



## 2018: The 50th Anniversary of the Michigan District Court System

We recognize and honor the 5  
individuals who have served as judges  
at the 47th District Court.

### Judge Marla E. Parker, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge: 1993 – Present

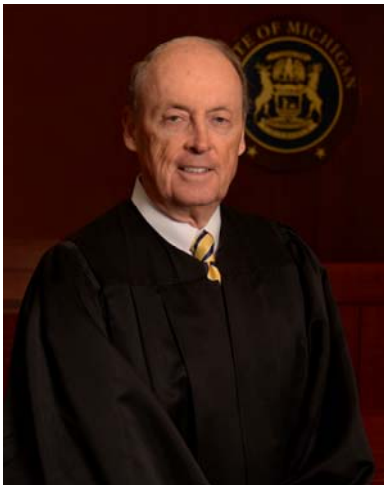
Judge Marla E. Parker was elected in November 1992 to succeed Judge Margaret G. Schaeffer, and is the longest serving judge in the history of the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court, having won election to her 5<sup>th</sup> full term as judge in 2016. Born in Detroit, Judge Parker is a graduate of the University of Michigan and of Wayne State University Law School. Prior to her election as judge, she maintained a private law practice and served three years as a 47<sup>th</sup> District Court magistrate.

An early advocate of the therapeutic court concept, Judge Parker began the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Sobriety Court in 2005 with a focus on protecting society and reducing crime by targeting substance abuse and addiction through intervention, treatment and offender accountability. Through 2017, the program had seen over 80 successful graduates. In 2014, Judge Parker was honored with the Drug Court Hero Award from the Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals.

Active in professional associations and community groups throughout her career, Judge Parker has served on the Board of the Oakland County Bar Association, is a past-president of the Oakland County District Judges Association, a member of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families, and is a founding board member of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Community Foundation.



Marla E. Parker  
District Judge, 1993 - Present



James B. Brady  
District Judge, 2003 - Present

### Judge James B. Brady, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge: 2003 – Present

Judge James B. Brady was elected in November 2002 to succeed Judge Frederick L. Harris, after serving 17 years as a magistrate for the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court. Born in Detroit, Judge Brady graduated of the University of Michigan and of Wayne State University Law School.

In 2003, Judge Brady initiated the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court's collections program and show cause docket, which has become a model for other courts around the state. He worked with the Michigan Judicial Institute to create a collections training video for judges and later served as a judicial member of the Supreme Court's Ability to Pay Workgroup.

In 2016, Judge Brady was honored by the Oakland County Bar Association with the Distinguished Public Servant Award for his contributions to the community, including his leadership in organizing the 2016 Oakland County Bench-Bar Conference. He is a past-president of the Oakland County District Judges Association and served on the State Bar of Michigan's Character and Fitness Committee.

Locally, he is a past-president of both the Farmington Xemplar Club and the Farmington Optimist Club. He is also past-president of the Farmington High School Hockey Boosters Club and a long-time coach with South Farmington Baseball.



Frederick L. Harris  
District Judge, 1989 - 2002

**Judge Frederick L. Harris, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge: 1989 – 2002**

Judge Frederick L. Harris was appointed by Governor James Blanchard to succeed retiring 47<sup>th</sup> District Judge Michael J. Hand in May 1989. He was elected to a first full term beginning in January 1991. Born in Los Angeles on May 31, 1930, Judge Harris served as a naval aviator with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air Wing in the Korean War, and continued his service as a pilot with the Marine Corps Reserve, retiring with the rank of Colonel in 1983. He had a long and distinguished record as a public servant and attorney. He served as an assistant prosecuting attorney for Wayne County and as a special assistant attorney general for the State of Michigan. In addition, he served on the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, was chairman of the Oakland County Road Commission, and was a founding director of the Farmington Hills Police Benevolent Foundation.

During his tenure on the bench, he led major administrative changes at the court and was a primary force behind getting the need for a new courthouse facility on the public agenda. In May 2005, the new 47<sup>th</sup> District Courthouse was dedicated in his honor.

Judge Harris died at the age of 74 on July 21, 2004.

**Judge Margaret G. Schaeffer, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge: 1975 – 1992**

Judge Margaret G. Schaeffer was elected to a newly created judgeship at the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court in November 1974, taking the bench January 1, 1975. Born in Detroit in November 1920, she graduated from the University of Michigan in 1943 and with distinction from the University of Michigan Law School in 1945, one of only two women graduates in her law class. After serving clerkships for judges in Michigan and California, she joined her sister, (future U.S. Court of Appeals Judge) Cornelia G. Kennedy, in practice with their father, prominent Detroit attorney, Elmer Groefsema. She was appointed to the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board for the State of Michigan in 1971. Upon joining the bench, Judge Schaeffer and her sister became the first sisters to serve as judges in the United States.

Prior to her election as judge, Judge Schaeffer served on the Farmington Township Board of Trustees and the Farmington Hills City Council. She helped shape the future of the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court, as she appointed as magistrates future judges Marla E. Parker and James B. Brady. Upon retirement, Judge Schaeffer was succeeded in office by Judge Parker.

Judge Schaeffer died at the age of 92 on April 11, 2013.



Margaret G. Schaeffer  
District Judge, 1975 - 1992

**Judge Michael J. Hand, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge: 1969 – 1989**



Michael J. Hand  
District Judge, 1969 - 1989

Judge Michael J. Hand was the first judge of the 47<sup>th</sup> District Court and served until his retirement in May 1989. Born in Toronto, Canada, on October 16 1918, he came to the United States in 1924. A graduate of the University of Detroit, he served in the armed forces during World War II from 1941-1946. He was discharged as a Lieutenant Colonel, having served as the Adjutant General and Inspector General of the 314 Bomb Wing of the United States Air Force. He graduated from the University of Detroit Law School in 1948 and went into the private practice of law, eventually becoming senior partner of the firm Hand, Sullivan, Hull and Kiefer. He began his career as a jurist in 1964, serving first as Associate Municipal Judge for the City of Farmington, and then as Municipal Judge in 1966.

During his tenure as District Judge, he was a member of the Executive Board of the Michigan District Judges Association, serving as its President in 1975.

Judge Hand died at the age of 80 on June 7, 1999.