

## Donald L. Allegrucci(1936 - 2014)



Former Kansas Supreme Court Justice and State Senator Donald L. Allegrucci died peacefully in his home with his family on November 8, 2014, following a battle with cancer.

A 20-year member of the Kansas Supreme Court, Allegrucci was known as an incredibly tough but fair jurist. His career was one of distinction and dedication to the law and to protecting the constitutional rights of all people. He believed that an independent and impartial judiciary is the sacred right and final protection for every person in our democracy.

Prior to his service on the District Court and then the Supreme Court, Allegrucci earned experience in front of the bench as a prosecuting attorney and as an attorney in private practice. It has been reported that legal professionals came from around the area to watch Allegrucci as a young prosecuting attorney in the courtroom. He was always well prepared, articulate and relentless in prosecuting criminals and in protecting the rights of individuals.

Allegrucci represented Crawford and Cherokee Counties in the Kansas Senate from 1976 to 1980. In his work as an elected official, Allegrucci was known as a man of his word. When he made a commitment, he kept it.

Throughout his life of public service, Allegrucci was dedicated to social justice and equality. He was a sportsman and gun owner who, as a legislator, advanced commonsense gun control legislation in order to protect Kansans, especially law enforcement.

He was an advocate for women's rights who prosecuted the last illegal abortion case to the Supreme Court of Kansas prior to a woman's right to control her own reproductive health being established by the U.S. Supreme Court.

He was a former prosecutor who, as a State Senator, fought strongly against the death penalty as discriminatory - applied unevenly and unjustly. He later called for the repeal of the death penalty based upon its ineffectiveness and exorbitant cost to the state.

A timeline of the highlights of Allegrucci's education and professional life:

- Signed at 17-years-old to play professional baseball for the New York Yankees farm system from 1954 to 1955. Traveling with teams throughout the South, Allegrucci was appalled at the Jim Crow laws he and his teammates encountered.
- Worked as a fire suppression crew member for the United States Forest Service in Idaho and Washington from 1957 to 1958
- Graduate of Pittsburg State Teachers College (now Pittsburg State University) in 1959; named Outstanding Alumni in 2003
- U.S. Air Force pilot cadet training and Air Force Reserves, 1959 to 1966
- Graduate of Washburn Law School, 1963
- Assistant County Attorney, Butler County, Kansas, 1963 to 1966
- Director of Mid-Kansas Community Action Program (CAP), 1966 to 1968
- Attorney in private practice in Pittsburg, Kansas, 1967 to 1981
- Kansas State Senator, 1976 to 1980
- District Court Judge, 1982 to 1986
- Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, 1986 to 2007

Allegrucci was an accomplished athlete and outdoor enthusiast. Stories of his exploits with area sports teams are legendary, from grade school to high school to his time as a Golden Gloves champion boxer.

He continued to play rough-and-tumble basketball at the YMCA in Pittsburg and Topeka until he was 70. He played softball on community teams and participated in the Senior Olympics. He bicycled until shortly before his final illness.

As his way to relax after arduous terms on the Court, he motorcycled around the western United States to Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons and across the eastern half of the country to Nova Scotia and across Canada. He ran daily for most of his life and enjoyed hiking in the Rocky Mountains with his family.

His competitiveness and excellence in sports, his successful public service career, his devotion to his family and his commitment to justice and fairness for the environment, communities and people are well-known, and to a great degree the displayed tenacity, independence, loyalty, competence, honesty, protectiveness and duty in all aspects of his life.

Allegrucci was born in Pittsburg, Kansas on September 19, 1936, to Nello and Josephine Allegrucci. He and Joyce Thompson were married on November 30, 1963, and have two sons: Scott Allegrucci, Lawrence, Kansas, Bo Allegrucci, Lincoln, Nebraska, and grandson Nello Allegrucci, Lawrence. He is also survived by his brother Robert Allegrucci (Lori Sims) of Blue Ridge, Georgia, along with numerous extended family members.

Justice Allegrucci will be cremated and private services held at a later date according to his wishes.

The Allegrucci family suggests memorial contributions in Justice Don Allegrucci's honor be made to Earthjustice ("because the Earth needs a good lawyer") or to The Stowers Institute for Medical Research. Memorial contributions may be sent to Earthjustice or The Stowers Institute c/o The Far Shore, PO Box 863, Lawrence, KS 66044.

The family is grateful to the people of Stowers Institute of Kansas City, Missouri, for excellence in cancer and other critical medical research and guidance over many years, and to the people of Midland Care Hospice, Topeka, Kansas, for their most compassionate end-of-life care and support. The Allegruccis thank extended family and friends for their ongoing concern and comfort.

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