



Judge Jose A. Villanueva

Judge José A. Villanueva served in the General Division of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas from January, 1988 to his retirement on November 30, 2016. His election in November, 1988 marked the first time a member of the Hispanic Community achieved elective office in Cuyahoga County. This also marked the first election of a Hispanic to county-wide office in the state of Ohio. Judge Villanueva presided as a judge on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court's Innovative Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Docket. Judge Villanueva served as **Chair** of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court from 2010 to July 1, 2016.

Judge Villanueva previously served on the *Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC)* from 1985 to 1988 and was the first ever Hispanic member of the **OCRC**. He was appointed by Governor Richard F. Celeste. As a Commissioner, Judge Villanueva authored **OCRC's** policy extending handicap status protection to **AIDS** sufferers, proposed changes in the processing of sexual harassment claims to improve fairness and led efforts to reform **OCRC's** practices and policies.

Judge Villanueva attended the Youngstown Public Schools for elementary school. He graduated from Cleveland Municipal School District's *West Technical High School* in 1969. He received a B.A. from *Cleveland State University* in 1976 and his law degree from *George Washington University* in *Washington, D.C.* in 1979.

Upon graduation from law school, Judge Villanueva took a staff position with the *Cleveland Legal Aid Society (CLAS)*. As an attorney with the CLAS, Judge Villanueva represented a bilingual clientele on Cleveland's Near West Side. In 1982 Judge Villanueva received the Legal Aid Society's *Claude E. Clarke Award for Outstanding Service As A Cleveland Legal Aid Society Lawyer*.

Judge Villanueva has been active in the community's civic life and in 1987 received Cleveland's *Mayor's Award for Volunteerism*. Among his extensive past community activities are service as a member of *Cleveland's Bicentennial Commission*; the *Office on School Monitoring and Community Relations*, (the Citizens commission responsible for monitoring the U.S. District Court's school desegregation order); and the *Cleveland Municipal District Nominating Panel* which was responsible for recommending the first nominations for appointment to the restructured Cleveland Board of Education.

Other past activities have included service as a *United Way Services Trustee*; Trustee on the *Greater Cleveland Round Table Board*; member of the *Cleveland Marshall School of Law Visiting Committee*; member of the *Cuyahoga Community College Hispanic Steering Council*; and as a trustee of the *Roberto Ocasio Foundation*.

A 1985 graduate of *Leadership Cleveland*, Judge Villanueva is a founder of the *Ohio Hispanic Bar Association*, the *Hispanic Community Forum* and the *Hispanic Roundtable*. In 2014

Judge Villanueva was honored by the Ohio Hispanic Bar Association, receiving the organization's first *Leadership and Community Service Award*. He has been inducted into West Tech's *Hall of Fame*. In 2015 he was inducted into *Cleveland's International Hall of Fame*.

Judge Villanueva was born in *Uturado, Puerto Rico* to the late *José Villanueva Montero* and *Luz Maria Gonzalez*. He is married to *Margaret (Peggy) K. Villanueva*. They have one adult child, *Joshua*.