

# NEWS from THE THIRD CIRCUIT

December 21, 2021

PHILADELPHIA – Chief Judge Michael A. Chagares of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit is pleased to announce that the lobby of the Joseph F. Weis, Jr. Courthouse in Pittsburgh will be named in honor of Third Circuit Judge D. Brooks Smith. A ceremony dedicating the Smith Lobby will be held at the Weis Courthouse on April 21, 2022.

“Brooks Smith is a giant in the law and his tireless service and leadership have touched so many,” said Chief Judge Chagares. “He has served with great distinction as chief judge in two courts and as a member of both the Judicial Conference and the Executive Committee of the Conference. He also performed crucial work as chair of the Judicial Conference’s Space and Facilities Committee, leading an ambitious nationwide project to reduce the judiciary’s footprint and reduce costs, while securing funding to replace aging court facilities and building eleven new courthouses. These achievements only begin to describe Judge Smith’s impact on our system of justice. He has forged a truly incredible legacy. The dedication of the Smith Lobby is a fitting honor for a judge who has devoted his life’s work to promoting the rule of law and contributing so much to the people of Western Pennsylvania, the Third Circuit, and the United States.”

D. Brooks Smith has been a judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals since 2002. He recently concluded a five-year term as chief judge of the Court before electing senior judge status. Judge Smith served as a judge of the District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania from 1988 to 2002, and was chief judge of that Court at the time of his appointment to the Court of Appeals. Judge

Smith is the only judge in the history of the Circuit to have served as both a chief district judge and chief circuit judge.

“We enthusiastically join our Court of Appeals colleagues in recognizing the decades of public service that have been the hallmark of Judge Brooks Smith’s life,” said Judge Mark R. Hornak, the current Chief Judge of the District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. “For more than 30 years, his service as a judge and chief judge of our Court, and then as a judge and chief judge of the Court of Appeals, has been exemplified by his unwavering dedication to a fundamental mission of the federal courts – the commitment to providing equal justice under law. His wide-ranging service to the federal judiciary has advanced that mission in many ways, and this recognition is a timely reflection of those many contributions.”

Judge Smith’s legacy of service in his community runs deep. Born in Altoona, where he has been a life-long resident, he is a graduate of the Dickinson School of Law. Before his appointment as an Article III judge, Judge Smith served as an Assistant District Attorney in Blair County; a Special Assistant Attorney General for Pennsylvania; the District Attorney for Blair County; and a Judge of the Blair County Court of Common Pleas. Judge Smith is an active mentor and teacher at Penn State University Law School, where he has been an adjunct professor since 2011 and was recently honored with an appointment as the Law School’s Distinguished Jurist in Residence.

In addition to his service on both the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference and the Judicial Conference’s Space & Facilities Committee, Judge Smith was appointed, shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the federal judiciary’s national COVID-19 Task Force. He also served on the Judicial Conference’s Advisory Committee on Criminal Rules and participated in

numerous rule of law programs in Eastern European countries. Judge Smith currently chairs the Third Circuit's Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee, which promotes civics education and presents programs designed to foster an understanding of the role of the federal judiciary in communities across the Third Circuit.

The Third Circuit is comprised of the federal courts within Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For further information, contact Joel McHugh, Deputy Circuit Executive, at [joel\\_mchugh@ca3.uscourts.gov](mailto:joel_mchugh@ca3.uscourts.gov).