

Bio

James E. Edmondson was appointed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court by Governor Brad Henry on December 2, 2003. He was a District Judge for the Fifteenth Judicial District of Oklahoma, initially appointed by Governor George Nigh in 1983. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1967 from Northeastern State University, served in the U.S. Navy, and earned a Juris Doctorate degree in 1973 from Georgetown University.

Edmondson served as a District Judge for twenty years without opposition. Prior to his appointment as District Judge, he was in private practice for five years. He served as an assistant U.S. Attorney then as the court-appointed United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, having first been an Assistant District Attorney in Muskogee County.

Retained by Oklahoma voters for a six-year term in 2006, Edmondson served the Supreme Court as its Chief Justice in 2009-2010.

He and his wife, Suzanne, have two children, Jimmy and Sarah, and one grandchild, Jack.

Responses

1) Why should the voters retain you?

When I volunteered for naval service in Vietnam, I had no idea that my brother Drew and I, and the son of a Tennessee Senator named Albert Gore, would be the only Congressional kids to do so.

From nearly my birth, my Mother, June Maureen, who enlisted in the Navy during World War II, and my Father, Ed Edmondson, who served in the South Pacific during the same war, and was an FBI agent, two-term County Attorney and a Congressman for twenty years, impressed upon me that there is no higher calling than public service; and, in fact, one should be ashamed to die without first having done something for the benefit of humanity.

In that spirit, I have tried to dedicate my life to public service. After ten years in practice as a lawyer, I felt ready for the trial bench.

Twenty years later, I sought this position and now retention, still inspired by the lessons of my parents; inspired also by the selfless courage of my wife, Suzanne, as a volunteer in corrections, and by the exemplary service of my predecessor, Justice Hardy Summers.

2) How can you ensure a fair judiciary for all parties involved?

It is essential for each of us to give earnest and respectful attention to all who plead for justice. We must be committed to the principles upon which our Nation and State were founded. We must resist prejudice and bias in any form. We must continue to labor in accordance with established rules, mindful of the solemn oaths we have taken.

I can do only my part, but I renew each day my pledge to do so.