

District Judge Peter J. Messitte

District Judge Peter J. Messitte was born in Washington, D.C. in 1941. He received his bachelor's degree cum laude from Amherst College in 1963 and his law degree from the University of Chicago Law School in 1966. While at the University of Chicago Law School, Judge Messitte won first prize in the Karl Llewelyn Moot Court Competition in 1965.

Immediately after law school graduation, Judge Messitte joined the Peace Corps as a volunteer and was stationed in São Paulo, Brazil until 1968 where, among other things, he taught a course on comparative law at the University of São Paulo Law School. Upon his return to the States, Judge Messitte entered the private practice of law, first in Washington, D.C. from 1969 to 1971, then in Chevy Chase, Maryland from 1971 to 1985. From 1985 to 1993, Judge Messitte served as an Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of Maryland, Sixth Judicial Circuit (Montgomery County). Judge Messitte was nominated as a United States District Judge by President Clinton on August 6, 1993. His appointment was confirmed by the United States Senate on October 18, 1993, and on October 20, 1993, he received his commission. Judge Messitte took senior status on September 1, 2008, but carried a full caseload through 2011.

Judge Messitte is a member of various professional organizations, including the Montgomery County, Maryland, District of Columbia, American and Federal Bar Associations. He is also a Bencher of the Montgomery County Inn of Court, which he founded, and a member of the American Law Institute; he was Vice-President and General Counsel, Community Psychiatric Clinic, 1975-85; and Delegate to the Democratic Party National Convention (Chair of Uncommitted Delegate Caucus), 1980. Among his awards are the Distinguished Alumnus Award, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 1984; the Elizabeth Scull Award for outstanding community service to Montgomery County, 1993; the Century of Service Award for Contributions to the Administration of Justice, Bar Association of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1999; the H. Vernon Eney Endowment Fund Award for Contributions to the Administration of Justice, Maryland Bar Foundation, 2001; the Gran Cruz da Ordem de São José Operário for Judicial Merit in the Field of Labor Law, Tribunal Regional do Trabalho, Mato Grosso, Brazil, 2001; the Medalha de Mérito Acadêmico, Academia Paulista de Magistrados, for Academic Contributions to the Brazilian Judiciary, 2002 and 2009; the Jon Mills Award for Significant Contributions to Relations Between Florida and the Americas, University of Florida Levin College of Law, 2009; Medal of Commendation, São Paulo Academy of Magistrates, 2009; Honorary Citizen of the Cities of São Paulo, Riberão Preto, and Uberlândia, Brazil, in recognition of work with the Judiciary of Brazil; and the Leadership in Law Award, Daily Record (Maryland), 2002. Judge Messitte was a member of the International Judicial Relations

Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States between 1997 and 2003, where he chaired the Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Judge Messitte is a former member and currently Special Advisor to the Council of American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean. He is Adjunct Professor of Comparative Law at the American University Washington College of Law, where he directs the Brazil-U.S. Legal and Judicial Studies Program. Judge Messitte has served as a consultant on judicial reform projects throughout Latin America and Africa, as well as Turkey and has published articles on a wide variety of legal topics, many of which have appeared in journals throughout Latin America.