

## **CHIEF JUSTICE HANNAH ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION**

Chief Justice Jim Hannah announced on August 13<sup>th</sup> that he is resigning, effective August 31<sup>st</sup>, because of health problems. In a prepared statement, he said, "In recent weeks I have been challenged by a significant health issue. Having the utmost respect for my job as Chief Justice and the business of the court, I have made a decision to tender my resignation effective at the end of August 31, 2015 to focus full-time on addressing my immediate health condition."

He was first elected to the Supreme Court in 2000 and was elected chief justice in 2004. His current term would have ended December 31, 2016. Governor Hutchinson will make an appointment to complete this term. Prior to his election to the Supreme Court, he served for many years as a Chancery Judge. He is currently the longest-serving member of the state judiciary, having remained on the bench for over thirty-seven years.

In 2014, Chief Justice Hannah was named Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and President of the Conference of Chief Justices. Upon learning of his resignation, a joint statement was issued by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) President David Gilbertson, South Dakota Chief Justice, and President of the National Center for State Courts, Mary McQueen:

"It was with a sense of sadness that we learned of Chief Justice Hannah's retirement. We have worked closely with him over the years through his leadership positions with CCJ and the National Center. Not only has he advanced justice for the people of Arkansas, but the public as a whole. Chief Justice Hannah believes Americans deserve a justice system that is not just fair and impartial, but that is accessible, efficient, and inclusive. He has dedicated his professional life to that philosophy and the people of Arkansas and the country are better off because of his tenure."

Chief Justice Hannah was appointed by U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court Judicial Conference Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction, and was appointed by President Barrack Obama to chair the State Justice Institute. The State Justice Institute in Washington, DC issued the following statement:

"The Board and staff of the State Justice Institute commend Chief Justice Hannah for his many years of service to the Arkansas Judiciary, and his unwavering commitment to equal justice for all." (Jonathan Mattiello, Executive Director)

Gov. Hutchinson said in a prepared statement: "Even in his resignation, the chief justice has placed the courts and the people of Arkansas above his personal interests, and, while I recognize this is a tough decision for him to make, he made it for the right reasons and we are forever grateful for his dedication to the rule of law."

## **Chief Justice Hannah's Resignation Statement**

"The people of Arkansas elected me to our state's highest court in year 2000. I will be forever grateful. It is with great pride and pleasure that I have served on the Arkansas Supreme Court for over fourteen years, the last ten in the role of Chief Justice. In recent weeks I have been challenged by a significant health issue. Having the utmost respect for my job as Chief Justice and the business of the court, I have made a decision to tender my resignation effective at the end of August 31, 2015 to focus full-time on addressing my immediate health condition. There is no greater honor that a person can receive than to have another person place his or her trust and confidence in you. I want to thank the people of Arkansas who placed their trust and confidence in me and allowed me to serve them on their Arkansas Supreme Court. I sincerely appreciate the excellent staff that has worked with me. I have been privileged to work with some of the best district court judges, circuit court judges, appellate court judges, and justices in the country. I have also been privileged to work with our excellent Administrative Office of the Courts, its leadership and dedicated employees. Lastly, thank you to my wife Pat for her sacrifice and support."