

The End of an Era: County Clerk Norman Goodman Retires

After a long and illustrious career, a New York “fixture” has left 60 Centre Street, home of the New York County Supreme Court. On December 31, one day after his 91st birthday, Norman Goodman, Commissioner of Jurors and County Clerk of New York County for the past 45 years, retired. Milton Tingling, Jr., a State Supreme Court justice, was appointed to take the position beginning January 1.

During his tenure, Goodman’s office issued more than 11 million summonses to potential jurors, and supervised the transition from paper to computerized records. In the 1990s, Goodman worked with then Chief Judge Judith Kaye on a major jury reform project, which resulted in the elimination of occupational exemptions, more pay for jury service and a reduction in the length of service time required. Goodman considered these the most lasting and beneficial changes of his tenure. The County Clerk’s Office also maintains the official case files of the NY County Supreme Court, Civil Term.

Early on in his career, he found a passion for preserving and restoring the myriad historical records—many of which dated from colonial times—that resided in the courthouse. He created an archival department and introduced one of the NY state courts system’s first microfilm

programs that helped to preserve and make for easier access to these historical records. In the 1980s, he organized a committee to restore the building’s majestic Works Progress Administration (WPA) murals, painted in the mid-1930s, which depict

“What I will miss the most is the contact with the public, solving problems every day, helping people out.”

– Norman Goodman,

County Clerk and Commissioner of Jurors, 1969-2014

the progress of law across civilizations. Murals of old New York scenes in a courthouse on the fourth floor were also restored under Goodman’s leadership.

On December 10, a farewell tribute took place in the rotunda of the Supreme Court, below the very murals that Goodman was instrumental in preserving. Among the more than 300 attendees were Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman and former Chief Judge Judith Kaye.

On the cusp of New Year’s Eve, while packing up more than four decades of files and memorabilia, Goodman processed his last request. A woman who needed a divorce judgment recorded before the December 31 deadline wandered in. With a smile on his face and a signature it was done.

