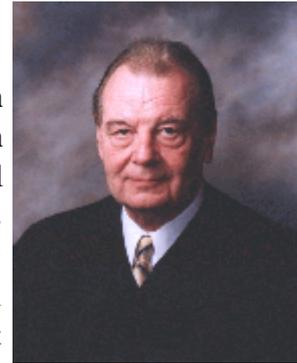


## PRESS RELEASE

From: U.S. District Court, Texas Eastern

U.S. District Judge John H. Hannah Jr., chief judge of the Eastern District of Texas since June 2001, died early this morning in Florida of an apparent heart attack. Hannah, 64, was attending a meeting of the Judicial Conference Committee on Defender Services in Miami, Fla., and was accompanied by his wife, U.S. Magistrate Judge Judith K. Guthrie. The funeral is tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday at First Baptist Church in Tyler. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Burks-Walker-Tippitt in Tyler.



Judge Hannah will be missed by his wife, Judge Guthrie, his father, John Hannah, Sr., of Diboll, his brother James Hannah, a professor at Texas A&M University, his son John III, who works for the National Federation of Wildlife in Austin, Texas, his grand-daughter Rebecca of Austin, and his secretary of many years, Glenda Shelton of Tyler.

U.S. District Judge Thad Heartfield of Beaumont has taken Judge Hannah's place as the chief judge of the Eastern District. Judge Heartfield has been a federal judge since March 1995.

Judge Hannah was appointed to the federal bench in Eastern Texas by then-President Clinton on March 11, 1994. He became chief judge of the court on June 17, 2001. He had a long history of public service, beginning with a stint in the U.S. Navy from 1958-1961. He also served as state representative from the Fifth District (Angelina County) from 1967-73. He then was elected as district attorney for Angelina County and served from 1973-75. In 1975, Judge Hannah was legal counsel for Common Cause of Texas. After two years of private practice, Judge Hannah was appointed U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, a position he served in until 1981. Judge Hannah practiced law in Tyler and Lufkin from 1981-91. He was appointed Secretary of State for the State of Texas in 1991 and served until 1994.

Before becoming Secretary of State, Hannah focused primarily on federal trial work in his law practice. He defended clients in several long-term RICO cases and tried several federal civil rights cases representing plaintiffs and defendants. He supervised 19 lawyers and their support staff as United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas. Judge Hannah considered one of his most significant litigated matters to be his prosecution in 1979 of one of the first criminal RICO cases ever brought in federal court. After a trial that lasted several weeks, the defendant was found guilty. Hannah also successfully argued the case before the Fifth Circuit.

A December 16, 1996 article in the *Texas Lawyer* included interviews with 56 local attorneys regarding Judge Hannah. The article accurately described him as "an easygoing judge with a good grasp of the law." Here are some lawyer quotes regarding Judge Hannah from that article:

"You know, if they would let me select federal judges, all of them would be just like John Hannah.

He is a guy with trial experience."

"From the standpoint of a criminal defense attorney all you really want is a judge who will give you an even playing field, let you lawyer, and it's up to you to out-lawyer the government. He gives you that playing field, and that's both in civil practice as well as criminal practice."

"He's a real good seat-of-the-pants lawyer. He calls the shots right."

"He knows the criminal law inside and out. He is top-notch."

"He has good legal skills- an outstanding judge and advocate."

"He is kind to lawyers and hasn't lost his sense of humor. Be straightforward with him."

"He has no bias. He is fair. He is impartial."

A few days ago Judge Hannah called Judge Wendell Radford and told him that one of the first things he wanted to do when he retired was "buy a pick-up truck and show Rebecca (his granddaughter) America." According to Chief Judge Heartfield, who has spoken to all the judges of the Eastern District this morning, the unanimous view is that the court has lost "a great friend, jurist, chief judge and statesman, but it is John Hannah as a friend that we will miss the most."