

PRESS RELEASE

January 15, 2015

Chief United States District Judge K. Michael Moore announces that the Southern District of Florida is hosting a reception at the Fort Lauderdale Courthouse in honor of Judge Jose A. Gonzalez, Jr.'s fifty years of state and federal judicial service. Judge Gonzalez was appointed to the federal bench by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. He is the first and the longest serving judicial officer of Hispanic heritage in the Southern District of Florida. He assumed senior status on November 30, 1996.

Judge Gonzalez was born on Thanksgiving Day, 1931, in Tampa, Florida. He was educated in the Tampa public schools and graduated with honors from Hillsborough High in 1949. He received his B.A. and his J.D. from the University of Florida in 1952 and 1957, respectively. Judge Gonzalez served in the United States Army on active duty from 1952 to 1954 during the Korean War. He was discharged as a First Lieutenant, and later attained the rank of Captain in the Army Reserve.

After graduating from law school, Judge Gonzalez moved to Fort Lauderdale to work for the law firm Watson, Hubert & Sausley, where he remained until December 1964. From 1961 to 1964 he also served as a part-time Assistant State Attorney for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit.

In 1964, Judge Gonzalez was appointed Circuit Judge of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, a position to which he was reelected twice. He served two terms as Administrative Judge of the Civil Division, and is a past chief judge of the Circuit. Judge Gonzalez remained on the state bench until he was nominated to the federal bench in 1978.

Judge Gonzalez has had a long and distinguished career on the federal bench. Notably, he presided over all of the civil, criminal and bankruptcy litigation associated with the collapse of ESM Government Securities, Inc., which, at the time, was one of the largest securities fraud cases ever to come before a federal court. He also presided over the prosecutions collectively referred to as "Operation Court Broom," which involved public corruption in the Dade County courts. Judge Gonzalez is the author of over 300 published legal opinions and four of his cases were eventually the subject of written opinions by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In addition to serving in the Southern District of Florida, Judge Gonzalez has served as an Associate Judge of the Fourth District Court of Appeals of Florida on several occasions. He has also served by designation on the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

The Judges of the Southern District of Florida have established the Hon. Jose A. Gonzalez, Jr. "Unsung Hero Award" presented annually to a member of the Federal Bar for unselfish service to the Court in Judge Gonzalez's honor. The Southern District of Florida looks forward to having Judge Gonzalez on the bench for many years to come.

Please contact Steven M. Larimore, Court Administrator · Clerk of Court, at (305) 523-5001 if you have any questions.

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