



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

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PASSING OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT J. KELLEHER, UNITED STATES SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Chief Judge Audrey B. Collins announced the passing of Senior District Judge Robert J. Kelleher, who died Wednesday morning, June 20, 2012. Judge Kelleher, who was 99 at the time of his death, was the oldest-serving federal judge in the nation.

Judge Kelleher was nominated as a United States district judge for the Central District of California by President Richard M. Nixon, and received his commission on December 21, 1970. He assumed senior status on March 5, 1983.

Judge Kelleher received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Williams College in 1935 and his Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School in 1938. After graduating from law school, he began his legal career as a corporate trial attorney in New York City, then served as an associate attorney with the U.S. Department of the Army in Los Angeles from 1941 to 1942. After serving in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1943 to 1945, Judge Kelleher worked in private practice before returning to public service in 1948, serving as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California until 1951. He returned to private practice in 1951, and practiced in Beverly Hills until his appointment to the bench in 1970.

A former tennis player and official, Judge Kelleher was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2000, and was presented with an official Hall of Fame ring on July 3, 2011. During his long association with the sport, which began as a ball boy at Forest Hills, he won the Canadian mixed doubles championship in 1947 with his wife Gracyn Wheeler Kelleher, who predeceased him in 1980, and was the non-playing captain of the triumphant 1963 U.S. Davis Cup team. He also served as President of the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association, now known as the U.S. Tennis Association, from 1967 to 1968. As the USLTA's principal delegate to the International Lawn Tennis Federation, the worldwide governing body of tennis, he was instrumental in making open tennis a reality in 1968. In later years he continued to be an ardent supporter of the sport, serving as president and on the board of

directors of the Southern California Tennis Association and remaining involved with the national organization.

Upon learning of Judge Kelleher's death, Chief Judge Audrey B. Collins issued the following statement:

"Today our court has lost a great judge and a dear friend. Judge Kelleher contributed to the life and history of the court, and continued to handle cases well into his 90's. In addition, his institutional memory of events often contributed greatly to the administration of the court. It was a privilege to hear Judge Kelleher recount the history of this court, his experiences during World War II, and how he helped to bring tennis into the modern era. Although Judge Kelleher had been ill for some time, he was a fighter until the end, enjoying life and loving his family and this court."

Judge Kelleher is survived by his son, R. Jeffrey Kelleher; daughter, Karen Kathleen Kelleher; and grandchildren, Catherine Kelleher Kay, Robert Vincent Kelleher, and Sarah Donovan King.

In lieu of funeral services, arrangements for a memorial service are pending.

In honor of Judge Kelleher, the flags outside the courthouses of the United States District Court for the Central District of California will be flown at half staff.

TERRY NAFISI
DISTRICT COURT EXECUTIVE