

Margaret H. Marshall

SENIOR COUNSEL

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Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall rejoined Choate, Hall & Stewart in 2012.

Before rejoining Choate she served for eleven years as Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. She was the first woman to hold that position in the Court's more than 300 year history. Governor William F. Weld first appointed her as an Associate Justice of the Court in 1996. A graduate of Witwatersrand University (Johannesburg, South Africa), Harvard University and Yale Law School, Margaret gained a national reputation for both her landmark decisions and her reforms of the Massachusetts court system.

During her fourteen years on the Supreme Judicial Court, Chief Justice Marshall wrote numerous opinions, many of them groundbreaking, including the 2003 decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, which declared that the Massachusetts Constitution prohibits the state from denying same-sex couples access to civil marriage. The ruling made Massachusetts the first state to legalize gay marriage. She is recognized as a champion for an independent judiciary and as a leader in the promotion of administrative reforms within the judicial branch. Her reforms greatly improved the delivery of justice, with significant decreases in case backlogs and in the length of time between the filing and resolution of cases, as well as in cost-savings throughout the system. A long-time advocate of access to justice for all, she implemented innovative procedures for self-represented litigants and strengthened pro bono services by the bar.

Prior to her service on the Supreme Judicial Court, she was in private practice for sixteen years, and was a partner at Choate, before joining Harvard University as Vice President and General Counsel in 1992. She has received numerous awards recognizing her judicial and other accomplishments, including the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award, the ABA's Pursuit of Justice Award, the Massachusetts Bar Association's Chief Justice Edward F. Hennessey Award for outstanding leadership in the administration of justice, the Boston Bar Association Award for Judicial Excellence, Yale Law School's Alumni Award of Merit and the Yale Medal. She was the first recipient of Harvard University's Professional Women's Achievement Award.

Chief Justice Marshall has been involved in many professional activities. She is a Fellow and member of the Council of the American Philosophical Society, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the American Law Institute, where she served as a member of the Council and Executive Committee. She served as President of the United States Conference of Chief Justices, and as Chair of the Board of the National Center for State Courts. From 2004 to 2010 she was a member of the Board of Trustees of Yale University (formerly the Yale Corporation), Yale's governing and policy-making body. She was reappointed to serve a second term and until July 2016

Focus Areas

Litigation and Investigations

- Business and Financial Litigation

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she served as its Senior Trustee, the first woman to hold that position. She has received numerous honorary degrees, including an honorary degree from each of her alma maters, University of the Witwatersrand (2000), Yale University (2012) and Harvard University (2021).

Education & Credentials

- Yale Law School, JD (1976)
- Harvard University, Ed M (1969)
- Witwatersrand University, BA (1966)