



225th Anniversary
1789-2014



Thomas Day Thacher

Born:

September 10, 1881
Tenafly, NJ

Received Commission:

January 21, 1925

Service terminated due to appointment in 1930 as United States Solicitor General.

Died:

November 12, 1950
New York, NY

Thomas Day Thacher came from a family of lawyers. Both his maternal grandfather and his father were attorneys, the latter being a founding member of the firm that became Simpson Thacher & Bartlett. Thacher's preliminary education was at the Taft School in Watertown, CT, and at Phillips Andover Academy. He graduated from Yale College in 1904, attended Yale Law School for two years, and was admitted to the New York bar in 1906. He then established a private practice with his father's firm, an association that continued all of his life.

Judge Thacher's private practice was interrupted numerous times by his career in public service. From 1907 to 1910 he was Assistant U.S. Attorney for the S.D.N.Y., and was known for his work in prosecuting customs fraud. During World War I, he participated in the American Red Cross Mission to Russia to organize relief efforts (1917-1918). After several more years of private practice, President Coolidge nominated Thacher to the District Court. He achieved a reputation for independence in Prohibition cases, but his major contribution while on the Court was investigation and reform of the bankruptcy laws. His reports to President Hoover were the basis for major reforms in bankruptcy procedures.

Judge Thacher left the Court to serve as Solicitor General of the United States (1930-1933), after which he returned to private practice. He became a strong supporter of and advisor to New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. LaGuardia appointed him to head the Charter Revision Commission in 1935, and later (January, 1943) to be New York City's Corporation Counsel. Judge Thacher's time as Corporation Counsel was brief, however, when in May, 1943 Gov. Dewey appointed him to the New York Court of Appeals. He retired from the Court in 1948 and returned to private practice until his death.

Sources:

Avshalom Yotam, "Thomas Day Thacher", Historical Society of the New York Courts, New York State Court of Appeals, available at <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/legal-history-new-york/history-legal-bench-court-appeals.html>.

Thomas D. Thacher, Solicitor General, Office of Solicitor General, at <http://www.usdoj.gov/osg/aboutosg/thacher.htm>

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