

On January 3, 2012, Michael T. Hudock was sworn in at the Union County courthouse as the newest judge in the Court of Common Pleas, 17th Judicial District. In his remarks to the many courthouse officials and visitors in attendance, he said that when he arrives early to court (as is his preference), he often looks at the judges' pictures displayed near the courtroom. He appreciates the historical continuity shown by this line of portraits. It was through the efforts of many individuals, that these judges' pictures can be admired and studied today.

## The Judges Project

Years ago, early Union County judges' portraits hung in a large law library on the second floor of the courthouse. Early portraits of county Bar Association members were also on display. During renovations of the courthouse in the 1990's, the portraits were placed in storage.

When the courtroom was renovated in 1998-1999, it was thought the judges' portraits could be displayed in the courtroom, but this was not possible because of the soundproofing baffles on the walls. The portraits were then "stored" in the arbitration hearing room on the second floor.

In 2005, Judge Louise Knight approached the Union County Historical Society about restoring the judges' portraits. The Society presented a proposal to the county commissioners, who approved modest funding for the project. The Union County Bar Association made a contribution. Restoration and photographic work was done at little to no cost.

Many of the older portraits had condition problems, needing rematting or repairs to the frames. Early Bar Association portraits needed serious conservation work to stabilize the pictures. Owen Mahon of The Open Door Gallery in Lewisburg did this restoration.

To bring the collection up to date, Judges Harold Woelfel and Louise Knight were photographed by Jim Walter of Mifflinburg.

The photograph of retired judge Wayne Bromfield was taken by Mel Rakerd of Rakerd Studio in Lewisburg. A photograph of retired judge Thomas Wilson (provided by his family), and a photograph of Judge James McClure, were prepared by Alan Richard of RichardHouse Photo Restoration in Winfield.

The courthouse maintenance staff, especially Merrill Shwartz, helped with all aspects of the project, including transporting the portraits, protecting them in storage, and hanging them for display as we see them today in the hallway leading to the courtroom.

The judges' portraits are displayed in chronological order [right to left below], starting with Ellis Lewis who served from 1833-1842, followed by Abraham Wilson, Samuel Woods, Joseph Bucher, [not shown - Harold McClure, Albert Johnson, Curtis Leshner, Cloyd Steininger, A. Francis Gilbert, Wm. Showers,] Paul Showalter, Charles Kalp, A. Thomas Wilson, James McClure, Wayne Bromfield, Harold Woelfel, and ending with Louise Knight who has served since 1998. The early Bar Association members' portraits are nearby. In the hall at the entrance to the courtroom are several large oil paintings of former judges.

There are 2 portraits missing in the historic lineage of presiding judges of Union/Snyder County - portraits of Miles I. Potter, who presided from 1922-1932, and of Seth Chapman, the first judge, who sat 1813-1833. A portrait of current Judge Michael Sholley is needed. And eventually Judge Hudock, too, will join this line of history.



Gallery of Judges' Photographs



Oil Paintings of Former Judges