

## North Carolina Judicial Branch Mourns the Passing of Former Chief Justice Rhoda Billings



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RALEIGH — The North Carolina Judicial Branch mourns the passing of former Chief Justice Rhoda Bryan Billings (September 30, 1937 – December 29, 2025), a distinguished jurist, educator, and trailblazer in the legal profession. Billings served with distinction as an associate justice of the [Supreme Court of North Carolina](#) in 1985, and became the 22nd Chief Justice of the Court in 1986. She made lasting contributions to the state's judiciary and legal education.



"Macon and I were saddened to hear of the passing of former Chief Justice Rhoda Billings," said [Chief Justice Paul Newby](#). "Chief Justice Rhoda Billings served the state of North Carolina in multiple ways for many years. Truly, she has left a lasting legacy. Chief Justice Billings was only the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court of North Carolina. She became the first woman to serve on the faculty of Wake Forest School of Law and as president of the NC Bar Association. Her teaching career has helped train numerous lawyers. We are thankful for her full life and are praying for her family."

**Chief Justice Rhoda Billings** was born in Wilkesboro, NC, and earned her Juris Doctor from Wake Forest University School of Law in 1966. She began her legal career in private practice and went on to serve as a state district court judge before her appointment to the Supreme Court in 1985. In 1986, she was appointed Chief Justice, becoming the second woman to hold that position in state history. After her tenure on the Court, she enjoyed a long and impactful career as a law professor at Wake Forest University School of Law, where she helped educate generations of lawyers.

Chief Justice Billings also served as the first woman president of the North Carolina Bar Association and was widely respected for her leadership, scholarship, and dedication to justice.

The North Carolina Judicial Branch extends its deepest condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues.

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### About North Carolina Judicial Branch

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. The 7,600 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties.

### About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively.

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