



J. Frederick "Fred" Motz

December 30, 1942 - October 23, 2023

Judge John Frederick "Fred" Motz died on Monday, October 23 at his home in Roland Park Place after a long illness. He was 80.

Fred was born in Baltimore on December 30, 1942 and grew up in Towson. His mother, Catherine Grauel Motz, was a civic leader, serving on and/or chairing numerous boards, including the United Way, Broadmead, and the YWCA. His father, John Motz, was President of the Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust Company and one of the founding board members of the Greater Baltimore Medical Center.

Fred attended Friends School of Baltimore (class of 1960), Wesleyan University (class of 1964), where he was the starting goalie on a championship lacrosse team, and the University of Virginia School of Law (class of 1967), where he served on the law review. Immediately after law school, Fred clerked for Judge Harrison Winter, then Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

In 1968, Fred married Diana Gribbon, a fellow graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law. Two weeks after their wedding, he planned to serve as a Marine in Vietnam, but the Marine Corps rejected him because of childhood asthma. Instead, Fred joined Venable, Baetjer, and Howard as an associate where he worked as a litigator in civil cases. While at Venable, Fred was

appointed to represent a criminal defendant. He was struck by the need not only for excellent defense counsel but also for thoughtful prosecutors, and so he successfully sought to become an Assistant U.S. Attorney. Fred returned to Venable in 1971, where he became a partner.

In 1981, President Reagan appointed him to be the U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland. In 1985, the President nominated and the Senate confirmed Fred as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. Fred ultimately became chief judge (from 1994 to 2001) and served until his retirement in 2017. Counsel appearing before him called him “Fundamentally Fair Fred” -- a tribute to his effort -- in civil and criminal cases -- to try to render the fairest ruling. As chief judge, he was particularly proud of reforms he and his colleagues made to the process of appointing well-qualified lawyers for indigent criminal defendants.

Fred presided over several noteworthy cases. In *Wiggins v. United States*, the Fourth Circuit rejected Fred's holding that a criminal defendant had received ineffective assistance of counsel in the penalty phase of a death penalty prosecution. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed and upheld Fred's original decision. In *Podberesky v. University of Maryland*, Fred upheld a scholarship program for Black students, given the historical evidence of racial discrimination at the university, presented by the university itself; that decision was overturned on appeal to the chagrin of many. Fred presided over six multi-district litigation proceedings, including an antitrust suit brought by the U.S. government against Microsoft. In the Microsoft case, Fred conducted an 8-week trial in Utah (flying home every Thursday night to hear cases in Baltimore on Friday morning). The trial culminated in a hung jury. Fred entered a judgment in favor of Microsoft, a decision that was affirmed on appeal.

As chief judge, Fred sought to engender a spirit of collaboration and collegiality among his colleagues. He integrated the caseloads of the U.S.

District Court's Northern and Southern Divisions (based in Baltimore and Greenbelt, respectively). He persuaded his colleagues to no longer transfer "old dog" cases to the newest judges. With Fred's encouragement, his colleagues agreed to back up one another for trial when they had conflicts on their calendars, thereby allowing for firm trial dates and speedier trials.

Fred loved his courthouse family, including the scores of law clerks with whom he worked during his 32 years as a judge; his long-time assistant, Mary Ellen Claypoole; the clerk's office team; the court security officers; and all other courthouse staff. Fred was a fan of the Baltimore (but not Indianapolis) Colts, Ravens, and Orioles, often treating his team to Orioles day games at Camden Yards. Fred also enjoyed playing sports himself, including serving as the second baseman for the U.S. Attorney's Office softball team. A plaque from his teammates encapsulates his drive: "U.S. Attorney Softball Hall of Fame - Superior Effort on the Basepaths - When he had to slide he did. When he did not have to slide he slid anyway."

Fred was a member of many professional organizations, including the American College of Trial Lawyers; the American Law Institute; the American Bar Association; the American Bar Foundation; the Baltimore City Bar Association; the Maryland State Bar Association; Lawyers Roundtable; and Wednesday Law Club. He also served on the Budget Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States. From 2001-2009, he served on the Judicial Panel of Multidistrict Litigation, and from 2008-2013, he chaired the Judicial Conference Committee on Intercircuit Assignments.

Fred was also very involved in the community, serving as chair of the Boards of Trustees of Friends School and the Sheppard Pratt Health System. He was a long-time Roland Park Little League Baseball coach, first coaching his son Daniel's team, and ultimately coaching with Daniel. This year they were both

inducted into the Roland Park Little League Hall of Fame.

Fred is survived by his wife of 55 years, Diana Gribbon Motz; a daughter, Catherine (Cassie) Motz, her partner, Christopher Callaghan; a son, Daniel Motz, his wife, AJ Furay; and three grandsons, Jack, Peter, and Matthew Motz, all of Baltimore; and a sister, Catherine (Cemmy) Peterson of Washington, DC. Fred's family is very grateful to Josephine Furtick and her team at Care Staff who provided him with loving care.

The family will receive well wishers at the Mitchell Wiedefeld Funeral Home, 6500 York Road, Baltimore, on Sunday, October 29 from 10 am to noon and 1 to 3 pm. A celebration of life is being planned for later this fall.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Friends School of Baltimore, www.friendsbalt.org, where donations will be directed towards student financial aid, or the CollegeBound Foundation, <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/jfrederickmotzmemorialscholarship/>, where a scholarship has been established in Fred's name.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **29**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Mitchell - Wiedefeld Funeral Home, Inc.
6500 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
(410) 377-8300
general@mwfuneralhome.com

Visitation

OCT **29**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Mitchell - Wiedefeld Funeral Home, Inc.
6500 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
(410) 377-8300
general@mwfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of J. Frederick "Fred" Motz.



October 30, 2023 at 09:14 PM



“ Thank you for your exemplary public service. It was a privilege to know you. J.C.Byrnes, Wednesday Law Club

john c byrnes - October 29, 2023 at 08:17 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of J. Frederick "Fred" Motz.



October 25, 2023 at 06:55 PM