



225th Anniversary
1789-2014



Colleen McMahon

Born:

1951
Columbus, OH

Received Commission:

October 22, 1998

Colleen McMahon was appointed to the bench of the Southern District of New York by President William Jefferson Clinton; she was confirmed on October 21, 1998.

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Judge McMahon graduated from The Ohio State University in 1973, *summa cum laude* and with distinction in Political Science. She attended Harvard Law School from 1973–1976, graduating *cum laude*. She spent all but one of the next nineteen years at Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, where in 1984 she became the first woman litigator elected to partnership. During 1979–80, Judge McMahon took a ten-month leave of absence from the firm to serve as the Speechwriter/Special Assistant to Donald McHenry, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

During her years in private practice, Judge McMahon chaired the Committees on State Courts of Superior and Women in the Profession of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, and served as a member of other Association committees, including the Committee on the Judiciary. For three years, Judge McMahon was an ABCNY representative to the House of Delegates of the New York State Bar Association. She also served in various civic capacities and as Vice Chancellor of the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

In 1993, Judge McMahon was asked by Chief Judge Judith Kaye to chair a commission to reform New York's jury system (The Jury Project). The group's report, which Judge McMahon wrote, was praised by *The New York Times* as "making a persuasive case for serious attention in Albany," and nearly all of its 82 substantive recommendations for reform were eventually implemented.

In June 1995, Governor George Pataki nominated Judge McMahon to the New York Court of Claims. Designated as an Acting Justice of the State Supreme Court, she conducted felony trials in Manhattan until her appointment to the federal bench three years later.
