

Chester T. Harhut

Judge

Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas



Judge Chester Harhut served as President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lackawanna County from October 2000 through December 2010. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law in 1972. The Judge received a Master's degree from the University of Nevada Judicial College in 1995. Judge Harhut was first appointed to the bench in April 1987 and became Administrative Judge of Family Court in 1996. At that time, he also integrated human services into the legal system to alleviate conflict while helping families achieve a permanent solution to family issues.

Judge Harhut has also instituted major reforms in family practice in Lackawanna County, including establishing Kids First, Co-Operative Parenting, Mediation, and programs to help parents understand the implications of separation and divorce on their children. Since the introduction of this interplay between the court and social services, recidivism has dropped considerably. Judge Harhut is a strong proponent of resolving conflict through support services and alternative dispute resolution and a strong advocate of mediation as an alternative to litigation. He also spearheaded an anti-truancy program which focuses on reducing criminal activity while strengthening the importance of education. Since its inception, it has been expanded countywide.

Judge Chester Harhut currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; President of the Board of Directors, Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network; Pennsylvania Bar Association Youth Court Advisory Board and Past-President of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges. He is also a member of the National Judicial-Child Support Task Force, the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission and Chair of the Pennsylvania Dependency Bench Book Committee.