



225th Anniversary
1789-2014



Martin Thomas Manton

Born:

August 2, 1880
New York, NY

Received Commission:

August 23, 1916

Service terminated due to appointment in 1918 to the United States Circuit Court for the Second Circuit.

Died:

November 17, 1946
Fayetteville, NY

Martin Thomas Manton was the son of Michael and Catherine Mullen Manton. He was educated in public schools in Bayside, NY, followed by Columbia University, from which he received an LL.B. in 1901. In the same year, he was admitted to the bar and began practicing law. Manton's private practice lasted approximately 15 years: 12 years as a solo practitioner, and the remainder in the firm of Cockran & Manton. He was successful and enjoyed a good reputation, thereby amassing considerable wealth.

He was appointed to the District Court in 1916. At the time, Judge Manton was the youngest federal judge in the United States. He was quickly elevated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, where he eventually became the senior judge.

Outside of his professional life, Judge Manton had considerable business investments, both during his time in private practice and while on the bench. He suffered tremendous losses during the Great Depression, leaving his businesses heavily in debt and him personally owing over \$500,000.

In early 1939, Manhattan District Attorney Thomas Dewey sent a letter to the House Judiciary Committee outlining misdeeds of Judge Manton while in office. He resigned and was indicted by U.S. Attorney for the S.D.N.Y., John T. Cahill. Former judge Manton was tried and convicted and a specially constituted panel of the Circuit affirmed. He was remanded to prison, where he served seventeen months.

His tenure on the District Court was brief, less than two years. On the Circuit, he wrote a dissent from the Circuit decision that allowed the importation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, that had been accused of being obscene. He was Senior Judge of the Circuit during the construction and opening of the Courthouse at 40 Foley Square, now known as the Thurgood Marshall Court House.

Sources:

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, available at <http://www.fjc.gov/>.

"Ex-Judge Manton of U.S. Bench Here" New York Times, November 18, 1946.