



Irma Steinberg Raker is a Senior Judge in the Maryland Court of Appeals, the state's highest court. She was born and grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and attended local schools including Midwood High School. She graduated from Syracuse University in 1959 and received a scholarship from the Maxwell School at Syracuse to attend The Hague Academy of International Law that summer. Always intending to be a lawyer, she interrupted her education to marry Samuel Raker and then raise their three children. When the children were 3, 6 and 8 years of age, she returned to her studies, earning a J.D. degree from the Washington College of Law of the American

University in Washington, D.C. in 1972. She was admitted to the Maryland bar the next year.

Judge Raker served as an Assistant State's Attorney for Montgomery County, Maryland from 1973 to 1979, the first female prosecutor to serve in the County. As a prosecutor, she was instrumental in developing the rape crisis kit along with the police department to be used in sexual assault cases, establishing the first rape crisis center in the county and revising the sexual offense laws in Maryland. She was appointed to the District Court of Maryland in 1980, then the Circuit Court for Montgomery County in 1982, and the Maryland Court of Appeals in 1994.

Judge Raker was elected President of the Maryland Chapter of NAWJ in 1994. Her brain-child was an annual dinner with the NAWJ women judges and women legislators, which was initially held at the Maryland Court of Appeals and later held at the Maryland Governor's Mansion when Judge Katie O'Malley's husband, Martin O'Malley became Governor of Maryland. Based on "constitutional senility," that is, mandatory retirement required by the Maryland Constitution, Judge Raker became a Senior Judge in 2008 and sits currently by designation on both appellate courts.

Judge Raker served as the Chairperson of the Maryland Access to Justice Committee between 2008-2014. She chaired the Court's Judicial Compensation Committee, spearheading the effort to increase salaries of Maryland judges. She chaired the Maryland State Bar Association's Pattern Jury Instruction Committee, creating the Criminal Instruction committee in 1981 and serving as its chair for 30 years.

Judge Raker is the recipient of many awards, too numerous to list here. Notably, however, she received the American Bar Association Margaret Brent Women Lawyers Achievement Award, The Maryland Bar Foundation H. Vernon Eney Award, American Red Cross, Women Achievement in Maryland History, Lady Justice Award from NAWJ, District 4, and the Daily Record Leadership in Law Award.

Judge Raker has been engaged as mediator and arbitrator since retiring in 2008 from the Maryland Court of Appeals. She has mediated countless cases involving complex civil litigation and the like. She has served as special master and claims adjudicator in several million dollars. Recently, she was honored as the sole recipient Daily Record Leadership in Law Award in the Alternative Dispute Category.