

Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

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STATEMENTS FROM THE SUPREME COURT REGARDING THE DEATH OF RETIRED
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE DAVID SOUTER

Statement of Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.:

Justice David Souter served our Court with great distinction for nearly twenty years. He brought uncommon wisdom and kindness to a lifetime of public service. After retiring to his beloved New Hampshire in 2009, he continued to render significant service to our branch by sitting regularly on the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit for more than a decade. He will be greatly missed.

Statement of Justice Clarence Thomas:

Virginia and I are deeply, deeply saddened by the death of David Souter. David was a wonderful colleague and friend. It was truly a great honor to serve on the Court with him and to get to know him as the kind, honorable, and decent man he was.

Statement of Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr.:

Martha-Ann and I were deeply saddened to learn that David passed away. It was a pleasure and an honor to serve with him at the beginning of my time on the Supreme Court. I was impressed by his learning, his dedication to the law, and his delightfully old-fashioned ways. I was very sorry to see him retire, but he sorely missed his native New Hampshire and his book-laden home there, and I was happy that he was able to spend the last 16 years of his life in the surroundings he cherished living the kind of private life he preferred.

Statement of Justice Sonia Sotomayor:

David Souter was a unique man with a special kindness and grace. He joined the Court purely out of a sense of duty to the country. He loved his home in New Hampshire dearly and he left it only to serve his Nation. When I arrived at the Court, no one was more welcoming to me than

David. After his retirement, he periodically sent me notes, which I will forever treasure for their insightfulness and beautiful turns of phrase. I know no one who cherished books more than David, and he filled his mind and heart with the lessons of beauty they imparted.

A man of honor who served the Court with great distinction has passed away. Along with the Nation, I grieve.

Statement of Justice Elena Kagan:

David Souter was a deeply thoughtful judge, who gave everything he had to getting each case right. And underneath his veneer of New England reserve, he was a warm, generous, and surprisingly charming man. I wish I had served with him, but I feel lucky to have become his friend, and I will miss him.

Statement of Justice Neil M. Gorsuch:

Louise and I were saddened to learn of Justice Souter's passing. When I was a young clerk, he was a relatively new Justice who went out of his way to make us young lawyers feel welcome at the Court and in our new profession. When I joined the Court many years later, he was retired but he took time to offer me and my family a warm welcome back, kindly fielding one question after another from a rookie. He will be remembered not just for his many contributions to this Court's jurisprudence over almost 19 years of service, but for his kindness, his incredible Yankee work ethic, and his love of our Constitution and country.

Statement of Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh:

Ashley and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Justice David Souter. For nearly two decades, Justice Souter served on the Supreme Court with extraordinary dignity and class. His piercing oral argument questions and his thorough and insightful opinions reflected his exceptional preparation and work ethic. Justice Souter was a consummate public servant who sought throughout his life to make America a more perfect Union. His personal modesty and unsurpassed devotion to his work on behalf of the American people set an enduring standard for all judges and public servants to live up to. May God always bless Justice David Souter.

Statement of Justice Amy Coney Barrett:

Though I did not serve with Justice David Souter, I remember his kindness to me as a young law clerk. Despite his position, his demeanor was unfailingly humble, and it was easy to see why his law clerks were utterly devoted to him. David Souter is the model of a judge who loved the law rather than the trappings of office. I am grateful for his service to the nation.

Statement of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson:

Justice Souter was a brilliant jurist who modeled civility and kindness during his exemplary service on the Supreme Court. I am saddened by not having had the opportunity to learn from him during my time as a Justice, but I will always be grateful for the chance I had to engage with him when I was a law clerk for Justice Breyer. Although Justice Souter's wisdom and grace will be sorely missed throughout the federal judiciary and across the nation, I am confident that his legacy of independence and respect for the rule of law will inspire generations to come. I extend my heartfelt condolences to all who were touched by his life and service.

Statement of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy (Retired):

With the sad passing of David Souter, we have lost a kind, close friend and a talented, dedicated jurist. David was often lonely for his beloved New Hampshire, but he was not lonely for the law. He found there, and of course in the Constitution, ever emerging principles of fairness and justice. My wife Mary joins me in saying we will be forever grateful for David Souter's kindness and his friendship.

Statement of Justice Stephen G. Breyer (Retired):

David Souter and I served together on the Supreme Court for fifteen years. For me that was a great privilege. He was a great judge. He was intelligent. He had a good sense of humor. He was a thoroughly decent person. He thought mostly not of himself but of the people the Constitution will serve. The judges will miss him, the lawyers will miss him, the country will miss him, and I will miss him very much indeed. He was my friend – my very good friend.