

The Honorable Judge Judith Kaye (formerly Chief Judge for New York State)

Judge Kaye was the first woman to occupy the State Judiciary's highest office. She became the first woman to serve on New York State's highest court when Governor Cuomo appointed her Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals on September 12, 1983. She is also the first Chief Judge ever to complete a full 14 year term.

As New York State's longest serving Chief Judge, Judge Kaye's experience for the past 25 years has fallen into two categories: judging and court administration. The cases that reach New York's highest court run the gamut of common law, statutory and constitutional law cases, principally in the areas of contract, insurance, tort, commercial, administrative and criminal law. As a judge, she studied briefs and records in thousands of cases, heard oral argument, and (together with six colleagues) reached decisions articulating the law of the State of New York.

On the administrative side, among other initiatives she oversaw reform of the State's jury system, formation of "problem-solving" courts, (such as specialized drug courts, mental health courts and domestic violence courts), and the

The Honorable Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman refers to Judge Kaye as a *Visionary Third Branch Leader*, and in his tribute to her states that "No assessment of her legacy would be complete, however, without mentioning the following: the improvement of access to justice through increased pro bono and enhanced services for self-represented litigants; the establishment of the Commercial Division; her presiding over an unprecedented boom in court facilities construction, including forty-six new courthouses and thirty-seven major renovations; the integration of the latest technologies and alternative dispute resolution techniques into the daily work of the courts; the jump-starting of the Rockefeller Drug Law reform; the introduction of major reforms of the legal profession and the judicial elective and fiduciary appointment systems; her keeping the courts open in the difficult aftermath of September 11, 2001; the upgrade of the Town and Village courts; and on and on. Each and every one of these initiatives was the result of Judith Kaye's legendary persistence and unstinting commitment to fostering public trust and confidence in the courts and the legal profession. During nearly sixteen years at the head of the New York State courts, Judith Kaye virtually rewrote the script for how a twenty-first century chief judge can lead the courts in delivering justice in ways that are relevant and responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of our citizenry. Her jurisprudential and administrative achievements have left an imprint on New York State history growth of alternative dispute resolution within the court system."

In addition to judging cases and administering courts over the past 25 years, Ms. Kaye has published well over 100 articles in respected journals throughout the nation, and spoken publicly on a wide variety of subjects, largely to law and business audiences. A small sampling of her publications includes [The Progress of Women Lawyers at Big Firms: Steadied or Simply Studied](#), 76 *Fordham L Rev* 1941 (March 2008); [Delivering Justice Today: A Problem Solving Approach](#), 22 *Yale Law & Policy Review* 125 (2004); and [Cardozo: A Law Classic](#), 112 *Harvard L Rev* 1026 (1999).