



Michael P. Donnelly

JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT OF OHIO



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CONTACT:

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Justice Michael P. Donnelly is the 160th justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio. He took office in January 2019, following his statewide election in November 2018 to a full term on the Court.

Prior to joining the state Court, Justice Donnelly served as a judge on the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, General Division for 14 years. He was elected to the seat in November 2004 and re-elected in 2010 and 2016. In addition, from 2010 to 2017, he was one of five judges on Cuyahoga County's Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court, which oversees criminal cases involving defendants who suffer from severe mental illness or developmental disabilities.

Before serving as a member of the local judiciary, Justice Donnelly was an assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor from 1992 until 1997. He then went on to practice civil litigation for seven years, first practicing at an insurance-defense firm, and later joining a firm where he represented injured workers and other plaintiffs in asbestos litigation, personal injury lawsuits, and workers' compensation claims.

Justice Donnelly served on the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism from 2007 to 2012 and chaired the Commission during his final year. During his tenure on the Commission on Professionalism, he helped establish the highly successful Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program, which has received national accolades. He also spent more than a decade personally mentoring new lawyers.

In 2011, Justice Donnelly was one of two Ohio judges invited to participate in a two-year program created by the National Judicial College as part of their "Innovative Leadership Skills for Leader-Manager Judges Project," which aimed to empower future judicial leaders across the United States to improve the functioning of the justice system.

Justice Donnelly accepts numerous speaking invitations throughout the year to advocate for comprehensive data-driven criminal justice reform, plea-bargaining reform, and the elimination of wrongful convictions. In 2023 he was invited to speak and participate at the inaugural meeting of the Plea Bargaining Institute at Belmont University College Of Law.

Justice Donnelly has also been a faculty member of the Ohio Judicial College, teaching both attorneys and judges at numerous continuing-legal-education seminars on professionalism and issues of criminal and civil justice reform and procedural fairness.

Justice Donnelly has served as a member of both the Ohio State Board of Bar Examiners and the Ohio Jury Instruction Committee. He was appointed by the chief justice to the Ohio Supreme Court Death Penalty Task Force in 2013. During 2021 and 2022 he served as the Ohio Supreme Court's liaison to the Task Force on Conviction Integrity and Post-Conviction review. The task force issued its formal recommendations in August 2022 for improving the post-conviction process for claims of innocence.

Justice Donnelly is a proud recipient of the 2015 Honorable William K. Thomas Professionalism Award from the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, the 2017 Public Service Award from the Ohio Association of Civil Trial Attorneys, and the 2020 Alumni of the Year Award from Cleveland State University College of Law. He was inducted into Cleveland State University College of Law Hall of Fame in 2020.

Justice Donnelly served on the board of the Cleveland Baseball Federation, which provides baseball and softball summer programs at no charge to children living in lower-income areas of Cleveland and East Cleveland. He also was involved with the development of the Western Reserve Fire Museum, which educates children about fire safety. Justice Donnelly serves as a board member of Chagrin Arts, a nonprofit founded in 2007 that promotes arts programming and is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in all its forms.

He is a graduate of Cleveland's St. Ignatius High School and John Carroll University, and he received his Juris Doctor degree from Cleveland State University College of Law. He was admitted to the practice of law in Ohio in 1992.

He and his wife, Nancy, reside in Cleveland Heights. They have two children.