

Leighton Award For Justice Burke



The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission will honor Anne M. Burke, former Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, for her outstanding career and contributions as a jurist. The presentation of the award will take place during a special session of the Illinois Supreme Court at 2 p.m. on Oct. 9th, in the Illinois Supreme Court Court-room, 160 N. LaSalle st. A reception hosted by the Illinois State Bar Association will follow the presentation ceremony.

She will receive The Honorable George N. Leighton Justice Award, which is given to a person

whose career represents the highest standards of the legal profession and is dedicated to public service. In 2009, the inaugural award was given to its namesake, Judge George N. Leighton of the Northern District of Illinois.

Burke served as a justice on the Supreme Court of Illinois from 2006 to 2022, including a three-year term as Chief Justice from 2019 to 2022. She oversaw the Illinois Judicial Branch's management of the COVID pandemic, launched a listening tour hosted by the Illinois State Bar Association to learn about issues on a local level, created a task force for the Illinois Courts to be prepared for the implementation of the SAFE-T Act to eliminate cash bail and oversaw the first judicial redistricting in 60 years.

During her time on the Illinois Supreme Court, Justice Burke participated in more than 1,100 cases and authored 164 opinions of the court, 64 dissenting opinions and 30 special concurrences. In *Hayashi v. Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation*, Justice Burke authored the opinion affirming the constitutionality of the professional regulation law that health care licenses can be revoked without a hearing for those convicted of criminal battery against a patient.

Justice Burke was the lone dissenter in the 2013 case, *People v. Martinez* regarding double jeopardy. In a 6-1 decision, the Illinois Supreme Court ordered a new trial for Esteban Martinez with Burke dissenting, arguing that since "the jury was impaneled and sworn, and jeopardy attached, the State may not reprosecute a defendant for the same offenses." Martinez appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court, which, in a per curiam decision, agreed with Burke's dissent.

Born and raised on Chicago's South Side, Justice Burke started her career teaching physical education at the Chicago Park District. There she took part in a new program that offered children and young adults with mental and physical differences the opportunity to learn the skills to participate in sports. She championed the idea of a city-wide competition that ultimately led to the creation of the Chicago Special Olympics in 1968, which grew to become the International Special Olympics, reaching tens of millions of people from 192 nations across the globe.

She married attorney Edward M. Burke in 1968, and they are the parents of five children and grandparents of nine. She graduated from DePaul University in 1976. Four years later, she enrolled in the Chicago-Kent College of Law. Graduating in 1983 at the age of 40, she obtained her law license and opened a law practice focusing on cases of child neglect, abuse, delinquency, and custody.