



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### Chief Justice Ketchum named a Vice President of Conference of Chief Justices

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia Supreme Court Chief Justice Menis Ketchum has been elected a Vice President of the Conference of Chief Justices. He is the first West Virginian to serve on the Conference of Chief Justices' board in its almost 70-year history.

The position became effective in late July during the Conference of Chief Justices' annual meeting in Wyoming. The Conference of Chief Justices is made up of the Chief Justices of each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The group promotes the interests and effectiveness of state judicial systems by developing policies and educational programs designed to improve court operations. The Conference of Chief Justices also acts as the primary representative of the state courts before Congress and federal executive agencies.

Chief Justice Ketchum succeeds Nevada Supreme Court Justice James W. Hardesty in the position.

"I was really honored and thrilled," Chief Justice Ketchum told *The [Huntington] Herald-Dispatch*. No Chief Justice from West Virginia has ever been selected as an officer or to serve on the board of directors. "I really was honored that they would select me when it's been the bigger states that have always gotten people appointed to office or on the board."

Chief Justice Ketchum was elected to a full twelve-year term on the Supreme Court of Appeals on November 4, 2008. He also served as Chief Justice in 2012. He wrote and compiled Pattern Jury Instructions, which were released in February. Judges use the instructions as jury charges and are in plain English that is easily understood by lay jurors.

The Conference of Chief Justices is working on solving jail bond system issues that may cause low-income residents to spend more time in jail for non-violent minor crimes than those affluent enough to post bond.

"We're working on a way to solve that problem and eliminate that," Chief Justice Ketchum told the newspaper. "It's really an injustice to poor people charged with minor non-violent crimes."

Chief Justice Ketchum also said he wants to find a way to collect up to \$40 million in outstanding traffic fines in West Virginia. "It's one thing that they're not being paid by the people who owe them, and it certainly hurts the financial status of West Virginia," he told *The Herald-Dispatch*.

Chief Justice Ketchum was born in 1943 in Huntington and was raised in Wayne County. He was educated in Wayne County public schools before attending Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Chief Justice Ketchum returned to West Virginia to attend West Virginia University College of Law. While in law school he was a contributing writer and associate editor of the *West Virginia Law Review*.

He received his law degree in 1967 and returned to Huntington to join his father, Chad W. Ketchum (1911-1998), in the practice of law with the firm of Greene, Ketchum & Baker. He practiced at that firm and its successors, eventually becoming the senior partner, until his election to the Court. Chief Justice Ketchum's law practice included insurance defense, personal injury, and criminal defense.

He was recognized continuously from 1989 to 2008 in The Best Lawyers in America and was a member of the Leading Honoraries, the American College of Trial Lawyers, and the American Board of Trial Advocates. Throughout his legal career he published legal articles and presented numerous continuing legal education seminars.

Chief Justice Ketchum also served as a member of the Board of Governors of Marshall University from 2002 until his campaign for the Court, and served as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Board from 2003 until 2008. At the time of his election to the Court, he served on the Boards of the Public Defender Corporations for the Sixth and Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuits. He previously served on the Huntington Urban Renewal Authority, participated in the statewide Vision Shared Health Care Team, and the Governor's Mine Safety Task Force.

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