

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MAINE

The District of Maine was one of the original thirteen district courts established by the Judiciary Act of 1789. A district court was created in each of the eleven states that had ratified the Constitution by September, 1789, as well as in Maine (then part of Massachusetts) and Kentucky (then still part of Virginia). Although the Court sat primarily in Portland, sessions were also held in Pownalborough and Wiscasset during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1843, a term of court was first authorized to be held in Bangor. There was only one judge in the District until an additional judgeship was authorized in 1978. A third judgeship was authorized in 1990.

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**David Sewall** was the first District Court Judge for Maine, appointed by President Washington on September 26, 1789. A graduate of Harvard College and an experienced judge, Judge Sewall, who was born in York, Maine, previously served as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of Massachusetts from 1777-1789. He resigned from the District Court on January 9, 1818.

At the time **Albion Keith Parris**, from Hebron, Maine, was appointed the second District Judge in Maine, he was only 30 years old and was serving as a member of Congress. He resigned from the Court in 1821 and served six terms as Governor of the State of Maine and later, served as Comptroller of the Treasury through the administrations of Presidents Van Buren, Harrison, Tyler and Polk. He was a graduate of Dartmouth College class of 1806.

**Ashur Ware** was appointed to the Court by President Monroe in 1822 and served with distinction, particularly in the field of admiralty law, for 44 years, until 1866. Born in Sherborn, Massachusetts and a graduate of Harvard College, Judge Ware practiced law in Portland and was among the most active “Maine Separatists” during the second decade of the 1800’s.

The fourth District Judge **Edward Fox**, a native of Portland, served from 1866 until his death in 1881. He was a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School. A pre-eminent trial lawyer with an extensive practice, Judge Fox had served as City Solicitor for Portland and a state legislator prior to his appointment to the Court.

**Nathan Webb**, a lifelong resident of Portland, served in the Maine State Legislature, as the Cumberland County Attorney, and as the United States Attorney, prior his appointment in 1882 to the federal bench by President Arthur. Judge Webb served for more than 20 years, resigning in 1902. He was a member of the class of 1846 at Harvard College.

**Clarence Hale**, the successor of Judge Webb, was born in Turner, educated at Bowdoin College, and came to Portland in 1871 to begin his legal career. He served as the City Solicitor for Portland for 3 years and in the Maine House of Representatives prior to his appointment as District Judge by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902.

President Harding appointed **John Andrew Peters**, a lifelong resident of Ellsworth, to the District Court in 1922. A graduate of Bowdoin College, he studied law at the office of his cousin, Andrew Wiswell, who would later become chief justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. A former Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, Judge Peters served 5 terms in Congress prior to his appointment to the Court. He served on the Court for 25 years.

**John D. Clifford, Jr.**, who served as the United States Attorney for the District of Maine from 1933 – 1947, was appointed District Judge by President Truman in 1947 and held that office until his death in 1956. Judge Clifford practiced law in Lewiston and had been active in the Democratic Party prior to his federal appointments. He was a graduate of Bowdoin College and the Georgetown Law School.

**Edward T. Gignoux**, was appointed in 1957 by President Eisenhower as the ninth District Judge. Once seriously considered for a nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court, he presided over several cases of national interest, including the contempt trial of the “Chicago 7” and the bribery trial of a federal judge, during his celebrated 30 year career. Judge Gignoux graduated from Harvard College and from Harvard Law School.

Waterville native **George J. Mitchell** was the United States Attorney when he was appointed to the Court by President Carter in 1979 when a second judgeship was authorized for the District of Maine. He served only 6 months before resigning to accept appointment to the United States Senate to fill the unexpired term of Senator Muskie, who had become Secretary of State. Senator Mitchell is a graduate of Bowdoin College and Georgetown Law School.

**Conrad K. Cyr** served with distinction as the United States Bankruptcy Judge in Bangor for 20 years before being appointed by President Reagan in 1981 to succeed Judge Mitchell. In 1989 Judge Cyr was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Born in Limestone, Judge Cyr is a graduate of Holy Cross College and Yale Law School.

President Reagan appointed **Gene Carter** as the District of Maine’s twelfth judge in 1983 when Judge Gignoux assumed senior status. Born in Milbridge, Judge Carter was educated at the University of Maine and the New York University School of Law. Prior to his appointment, Judge Carter had a successful law practice in Bangor and also served as an Associate Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

Born in Canada, **D. Brock Hornby** is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario and the Harvard Law School. A naturalized American citizen, Judge Hornby was appointed District Judge by President Bush in 1990. Prior to his appointment, he practiced law in Portland and had served as the District of Maine’s first full-time United States Magistrate and as an Associate Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

When a third judgeship was authorized, **Morton A. Brody**, who like his two immediate predecessors had previously served as an Associate Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, was appointed District Judge by President Bush in 1991. He also previously served as a Justice on

the Maine Superior Court. Born in Lewiston, Judge Brody was a graduate of Bates College and the University of Chicago Law School. Judge Brody died in 2000.

**George Z. Singal** was appointed by President Clinton in 2001 to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Brody. Born in an Italian refugee camp in 1944, Judge Singal is a naturalized American citizen. His family emigrated to Bangor in 1948, where he lived and practiced law until his appointment to the Court. He is a graduate of the University of Maine and the Harvard Law School.

Bangor native **John A. Woodcock**, a graduate of Bowdoin College and the University of Maine School of Law, was appointed District Judge by President George W. Bush in 2003 after Judge Carter assumed senior status. A longtime civil litigator, Judge Woodcock practiced law in Bangor prior to his appointment to the bench.