

Nevada Supreme Court's Current Longest-Serving Justice Steps Down

Justice Mark Gibbons, who has served on the Nevada Supreme Court since he was first elected in 2002, decided not to seek re-election in 2020. Gibbons is the longest serving justice among the seven current members of the court. He served as chief justice on the court in 2008, 2014 and 2019.

BY NEVADA LAWYER STAFF



Justice Gibbons graduated from the Loyola University School of Law in Los Angeles. He was admitted to the State Bar of Nevada in 1975 and started his law career as an associate at the law firm Woofter & Bilbray. He worked in private law practice until 1995.

As an attorney, Gibbons focused his law practice primarily in the area of litigation, which included construction disputes, mechanic's liens and corporate governance. Gibbons was trial counsel for more than 100 bench trials. He has also been trial counsel for a number of jury trials, both representing plaintiffs and defendants.

Gibbons was first elected as a judge on November 5, 1996, when he won the race for district court judge for Department 7 of the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Gibbons' time on the court was eventful. In 1997, he heard 137 days of jury trials. This set a record at the time for the greatest number of jury trial days by a district judge for the Eighth Judicial District Court of the state of Nevada. Gibbons also finished first among all district judges for number of jury trial days in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

In 1998, Gibbons had his first opportunity to preside over a Nevada Supreme Court case when he was appointed by the governor to act as an ad hoc justice in *Blake Oade vs. The State of Nevada*, 114 Nev. 619, 960 P.2d 336 (1998). In 2000, then-Chief Justice Robert Rose of the Nevada Supreme Court appointed Gibbons to the Business Court Task Force

Committee. This committee created the district court business courts that specialize in business and corporate litigation, similar to the Delaware Chancery Court.

In 2001, Gibbons was unanimously elected chief judge of the Civil, Criminal, and Family Divisions of the Eighth Judicial District Court by his colleagues. He served as chief judge from July 1, 2001, through December 31, 2002, supervising civil, criminal and family district judges, and directing the administration of the Eighth Judicial District Court. As chief judge, he created the specialized Construction Defect Court to expedite the resolution of construction defect cases in Clark County. He was also appointed to the Jury Improvement Commission by the Nevada Supreme Court. The role of the commission was to recommend statutory changes to the Nevada Legislature to further assist jurors in discharging their civic duty.

While Gibbons served as chief judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court, the Nevada Supreme Court created the Specialty Court Funding Committee. Gibbons was appointed as a member of this committee to establish rules and administer funding to Drug and Mental Health Courts throughout Nevada. As a member of the Nevada Supreme Court, Gibbons has co-chaired this committee with retired Justice Michael Douglas.

In 2002, Gibbons was elected to the Nevada Supreme Court. He was sworn in on January 6, 2003.

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During his time on the Supreme Court, Gibbons served on numerous committees and commissions.

He was:

- appointed chairman of the Information Technology Steering Committee whose mission is to provide advice and recommendations on the overall priorities for information technology projects for the Nevada Supreme Court. Justice Gibbons chairs this committee at the present time.
- appointed as a member of the three-justice Executive Committee of the Nevada Supreme Court in 2005-08, 2013-14, 2017, 2019 and 2020.
- appointed to serve on the Nevada Supreme Court Electronic Filing Committee. The committee established procedures to allow attorneys and litigants to file court documents by computer so it would not be necessary to file paper documents with the Supreme Court Clerk's Office.
- appointed chairman of the Nevada Judicial Selection Commission in 2008 and 2014 while serving as chief justice. Gibbons requested the commission to open the judicial selection proceedings to the public. The commission agreed, and the first public judicial selection meeting and interviews took place in 2008. After the voters approved the creation of the Nevada Court of Appeals in the 2014 general election, Gibbons chaired the process for the Court of Appeals selection process to submit three finalists each to the governor for Departments 1 and 3 of the Court of Appeals. (Gibbons recused himself from the selection process for Department 2 since his brother, Michael P. Gibbons, was an applicant.)
- appointed chairman of the Foreclosure Mediation Rules Committee. This committee consisted of property owners, bank attorneys, title company

representatives and professional mediators. The committee drafted rules and forms to implement the procedures for foreclosure mediation established by the Nevada Legislature.

- appointed by the Nevada Supreme Court as co-chair of the Nevada Rules of Civil Procedure Revision Committee in 2018. The Supreme Court entered an order effective March 1, 2019, to approve the revisions recommended by the committee.

While serving as chief justice, Gibbons also became the first Nevada Supreme Court justice to be selected to sit on a trial jury in August 2014. Gibbons was subsequently elected jury foreman by his fellow jurors for a criminal trial in Carson City. Chief Justice Gibbons wrote an article about his experience as a juror for *Nevada Lawyer* magazine in the February 2015 issue.

In that article, Gibbons' wrote:

"The opportunity to serve on a jury was a very rewarding experience. I learned a number of lessons from my jury service. ... If I ever receive a summons to serve on a jury again, I will gladly participate."