

# DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CLERK'S OFFICE



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Clerk of Court

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## **THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS MOURNS THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE RAYMOND L. FINCH**

The Honorable Raymond L. Finch, former Chief Judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, trailblazing jurist of both the federal and Virgin Islands judiciary, passed away on Thursday, February 23, 2023.

Speaking on behalf of the Court, Chief Judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands Robert A. Molloy recalled Judge Finch as “a preeminent jurist who was steadfast in his commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands. He shared his wit and knowledge with all who had the privilege of appearing before him and working with him. Several current jurists, myself included, clerked for Judge Finch and he served as a mentor and friend. Among them are the Honorable Maria M. Cabret, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands, Honorable Jomo Meade, Judge of the Superior Court, and the Honorable Alphonso G. Andrews, Jr., Judge of the Superior Court. The experience gained during my clerkship was one of the most extraordinary moments of my life and his guidance endures to this day as I now hold the position he previously held and strive to emulate his wisdom and judicial temperament. My colleagues and I, along with the entire staff of the District Court of the Virgin Islands mourn his passing and will continue to honor his legacy in the work that we do for the people of the Virgin Islands.”

The Honorable Raymond L. Finch was a native Virgin Islander, born and raised in Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. He matriculated through the public school system on St. Croix and graduated from Christiansted High School in 1958. Thereafter, he received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a minor in Economics, from Howard University in Washington, DC in 1962. Inspired to help the people of St. Croix, Judge Finch pursued and earned his law degree from Howard University School of Law in 1965 and returned to the territory to clerk for the Honorable Alexander A. Farrelly and the Honorable Antoine L. Joseph, judges of the then Municipal Court of the Virgin Islands.

Judge Finch then honored the United States in service. From 1966 through 1969, Judge Finch served in the United States Army, as First Lieutenant, and then Captain. He served honorably

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in the Vietnam War and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and a Certificate of Appreciation from General William Westmoreland and the Army Chief of Staff.

Returning to St. Croix, Judge Finch then clerked for the firm of Hodge and Sheen, secured admission to the Virgin Islands Bar in 1970, and ultimately became partner in the law firm of Hodge, Sheen, Finch and Ross in 1971. Always striving to positively influence the lives of young Virgin Islanders, Judge Finch served as an instructor at the University of the Virgin Islands and the American Banking Association from 1965 to 1978.

It was in 1976 that the late Governor Cyril E. King appointed Judge Finch to the then Municipal Court of the Virgin Islands. From 1976 to 1994, Judge Finch's responsibilities progressed as the court progressed. During his time on the then Municipal Court, which later became the Territorial Court, Judge Finch served as the Acting Presiding Judge of the Territorial Court, Judge of the Appellate Division of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, and as Judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, by Special Designation.

His prior service prepared him well for his next judicial appointment. President Bill Clinton nominated Judge Finch to serve on the bench of the District Court of the Virgin Islands and on September 1, 1994, Judge Finch took his oath of office. In 1999, he took the helm of the federal judiciary and served as the Chief Judge of the District Court. He transferred to Senior Status on August 15, 2008, ultimately retiring from all service on August 22, 2018.

His impact went far beyond the judiciary. Judge Finch's professional and community associations include but are not limited to the following: the United States Court of Appeal for the Third Circuit, the Virgin Islands Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the American Law Institute, the American Judges' Association, the National Bar Association, Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission, Supervisory Board for the Juvenile Justice & Prevention of Delinquency Committee, Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands, Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club of St. Croix, and the Board of Directors for Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands.

Judge Finch was not only a great jurist, but he was also committed to his family and friends. The Court extends its condolences to his wife, Anne-Marie Finch, his children, Allison, Mark, and Jennifer, stepchildren, Marc and Michelle, and his family and friends.

Judge Finch's footsteps echo in the halls of justice in both the federal and Virgin Islands judiciary. His dedication and love for service and community will long reside in the many, many people whose lives he has positively affected. May he rest in eternal peace.

**For more information, please contact:**

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