership, adherence to the rule of law, integrity, collegiality, and hard work. I am so grateful to have had the privilege of working with him the last 20 years. He is an esteemed colleague who will be sorely missed."

Carpenter has served under four Chief Justices and was first nominated to Superior Court in 1993 by then-Gov. Tom Carper and was reappointed in 2005 by then-Gov. Ruth Ann Minner and again in 2017 by Gov. John Carney.

Prior to joining the Superior Court, he was the U.S. Attorney for Delaware from 1985 to 1993 – serving under Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton – and prior to that, he had been an Assistant U.S. Attorney for eight years.

In 2020, Carpenter was tasked with leading the Delaware Judiciary's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and led the efforts that produced a detailed, phased plan to put new health

and safety measures in place that allowed the courts to safely re-open and operate during the pandemic and eventually transition back to normal operations.

In June 2021, Judge Carpenter was awarded the Delaware State Bar Association's highest honor – the First State Distinguished Service Award – in recognition of the respect he has brought to the legal profession and the Delaware Bar through his “good citizenship in civic and humanitarian service” and his many years advancing “the ideals of citizen participation and community accomplishment.”