

THE HONORABLE RUSSELL F. CANAN
SENIOR JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Judge Russell F. Canan was appointed to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in 1993 by President William Jefferson Clinton.

Judge Canan was born in New York City and attended public schools in the area. After graduating from college he worked as a health education worker at which time he assisted in setting up health clinics for migrant farm workers. He obtained his law degree from Antioch School of Law in the District of Columbia.

Judge Canan served as a law clerk to the late John D. Fauntleroy, an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He also worked for the Legal Assistance Branch of the Superior Court. In 1977, Judge Canan and classmates from Antioch School of Law opened the law offices of Canan, Burns & O'Toole. His practice focused on litigation primarily in the criminal defense and civil rights fields.

In 1983 and part of 1984, Judge Canan helped establish the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia, where he represented prisoners on death row. He also directed class action civil rights lawsuits. Upon returning to the District of Columbia, he returned to the private practice of law with the firm Milliken, Van Susteren & Canan. He was later in the private practice of law with the firm of Canan, Kiersh & Lobo.

Currently, Judge Canan is in the Probate and Tax Division. He is presently the Chair of the Committee on Wrongful Convictions and is also the Chair of the Committee on the Selection and Tenure of Magistrate Judges. From 2009 – 2012, Judge Canan served as the Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division. He is former Chair of the Criminal Advisory Rules Committee, former Chair of the Judicial Education Committee and former Chair of the Jury Management Committee. He has also served in the Civil Division of the court as well as the Family Court.

Throughout his career, Judge Canan has served as an Adjunct Professor at the Antioch School of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, George Washington University Law School, the Washington College of Law at the American University and the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law. Judge Canan has been an instructor at the Harvard Law School Trial Advocacy Workshop, and has lectured throughout the country before such groups as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Amnesty International, and the American Bar Association.