



## Judge V. Robert Payant

June 25, 1932 - September 4, 2018

Judge V. Robert Payant, retired president of the National Judicial College died on September 4, 2018 after a short illness at his home in Milwaukee surrounded by his loving family.

Robert, known to his friends as Bob, was born in Iron Mountain in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on June 25, 1932, the middle son of Vital and Anna (Freele) Payant. He was valedictorian of his 1950 class at Kingsford High School where he was involved in a multitude of activities including serving as president of the Student Council, a member of the Upper Peninsula all-star football team and was captain of the his school's winning debate team.

Bob enrolled at Marquette University in September of 1950 and in 1954 received his B.S. in English literature. He received his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Marquette's law school in 1956. His college years were also filled with activities including dramatics, debate and presidency of the Student Senate.

In a career full of decision-making, Bob always claimed that his best decision and good fortune was his marriage to his beloved Virginia Henneberry in 1956. They recently celebrated their 62rd anniversary. Children are Margaret Payant in Milwaukee, Tom (Susan) Payant in Seattle, Mary Adele (John) Krolkowski in Pittsburgh, Ned (Debbie) Payant in Sacramento and Bob (Kristine) in Wisconsin.

Bob relished his role as grandpa to Max, Anna and Mary Clare Metscher, Jack and Sarah Krolikowski, Michael and Adele Cohodes Payant, Jack and Danielle Payant, and Caleb Payant, as well as greatgrandpa to Ryan Krolikowski, Christopher Sullivan and Francis Metscher. Besides his parents, Robert was predeceased by a brother, Judge Jack Payant and is survived by a brother, Bill Payant.

After a few years in Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin, the Payants moved to Iron Mountain to practice law. In 1963 Bob began his long judicial career when Michigan Governor George Romney appointed him to the Probate and Juvenile court. He subsequently served at all levels of the trial court system. Judge Payant was elected by his colleagues to president of the Michigan Probate Court Association and later as president of the Michigan District Judges Association. Bob was the first chair of the Michigan Commission on Aging and served on the Marquette Diocese Catholic Community Services board.

In 1972, Judge Payant was invited to become a member of the National Judicial College faculty and was a member of the volunteer faculty of the Reno based College until his death. He resigned from the Michigan judiciary in 1983 to become Associate Dean of the Judicial College then returned to Michigan to serve a three year stint as State Court Administrator. Major improvements in the court rules were drafted under Payant's direction as well as the adoption of extensive changes in the sentence guidelines adopted by the Michigan courts and used as models by many states. The Payants returned to Reno and Bob became President and CEO of the College from 1990 until his retirement in 1999 when he was granted the title "President Emeritus".

He made many trips overseas at the invitation of foreign judicial associations

and the American government to assist in creating judicial training programs. He has been honored by the American Bar Association, the American Judges Association and the American Judicature Society. Marquette University Law School in 2006 awarded him its Lifetime Achievement Award. In his retirement years, the College continued to use Judge Payant's teaching skills, especially with international programs conducted both in Reno and overseas.

Upon his retirement, the Catholic bishops of Nevada asked him to develop a Nevada Catholic Conference as the public voice of the Church and during that time he testified many times before the Nevada Legislature on matters of interest to the Catholic Church. His involvement with his church included membership in the Knights of Columbus, Serra Club and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

He wasn't big on hobbies, said his wife, Virginia Payant. He love his family, work and travel.

A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at St. Anne's Chapel Milwaukee Catholic Home, 2462 N. Prospect on Saturday, September 8th at 11 a.m. Visitation starting at 10 a.m. for friends and family. A reception will follow in the Astor Room following Mass.

A Memorial Mass will be held on Monday, September 10th, 2018 at 11:00 am at St. Mary's and Joseph's Catholic Church in Iron Mountain Fr. Francis Dobrzanski will offer the Mass of Christian . Burial will follow in Iron Mountain Cemetery Park.

Condolences to the family of V. Robert Payant may be expressed online at [www.ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com)

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain with the arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Cemetery Park

Cedar Ave  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

SEP **10**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary & St. Joseph Catholic Church  
414 Prospect Ave.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

# Tribute Wall

AC

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this time  
Many fond memories of events with your family  
Love Don and Marian Swanson and Anne Swanson Chritz*

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**Anne Swanson Chritz** - September 24, 2018 at 02:31 PM

GS

“ *Deepest condolences to your family from the K.O. SWANSON  
family  
That KO, elsie, Ted and Gary  
Many fun memories  
Bob and dad we're good friends  
I am Gary the last of the family retired living in south Georgia  
Iron mountain Kingford is still my Home  
Godspeed and prayers*

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**GARY J SWANSON** - September 19, 2018 at 02:45 PM

JS

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you in your time of sorrow.  
As a close neighbor and friend growing up. Judge V. Robert was a  
kind, thoughtful, and insightful family man with the best of values.  
We always had the most respect and admiration for his knowledge  
of the law and system. Most fondly, were our memories of  
Christmas songs and the decorating the famous 10' blue spruce  
tree from Sagola with popcorn and cranberries. Kindest regards,  
James, Patti, and Mike Skoglund*

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**James, Patti, And Mike Skoglund** - September 12, 2018 at 11:06 PM

JR

“ *Thoughts and prayers go out to Ned and the Payant family.*

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**Jim Riske** - September 07, 2018 at 09:36 PM

OW

“ MY Heartfelt sympathy and prayers to all the Payant Family in the loss of this good man. It was a loss to this community when he left for bigger things regarding law, as God had planned for him. How well I recall climbing the steps to his Office at the old First National Bank when my late hubby Harlan and I were making our very first Will for gaurdianship of our four children as we were to go on a trip all the way to Florida about 1963. Bob gave us good advice then and we were grateful. God's blessings and comforting love be with Bobs' family. Jesus has no doubt welcomed Bob to his Eternal Home already prepared for him.

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**Orice Walters** - September 07, 2018 at 01:22 PM

JJ

“ My condolences to Virginia and the family. I sought Judge Payants advice and counsel on several occasions. He was a well of knowledge that was unselfishly shared with all . I can't recount the numbers of times that other judges, upon learning that I was from Iron Mountain would ask if I knew Judge Payant, and that alone opened up a better professional relationship with them, We have lost a truly great man Jason Julian, Dewitt, Michigan.

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**Jason Julian** - September 07, 2018 at 11:31 AM