

News Release



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New Jersey Judiciary Launches Website Detailing Supreme Court History

The New Jersey Judiciary today unveiled a website that chronicles the rich history of the state's highest court dating to the adoption of the current state constitution in 1947.

The New Jersey Supreme Court Virtual Museum, created and maintained by the New Jersey Supreme Court Historical Advisory Board, includes speeches, correspondence, videos and photographs of the court, and key figures in its history.

The site also includes detailed biographical profiles of the first six chief justices to serve under the 1947 New Jersey Constitution. The Supreme Court Historical Advisory Board also has partnered with the Rutgers Oral History Archives to conduct in-depth interviews of living chief justices and associate justices.

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner formed the court's Historical Advisory Board last year to preserve the history of the state's highest court. Chaired by retired Supreme Court Associate Justice James H. Coleman Jr., the board is composed of sitting and retired justices and judges as well as law school professors and deans and attorneys.

"The Virtual Museum is part of an ongoing effort to preserve our history and educate the public about the work and legacy of the Supreme Court," Chief Justice Rabner said. "We hope visitors to the site find it informative and engaging."

New Jersey has had a Supreme Court since before it became a state on Dec. 18, 1787. However, the Supreme Court did not become the state's highest appellate court until 1948. New Jersey's first constitution in 1776 included a Court of Appeals, which was then the state's court of last resort. The state constitution of 1844 established the Court of Errors and Appeals as the state's highest court, deriving its name from its function of hearing appeals and correcting errors of lower courts.

That court was abolished after voters approved the 1947 state constitution establishing today's New Jersey Supreme Court, which held its first session in its courtroom in the Statehouse Annex in Trenton on Sept. 15, 1948. Photographs of that courtroom are featured on the new website.

In addition to maintaining the Virtual Museum, the Historical Advisory Board will develop short- and long-term projects to educate the public, preserve court-related materials and artifacts and commemorate significant court-related milestones.

The Virtual Museum can be accessed here: <http://www.njcourts.gov/courts/supreme/vm/scvirtual.html>

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