

ANNOUNCEMENT

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

George C. Pratt, a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit from 1982 to 1995, a District Judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York from 1976 to 1982, a beloved colleague, family member and friend to many died peacefully on December 8, 2025 in Syosset, New York at age 97. His passing was announced by Chief Judge Debra Ann Livingston.

Judge Pratt, who enjoyed a reputation as a careful, hard-working judge and, before that, a superlative lawyer, led a full and productive life in the law which he cherished. Judge Pratt's former law clerk, Dennis Glazer, a retired Davis Polk partner, remarked upon the judge's passing that he was an "outstanding judge" on the courts he served and "an even better person and role model to hundreds of colleagues and young lawyers." Glazer shared that "Judge Pratt's commitment to justice and the rule of law, which he so ably advanced, will live on in the many people who worked with him, appeared before him, and were represented by him during his long life at the law."

His colleague on the Court of Appeals, Judge John M. Walker, Jr., who later inherited Judge Pratt's chambers said, "George Pratt was a truly gifted appellate judge. He was balanced and fair and without ideological predispositions. He was deeply thoughtful and wrote his opinions efficiently and concisely. He said what needed to be said and no more. He was fully cognizant of the legal landscape in which the opinion would stand as precedent, but he distinguished proper legal opinions, written to be understood by both busy legal practitioners, judges and the intelligent layperson, from those that looked more like law review articles, lengthy, replete with footnotes and with interesting (to some but not all) digressions – opinions that were frequently written with an eye to impressing those in the academic community." Judge Pratt's views on this matter were exemplified by his annual footnote analysis of colleagues' opinions at the end of each term, which was intended to discourage footnotes in general. He, or more precisely his law clerks, would examine the entirety of the court's opinions for the term (no small task) and rate each judge's "FPP" or footnotes per page. Such was his gentle form of shaming those with higher FPPs, but these efforts ultimately stood for what he believed would benefit the greater good. The results of his chamber's labor were not for public consumption yet were effective in reducing the number of footnotes in the court's judicial opinions.

Judge Pratt was born on May 22, 1928 in Corning, New York and raised in a family with a judicial ancestral tradition. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all state court judges in Steuben County. As a youngster, he was a standout high school student-athlete both on the basketball court and on the football field where he played quarterback. He also was an Eagle Scout, sang in the church choir and became proficient at playing both violin and trombone.

Judge Pratt graduated from Yale University in 1950 and Yale Law School in 1953. He then served as a law clerk to Judge Charles W. Froessel on the New York State Court of Appeals. In 1955, he began law practice and, in 1960, established his own law firm on Long Island, today known as Farrell Fritz. Judge Pratt's practice as an attorney and later as a judge was noteworthy and not simply for his hard work. As a trial and appellate attorney, he served as attorney for several Nassau County villages, a school attorney for the Syosset Central School District, and special counsel for the Nassau County Board of Supervisors. As special counsel, Judge Pratt defended the Board's weighted-voting representation, a system ultimately upheld in the Supreme Court of the United States. As a district judge, he presided over the "Agent Orange" products liability class action and several "ABSCAM" criminal prosecutions. Even as an appellate judge, he continued to preside over exceptionally complicated trials, sitting by designation on the District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

After he retired from the bench in 1995, Judge Pratt returned to private practice with Farrell Fritz, where most of his time was taken up as an arbitrator or mediator for large commercial disputes. He also taught law at St. John's and Hofstra law schools and was a full-time law professor at the Touro Law Center for 10 years. Judge Pratt taught civil procedure, civil rights litigation, federal courts, and appellate advocacy. He co-authored "Jury Charges in Section 1983 Cases" and was the named author of volumes 19, 20, and 20A of Moore's Federal Practice, covering appeals in the federal courts. From 1989 to 1996, Judge Pratt served on the Standing Committee on the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the United States Judicial Conference, and, from 1964 to 1976, he was a member of the New York State Judicial Conference's Committee to advise and consult with that Judicial Conference on the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

While living on Long Island, Judge Pratt was active in the Community Church of Syosset, where he served on the church's Board of Stewards and anchored the bass section of the church's

choir. Later, he derived great satisfaction from singing with the North Shore Community Chorus and the Huntington Men's Chorus.

Judge Pratt was a consummate family man. In 1952, while in law school, he married Carol Hoffman, a top-tier duplicate bridge player. Together they raised two sons and two daughters which led to numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren, all of whom adored "Papa Judge." After Carol died in 2016, Judge Pratt married Susanah "Sue" Kuchenbrod with whom he enjoyed his remaining years.