

Judge Socrates H. Mihalakos¹

Judge Socrates H. Mihalakos passed from this life on July 6, 2021, at his home in Vero Beach, Florida. He was born on June 9, 1933, in Waterbury, the son of the late Harry and Kalliope Mihalakos. He is survived by his wife, Joan Montgomery Mihalakos, his daughters Cassandra Rinaldi, Kristin Tomczak, Charisse Mihalakos, and Anastasia Becvar; and four grandchildren. Like Afred, Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," his life took him many places, and he was part of all that he had met. Judge Mihalakos graduated from Waterbury's Crosby High School, which regularly sent its graduates to some of the great colleges and universities of the United States. He then played varsity basketball at Brown University, graduating as president of his class. Judge Mihalakos taught high school literature for a year before being commissioned as a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. Upon his honorable discharge, he entered the University of Connecticut School of Law and, after graduation, was admitted to the Connecticut Bar on August 14, 1962. He practiced in Cheshire for years before being nominated to the Superior Court bench in 1985 by Governor William A. O'Neill.

Judge Mihalakos took an active part in his community with Waterbury's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, where he once served as president of the board of trustees. He served as chair of the St. Jude's Leukemia Drive and as past chair of the drives for the American Red Cross, Cancer Fund, and United Way of Cheshire. He was a former chair of the Cheshire Charter Revision Commission, trustee of Cheshire Academy, and director of the Cheshire YMCA. Judge Mihalakos served in courts in Bridgeport, Milford, New Haven, Waterbury, Stamford, New London, and Danbury,

¹Remembrance by former Chief Appellate Judge Joseph P. Flynn.

where he served as chief administrative judge. Early in his career, he was selected by the Chief Court Administrator to preside over proceedings involving the takeover of insolvent banks by regulatory authorities. He served on both criminal and civil sides of the courts and spent much of his career hearing cases on busy domestic dockets, where his qualities of patience, kindness and firmness were appreciated. In 1999, Governor John G. Rowland nominated him to be a judge of the Appellate Court, where he served as a judge and later as a judge trial referee until retiring in 2019.

In 2009, the Hellenic Bar Association of Connecticut honored Judge Mihalakos by commissioning his portrait by the artist Jeanne Ciravolo, who captured the man on canvas. In his classic portrait, he looks out reflectively through the wisdom of his years, a hint of a smile on his tanned face, as the afternoon sun streams through the west windows of the Appellate Court courtroom each day. It was unveiled and hung at the Connecticut Appellate Court on May 15, 2009, at a ceremony at which Attorney Gregory J. Stamos of Ansonia, president of the Hellenic Bar Association, spoke together with then Chief Justice William J. Sullivan and then Chief Appellate Judge Joseph P. Flynn. The ceremony concluded when Judge Mihalakos addressed everyone, thanked the Hellenic Bar Association, and expressed gratitude to his family and friends, and to all who had made possible his serving of the public.

In his long career at the bar and bench, Judge Mihalakos was a tall, striding presence who brought his intellectual skills and down-to-earth practical approach to each day's work. He believed that the punishment should fit the crime and the civil remedy should fit the wrong. He was devoted to his family, his faith, his country, and the pursuit of fairness in his judgments and opinions.

Socrates Mihalakos embodied the percipience of Plato, the philosopher: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."