

**UNITED STATES COURT OF
APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2022

Dolores K. Sloviter, former Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, whose career as a trailblazing lawyer, law professor, and esteemed federal appellate judge for nearly thirty-seven years left an indelible imprint on both the practice of law and the federal judiciary, died on October 12, 2022, after a long illness. Judge Sloviter was 90 years old.

Speaking on behalf of the Court, current Third Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Judge Michael A. Chagares said, “Judge Sloviter was brilliant, fearless, and cared deeply about our Court. She was the first woman to serve on our Court and the first (and thus far only) woman to serve as our Chief Judge. Judge Sloviter was a remarkable individual whose many achievements in the law continue to command the admiration and respect of her former students, law clerks, and colleagues on the bench. She inspired generations of women to follow in her footsteps as lawyers and judges. My colleagues and I deeply mourn Judge Sloviter’s passing and cherish her legacy as a member of our Court and the Third Circuit legal community.”

Dolores Korman Sloviter was born September 5, 1932, in Philadelphia, the only child of Jewish immigrants from Poland. Judge Sloviter graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls and enrolled at Temple University, where she majored in Economics and received an undergraduate degree in 1953. At a time when few women were encouraged to enter the legal profession, Judge Sloviter enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, where she was one of eight women in a class of 132 students. Judge Sloviter excelled academically in law school and received her LL.B. degree in 1956. Despite graduating with sterling credentials, she initially was offered jobs as a law librarian. Undeterred and courageous – two hallmarks of her long career – Judge Sloviter forged a successful path as a litigation lawyer and became one of the first female partners at a major Philadelphia law firm. Judge Sloviter was then part of a first-wave of

women to enter the newly opened door to legal academia when she joined the faculty of the Temple University School of Law in 1972. She became a full professor at Temple in 1974, teaching courses in antitrust law, civil procedure, and elder law.

In 1979, President Carter appointed Judge Sloviter to fill a newly created seat on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, making her the first female judge on the Court. Beginning in 1991, she served a full seven-year term as the Court's first female Chief Judge. True to her commitment to the Court and its mission, Judge Sloviter continued to carry a full case load as an active judge for another fifteen years following her tenure as Chief Judge. Judge Sloviter decided to assume senior judge status on June 21, 2013 – exactly thirty-four years to the day from when she began her judicial tenure. She took inactive status in April 2016.

During her time as Chief Judge, Judge Sloviter formed a “Task Force on Equal Treatment in the Courts,” which examined issues of gender and racial bias in the Third Circuit courts. Through her leadership, the Court adopted a resolution which created mechanisms that continue to help ensure fairness for litigants, employees, and staff. Judge Sloviter's caring and concern for equality in the workplace was reflected in her own practices in chambers. Judge Sloviter split one of her clerkship positions into two, part-time positions so that attorneys with families would not be forced to forego a prestigious clerkship opportunity. Her legacy of caring has shaped generations of lawyers who had the great fortune to be her students, interns, and law clerks.

In 1996, Judge Sloviter served on a special three-judge panel that was convened one week after President Clinton signed the Communications Decency Act (CDA), part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In a unanimous decision authored by Judge Sloviter, the panel ruled that the CDA was unconstitutional on its face. Judge Sloviter's opinion in *ACLU v Reno* established important First Amendment protections for the internet. Over the course of her judicial career, Judge Sloviter authored approximately 808 precedential opinions.

Judge Sloviter was an adviser to the American Law Institute's Federal Judicial Code Revision Project and became a life member of the ALI. She was also an active member of the National Constitution Center's Board of Directors.

Judge Sloviter received an award from the Fulbright Commission for Educational Interchange to lecture in Santiago, Chile, and she was conferred honorary degrees by several leading institutions, including Widener University School of Law, the University of Richmond, Temple University, and the Dickinson School of Law.

Judge Sloviter was the first federal judge to receive the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Judicial Award, and she was awarded the James Wilson Award for Service to the Profession by the University of Pennsylvania Law School Alumni Society. The Philadelphia Bar Association conferred its prestigious Sandra Day O'Connor Award upon Judge Sloviter. Judge Sloviter was a frequent guest speaker at seminars and colloquia throughout the country and internationally, and was often asked to speak on issues concerning the federal courts, federal procedure, and women in the legal profession. Judge Sloviter made a career of breaking down barriers for women in the law and changing the status quo.

Judge Sloviter was predeceased by her husband of thirty-four years, Dr. Henry A. Sloviter. She is survived by her daughter Vikki Sloviter, son-in-law Justin Wheeler, and four grandchildren.