

HONORABLE THOMAS J. MCADAMS

Milwaukee, WI



Judge Thomas J. McAdams (Ret.) is a former Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge who now serves full-time as a mediator, arbitrator, and special master. He served as a trial judge for 13 years, from 2013 to 2026, before retiring from the bench in July 2026.

In 2022, Judge McAdams was selected for the Civil Division and assigned to the Large Claims calendar. During his four years in the Civil Division, he presided over a wide range of complex disputes involving personal injury, construction defects, contracts—including real estate, employment, and

UCC matters—medical and professional malpractice, products liability, insurance coverage and bad faith, business and commercial disputes, employment, eminent domain, financial matters, class actions, and landlord-tenant disputes.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge McAdams served as a commissioner and former acting chairperson of the Wisconsin Tax Appeals Commission, a position to which he was appointed by the Governor in 2008. During his tenure, he authored hundreds of tax decisions applying federal tax law.

Before his appointment to the Commission, Judge McAdams spent 20 years as an Assistant District Attorney with the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, gaining extensive trial and litigation experience.

Judge McAdams has extensive mediation training. In 2023, he completed a 40-hour, in-person mediation training course at the National Judicial College. He also earned a 2024 Certificate in Mediation and Dispute Resolution through Harvard Law School's Program on Mediation and Conflict Management. In 2025, he completed a 24-hour Family Law Mediation training focused on placement, custody, and marital property disputes. In 2026, he completed an additional 40-hour online mediation seminar through the National Judicial College, followed by a two-day Advanced Mediation course at the National Judicial College in Reno after retiring from the bench.

Judge McAdams is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, where he earned both his B.A. and J.D. He also holds an LL.M. in Taxation from DePaul University.

CAREER

EXPERIENCE: Milwaukee County Circuit Court

TRIAL COURT JUDGE

- Appointed by Gov. Scott Walker in June, 2013
- Elected to a six year term in April, 2014
- Presided over 75 jury trials, including felonies

Wisconsin Tax Appeals Commission

TAX APPEALS COMMISSIONER

- Appointed in 2008 and confirmed 33-0 by the Wisconsin Senate
- Wrote hundreds of tax decisions applying federal tax law
- Acting Chairperson in 2011

Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office

ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Milwaukee Metro Drug Enforcement Group

Legal Director (2005 to 2007)

- Managed a felony division composed of 12 attorneys
- Data Collection
- Administered both state and federal grants

Misdemeanor Team Captain (1991 to 1997 and 1999 to 2005)

- Managed a division composed of 23 attorneys and 7 paralegals
- Directed all appellate litigation in state and federal courts
- Co-ordinated Public Service Prosecutor Program
- Prosecuted police misconduct allegations
- Litigated numerous criminal tax cases
- Supervised Domestic Violence Unit

Metro Drug Unit Drug Enforcement Group Member (1990 to 1991)

- Prosecuted approximately 300 felony drug cases
- Litigated numerous search and seizure motions
- Obtained dozens of search warrants
- Took approximately 45 felony cases to trial

Vertical Prosecutor (1989)

- Prosecuted high profile misdemeanor cases
- Special Prosecutor for other Counties

Misdemeanor and Traffic Group member (1987 and 1988)

- Prosecuted thousands of misdemeanor cases
- Took approximately 30 cases to jury trial

Reinhart, Boerner, Van Deuren, Norris & Rieselbach

ASSOCIATE

Tax Department

1997 to 1998

- Civil and Criminal Tax Litigation
- Tax Research and Writing
- Appeals

EDUCATION:

DePaul University

LLM IN TAXATION

June, 1997

University of Wisconsin

JURIS DOCTOR

May, 1987

University of Wisconsin

BA with Distinction

May, 1983

PROGRAMS &

AFFILIATIONS: Trial Advocacy Instructor at Marquette Law School (1992 to 1995)
Governor Thompson's Task Force on Highway Safety (1995)
Sheriff's Training Academy Instructor (1992 to 2004)
Park Safety Task Force Member (1992)
Complex Narcotics Prosecutions Certificate Holder
Misdemeanor Long Term Planning Group
State Bar Appellate Practice Board Member
Wisconsin Alumni Association Board
Bench and Bar Misdemeanor Guidelines Author
Court of Claims Bar
Tax Court Bar
AV Rating

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