



News Release

www.njcourts.com

For more information:
Winnie Comfort
Pete McAleer
609-292-9580

For immediate release:
Jan, 15, 2016

Statement from Chief Justice Stuart Rabner on the Passing of Retired Supreme Court Justice Marie L. Garibaldi

It is with great sadness that we mourn the passing of Justice Marie L. Garibaldi, the first woman to serve on New Jersey's Supreme Court. Justice Garibaldi's groundbreaking contribution to the body of law began well before her appointment to the Court by Gov. Tom Kean in 1982 and beyond her retirement in 2000.

She became a tax law expert while serving as a prosecutor for the Internal Revenue Service and brought those skills into private practice, where she became a partner at a large New Jersey law firm in the mid-1970s, a difficult accomplishment for a woman at that time.

Justice Garibaldi's influence on our system of justice came through the more than 225 opinions she wrote while on the Supreme Court; through her service on nearly 50 committees that developed important policies for the entire judiciary; and through her service earlier in her career as a municipal court judge in her hometown of Weehawken. As the first woman president of the New Jersey Bar Association, she led the effort to adopt complementary dispute resolution, now a fundamental part of the settlement of legal disputes in New Jersey.

But perhaps her most significant contribution to our legal community is her legacy. It is not just that she was a woman who was first, but it was how she was first. She left an army of admirers behind her in every job or appointment she held. Her colleagues refer to her as among the best one could hope to know. And her law clerks, numbering 46 strong over her 18 years on the bench, remain a close-knit community, loyal to her and to each other. They met once a year to celebrate Justice Garibaldi's birthday and called on her for advice long after their clerkships and her service on the bench had ended. Those young lawyers have gone on to careers in both the private and public sectors and some have become judges. It is through these men and women that her love of the law, legal scholarship and concern for the rights of all who come before the courts will live on.

She was a vibrant and intellectually curious person right up until the end of her life. We are grateful to her for all that she left us. She will be missed.

#