

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

Chambers of
John M. Gerrard
Chief Judge



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SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senior District Judge Laurie Smith Camp passed away unexpectedly and peacefully at her home overnight. Judge Smith Camp was appointed to the District Court by President George W. Bush in 2001, and was confirmed to that position by the Senate by a unanimous vote of all 100 senators. She was the first woman appointed as a U.S. district judge in Nebraska. She assumed senior judge status in 2018, but continued to carry an active caseload.

Chief Judge John M. Gerrard said of Judge Smith Camp: "Judge Smith Camp was more than an outstanding judge and leader on this Court. To many of us, she was a mentor, true friend and confidante. Our prayers go out to Judge Smith Camp's family and to everyone who has been personally touched by the wisdom and grace of this fabulous woman."

Judge Smith Camp was born in Omaha on November 28, 1953. She graduated with distinction from Stanford University in 1974, and earned her law degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 1977, where she served as editor-in-chief of the Nebraska Law Review. Before being appointed to the bench, she was in private practice in Nebraska and Kansas between 1977 and 1980, served as General Counsel to Nebraska's Department of Corrections from 1980 to 1991, headed the Nebraska Attorney General's Civil Rights Section from 1991 to 1995, and was Chief Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Matters from 1995 to 2001. In 2019, Judge Smith Camp was elected to serve as the 2020-2021 president of the Omaha Bar Association. And in addition to her accomplished legal career, she, along with her three business partners, initiated and sustained the development of Lincoln's historic Haymarket district from 1982 to 2001.

Judge Smith Camp is survived by her two children, Jonathan and Abby.

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Chief Judge John M. Gerrard has issued the following statement regarding the death of Senior U.S. District Judge Laurie Smith Camp:

"The entire federal court family is devastated by the sudden and unexpected loss of Senior Judge Laurie Smith Camp. Judge Smith Camp was not just an outstanding judge and a true leader on our Court, but she was a gracious mentor, friend, and confidante to so many individuals in both the courthouse and the community. She truly was the Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the Nebraska legal community. And I say that with the highest regard to both of these amazing women. Like Justice Ginsburg, Judge Smith Camp was a pioneer and advocate of women's rights, a wonderful mother, and she did it all with a quiet grace, compassion and leading by example. Her legacy is profound and her historical mark on Nebraska's federal court is permanent."

John M. Gerrard
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