

**Statement of the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia on the  
Passing of Senior U.S. District Judge Jackson L. Kiser**

**October 21, 2020**

ROANOKE, VA—Earlier this morning, our dear friend and colleague, the Honorable Jackson L. Kiser, 91, passed away after a brief illness. Judge Kiser served this court and the citizens of the Western District of Virginia for nearly 40 years.

A native of Welch, WV, Judge Kiser graduated from Concord College in 1951, before enrolling at Washington and Lee University School of Law, where he received his LL.B. After law school, he served as an officer in the U.S. Army JAG Corps, and later, in the U.S. Army Reserves, attaining the rank of Captain.

After his military service, Judge Kiser worked as a U.S. Commissioner for the U.S. District Court and an Assistant United States Attorney in the Western District of Virginia, before entering private practice in Martinsville. Over the next 20 years, Judge Kiser practiced general civil and criminal litigation, trying cases throughout the Commonwealth and establishing a reputation as a skilled trial lawyer.

In November 1981, President Ronald Reagan nominated Judge Kiser to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, and the Senate confirmed his nomination the following month. During his long tenure, Judge Kiser was the presiding judge in the Danville Division, and he ably served as Chief Judge from 1993-1997. He assumed senior status in 1997, but continued to maintain an active docket in Danville for the next 23 years.

Over the course of his career on the bench, Judge Kiser presided over thousands of civil and criminal cases, including trials in *United States v. Virginia*, the landmark case involving the Virginia Military Institute's male-only admissions policy, and *United States v. Morrison*, a matter involving Congress' authority to enact the Violence Against Women Act. Both cases were eventually decided by the U.S. Supreme Court and are regularly taught in law schools across the country.

Judge Kiser had a demanding standard for all those who appeared in his court, including himself. Generations of lawyers who appeared before Judge Kiser, including several who later became his judicial colleagues, fondly recall his kind and gentlemanly demeanor, steel-trap legal mind, and genuine delight during an effective cross examination. His devoted Danville court staff, including his courtroom deputy Heather McDonald and career law clerk Scott Jones, will remember his quick wit, kindness, and devotion to the cause of justice.

Judge Kiser is survived by his wife, Carole, to whom he was married for 66 years. Judge Kiser is also survived by his children, Bill, John, and Beth; his four grandchildren, Jack, Olivia, Linus, and Augusta; and his brother, William.