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Court of Appeals Mourns the Loss of Retired Judge Gary Andrews

Atlanta, April 5, 2020 – With great sadness, the Court announces the loss of retired Presiding Judge Gary Blaylock Andrews, who died on Saturday, April 4, 2020. He and his family will be in our prayers during this difficult time.

The judge served the Court of Appeals for 28 years, from his election in 1990, as Chief Judge from 1997 through 1998, to his retirement in 2018. He earned the respect and friendship of his fellow judges.

“Judge Andrews’ passing is a milestone. He was an able jurist, and joined the court right around the time I started regularly appearing before and writing about it. Years later, when I joined the court myself, I found him to be kind and wise man beneath his gruff exterior,” said Chief Judge Christopher J. McFadden.

“Even though we often had different views of the law, Judge Andrews was a valued colleague for many years, and I am very sorry to hear of his passing,” said Presiding Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes. “I wish his family comfort during this most difficult of difficult times.” Presiding Judge M. Yvette Miller also respected Judge Andrews’ work and valued his friendship. “Judge Andrews was always a consummate gentleman, always so very nice and decent. He always looked out for me.”

“Judge Andrews was more like a friend than a boss,” said his former staff attorney Joe Chandler, who worked for the judge during his entire tenure on the Court of Appeals. “He would kid that I continued to call him ‘Judge’ even though I knew him better than most people who called him ‘Gary.’”

Judge Andrews was raised in Chickamauga and continued to live there even while commuting regularly to the Court of Appeals in Atlanta. He remained in his hometown after he retired in 2018, living on his grandparents’ farmland, where he could look north across the horse pasture and see Lookout Mountain.

“In law and in life, it’s the people you meet and the friends you make who make a difference,” said Georgia Supreme Court Justice John J. Ellington, who served with Judge Andrews on the Court of Appeals for almost 20 years. “Gary Andrews made a difference to the State of Georgia, the State Bar, and his home community in Chickamauga.”
Judge Andrews joined the State Bar in 1971, worked as an Assistant Attorney General under Arthur K. Bolton, hung out his shingle in Atlanta and Chickamauga, and in 1980 was elected to the Superior Court of the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit (Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, and Walker Counties).

Although Judge Andrews was re-elected to the Superior Court bench in 1984, the following year he accepted an appointment from Governor Joe Frank Harris to the Georgia Public Service Commission. He was elected to that office in 1986, served as the Commission Chair for two years, and in 1990 campaigned successfully for a seat on the Court of Appeals, a seat to which he was re-elected four times.

Judge Andrews remained connected to his fellow jurists after his retirement from the Court of Appeals. “He was a terrifically supportive friend and colleague. I will miss him terribly,” said Justice Michael P. Boggs, who also served with Judge Andrews on the Court of Appeals before taking the bench on the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Presiding Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard said, “Judge Gary Andrews was my colleague, my dear friend, and a cherished mentor. I will miss him more than I can express in words.”

Judge Andrews is survived by his three children: Elizabeth Paige Andrews, Gary B. (‘Blake”) Andrews, Jr., and Blane A. Andrews.