

**BEN F. TENNILLE**

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**PRESENT POSITION**

**Chief Special Superior Court Judge for Complex Business Cases  
State of North Carolina**

In January of 1996 Judge Tennille was sworn in as the first Special Superior Court Judge for Complex Business Cases in North Carolina and charged with creating the first state-wide Business Court in the nation. He was the only judge until the fall of 2005 when, on recommendation of the Chief Justice's Commission on the Future of the Business Court, the court's jurisdiction was expanded and two new judges were added. At that time Judge Tennille was appointed Chief Judge of the Business Court. The Business Court is similar to a Federal District Court in that its judges try cases and write opinions designed to create a body of case law involving issues of importance to business and industry in North Carolina. In establishing the court Judge Tennille designed a model paperless court, which employs a free electronic filing system using the Internet. It was one of the first successful e-filing systems in the country. The Court was one of the first to maintain a website where all the opinions were accessible as soon as they were filed and all pleadings were accessible on the website.

Judge Tennille currently maintains his chambers and his courtroom in the new Elon University School of Law, the only trial court in the country to be housed in a law school.

**ABA**

Judge Tennille served as the only judge on an American Bar Association Corporate Responsibility Task Force, a panel charged with examining the framework of laws and regulations and ethical principles governing the roles of lawyers, executive officers and directors. The goal of this Task Force on Corporate Responsibility was to design a system of checks and balances to enhance public trust in corporate integrity and responsibility following the Enron and Worldcom failures. The panel held hearings during Fall 2002 and submitted a final report to the ABA in April 2003.

Judge Tennille serves as Judicial Division Liaison to the Business Law Section of the ABA.

He is also Co-Chair of the Judges Initiative Committee of the Business Law Section and serves on the Business Courts Committee and the Business Law Section Institutes and Seminars Board.

Judge Tennille serves as Chair of the Business and Commercial Courts Committee of the National Conference of State Trial Judges, a newly formed committee which will provide a forum for the exchange of information, best practices and technology developments among ABA-member judges who are presently sitting on, planning to organize, or simply interested in the concept of, courts or divisions of courts dedicated to the trial of business and commercial cases. This committee will also coordinate with other ABA committees such as the committee on Business Courts of the Business Law Section and the Judges Initiative Committee.

### **North Carolina Bar Association**

Judge Tennille is currently serving as Vice President of the North Carolina Bar Association. He has served on the Technology Advisory Committee, the Dispute Resolution Council and been active in the General Counsel Section. He is a certified mediator.

### **American College of Business Court Judges**

Judge Tennille helped found the American College of Business Court Judges and served as its president from 2005 to 2007.

### **Advisory Boards**

Judge Tennille serves on the AEI-Brookings Judicial Education Advisory Board, the ALI-ABA Advisory Board on Business Law and the American Scientific and Technological Adjudication Resource Center Planning Committee.

Judge Tennille is a Master of the Joseph Branch Inn of the American Inns of Court.

### **Previous Experience**

- 1971-1985 Associate and Partner, Smith Moore Smith Schell & Hunter  
(now Smith Moore LLP), Greensboro, N.C.
- 1985-1993 Associate General Counsel, Assistant Secretary  
Burlington Industries, Inc., Greensboro, N.C.
- 1993-1995 Division Manager, Human Resources and Communications  
Burlington Industries, Inc., Denim Division
- 2001-2003 Adjunct Professor Wake Forest University School of Law

### **Educational Background**

- 1994 University of North Carolina, Kenan-Flagler Business School  
Executive Education/Leadership Development Program
- 1994 University of Michigan School of Business Administration  
Human Resources Executive Program
- 1971 University of North Carolina School of Law (J.D. with Honors)  
Member, North Carolina Law Review, Order of the Coif
- 1967 University of North Carolina (B. A. Political Science)
- 1964 Phillips Exeter Academy

### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

Judge Tennille was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where he currently resides with his wife Marty. They share six children and four grandchildren.

He received an Honorable Discharge from the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1975.