



Supreme Court of Illinois

July 11, 2025

FIRST DISTRICT APPELLATE COURT JUSTICE THOMAS E. HOFFMAN PASSES AWAY

First District Appellate Court Justice Thomas E. Hoffman passed away on July 4, 2025. Justice Hoffman had served on the First District Court since 1993.

Justice Hoffman was born in Chicago on Dec. 23, 1947. He earned his undergraduate degree from Loyola University in 1969 and his J.D. from the UIC School of Law (formerly John Marshall Law School) in 1971.

“The sudden passing of a judge as loved as Thomas Hoffman is not just a loss to me but a loss for everyone who appreciates a high-quality justice system,” said Illinois Supreme Court Justice Joy V. Cunningham, who served on the appellate court with Justice Hoffman from 2006-2022. “He was absolutely a judge’s judge. I feel very privileged to have worked with him and he absolutely made me a better judge. I will miss him profoundly.”

He served as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Chicago from 1971 to 1976 before entering private practice.

Justice Hoffman was appointed as an associate judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1984 and elected as a Circuit Judge in 1988. He was assigned to the First District Appellate Court in 1993 and elected as an Appellate Judge in 1994. He was retained in 2024 with over 76% of voters selecting yes.

“Justice Hoffman was a judge of the highest standards. He had an exceptional work ethic, was highly intelligent and had the utmost respect for the office,” said Justice Mary Kay Rochford, who served with Justice Hoffman on the First District Appellate Court. “His decisions without exception were well written and reasoned, concise and clear. Justice Hoffman was a superb colleague and mentor and will be sorely missed by the members of the First District.”

Justice Hoffman received the John Marshall Law School’s “Distinguished Alumni” award in 1988 and was president of the school’s alumni association in 1996. He was a member of the Justinian Society of Lawyers and the Chicago Inn of Court.

“I clerked for Justice Hoffman from 1995-1999. He was a tough but fair boss,” said Marcia M. Meis, Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. “Justice Hoffman loved the law and had a brilliant legal mind. He was also very funny and a great storyteller. I owe my career at the AOIC to him, as he recommended me for an AOIC attorney position when I didn’t even know what the AOIC was! I am a better lawyer for having known him.”

He is survived by his wife, Judge Margarita Kulys Hoffman (ret.), and his four children. A “Celebration of Life” will be held at a future date.

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: James Brunner, Public Information Officer for the Illinois Supreme Court at 217.208.3354 or jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov)