

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Jon R. Gray

PERSON

Gray, Jon R., 1951-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Jon R. Gray;

Life Dates: November 16, 1951-

Place of Birth: Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

Residence: Kansas City, MO

Work: Kansas City, MO

Occupations: Judge

Biographical Note

Judge Jon R. Gray was born on November 16, 1951 in Little Rock, Arkansas to Mai H. Gray and Reverend C. Jarrett Gray, Sr. After graduating from Paseo High School in Kansas City, Missouri in 1969, Gray received his B.A. degree in American Studies from Grinnell College in 1973. He went on to receive his J.D. degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1976.

After graduating from law school, Gray was appointed assistant Jackson County Counselor and established a solo law practice, before joining the firm of Gray Payne & Roque as a principal and partner. He served as a Democratic Attorney for the Kansas City Board of Election Commissioners from 1981 to 1986 and as a chair of the Liquor Control Board of Review of Kansas City, Missouri. In 1986, Governor John Ashcroft appointed him circuit judge in the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit of Missouri. He served a term as the Administrative Judge of the Family Court of Jackson County and as a special judge of the Missouri Supreme Court. He also taught at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, Emory University School of Law, and the Missouri Judicial College. In 2007, Gray retired from the circuit court and joined Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP as a partner in its Kansas City office, where he served as chair of the firm's Professional Development Committee.

Gray served on the board of trustees of Southern Methodist University from 1988 until 2000. In 2007, he served a one year term as chair of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association; and, in 2008, he joined the American Arbitration Association as a member of its panel of commercial arbitrators. Governor Jay Nixon appointed Gray to serve as a member of the Jackson County Sports Complex Authority in 2009, and as a

member of the Missouri Citizens' Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials in 2014. An active member of The United Methodist Church, Gray was elected to serve an eight year term as a member of its Judicial Council, and as a delegate to its General Conferences in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. Judge Gray holds membership in The Missouri Bar, the National Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the Jackson County Bar Association, the Association of Missouri Mediators, and the FINRA panel of arbitrators. He is admitted to practice before the Missouri Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Gray received the Difference Maker Award from the Urban League of Greater Kansas City in 2002, the Lewis W. Clymer Award from the Jackson County Bar in 2007, and the Spurgeon Smithson Award from the Missouri Bar Association in 2014. In 2018, he was honored with the Missouri Legal Icon Award from Missouri Lawyers Publications and the Raymond Pace Alexander Award from the National Bar Judicial Council.

The Honorable Jon R. Gray was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 6, 2019.

Related Entries

Wendell Phillips Elementary Magnet [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Park Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Northeast Junior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Paseo High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Grinnell College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2007 to ?]

Partner

Sixteenth Judicial Circuit of Missouri [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Circuit Judge

Gray Payne & Roque [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1989 to 1991]

Attorney at Law

Missouri Bar Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Jackson County Bar Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

National Bar Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Mentor

NAACP [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member