



# Judge Denny Clunk

JAN 15, 1930 - APR 18, 2021



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## **Judge Denny Clunk**

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**J**udge R. R. Denny Clunk (Robert Roy Denny Clunk) was born January 15, 1930 in Canton, Ohio to Dr. Roy H. Clunk and Marjorie James Clunk. He died at age 91 on Sunday, April 18, 2021 following a short illness.

He is survived by his wife, Josephine, whom he married June 9, 1951 in Massillon; four sons, Roy (Lynne) Clunk, Dennis (Kathleen) Clunk, Stephen (Jennifer) Clunk, David (Sandy) Clunk and son-in law, Rick (Chris) Robenstine all of Alliance. He is also survived by 17 grandchildren; 3 step-granddaughters; 24 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and his daughter, Susan Robenstine, step-grandson, John Shivers; and his sister, Elizabeth Shelt.

Judge Clunk enjoyed his legal career in Alliance of 30 years and his judicial career as a Probate Judge for over 30 years. He was very active in Alliance community affairs and believed that volunteer community service was important. He served as president of Alliance Citizens Hospital Association, Alliance Area Youth Center, Alliance City Schools Board of Education, Alliance Country Club, Greater Alliance Development Corp and the Alliance Auto Club. He also served as a director of the Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce, Alliance Rotary Club and treasurer of the City of Alliance for 8 years. Near and dear to his heart was the Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity. He served many years on the Board of Governors of the Epsilon Chapter at Mount Union and was inducted into the National Hall of Fame in 2018.

Judge Clunk had a truly distinguished judicial career that began as an acting substitute judge in the Alliance Municipal Court in 1978 and then on July 1, 1985 he was appointed the Stark County Probate Court judge where he served until his retirement in February, 2003. Upon the unexpected death of his successor, Judge Robert Horowitz, in November of 2003, he was appointed to again serve as Stark County Probate Judge until the appointment of Judge Dixie Park in February, 2004. He then continued to serve as a retired assigned Common Pleas Court Judge in some



## Obituary

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22 counties until his final assignment as Probate Judge of Mahoning County in 2014. As a judge, he was recognized as one of America's leading probate judges, and in 2003 received the prestigious "Trent Award of Excellence" by the National College of Probate Judges. He served as president of the Stark County Bar Association, the Ohio Association of Probate Judges and the National College of Probate Judges. During his tenure as Probate Judge he was responsible for the legislation that abolished common law marriages in Ohio and created the punitive father registry to expedite and insure valid adoptions of Ohio's children.

The judge was most proud of his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren and spent many hours attending their athletic and academic activities. He always said that his success as a lawyer and judge was directly related to his loving wife, Jo, who so lovingly took care of their 5 children and their home. He was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and served on its Parish Council. He also served 20 years as chairman of the board of trustees of Emmaus Residence for Retired Priests in Louisville and a board member of the House of Loretta in Canton. He received the "Pro Ecclesia ET Pontifical Award" from Pope John Paul II in 2000 and the "Lex Christi Award" from the Diocese of Youngstown in 2006.

The family would like to thank the care givers at Crandall Medical Center and Aultman Alliance Hospice.

The Judge was a man who loved his family, his community, his church and the law. He requested that any memorial contributions be made to the University of Mount Union, 1972 Clark Ave., Alliance, OH 44601 or to St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, 427 E. Broadway, Alliance, OH 44601.

A Private Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Joseph Catholic Church, with Very Rev. Canon Matthew J. Mankowski as celebrant. Burial will take place at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery.

Live-Streaming of the Mass will be available on the St. Joseph Catholic Church website on Saturday, April 24, beginning at 9:00 am: [www.stjoseph-alliance.org](http://www.stjoseph-alliance.org). You are invited to view Judge Clunk's tribute wall, offer condolences and share memories at [www.sharerfuneralhome.com](http://www.sharerfuneralhome.com). Arrangements are by the Sharer-Stirling-Skivolocke Funeral Home.



## Tribute Wall

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NE

**Nancy Schaper Ebert** posted:

I was always impressed with Denny Clunk as a great example when I was young and lived in Alliance. One of the best tributes to Denny and his wife is to say how well they raised their children and filled them with compassion for others. When my mother, Betty Ann Schaper, lived in her home she received a lot of help and kindness from neighbors Roy Clunk and his wife. We are so grateful. It shows that his parents were a great example to them as well as others. Our sympathies to the family.

April 29 at 3:15 PM

SK

**Shirley Klocek** posted:

Deepest sympathy to Roy, Lynne and the Clunk family in the loss of your husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. What a wonderful life he lived and legacy he left. Sincerely, Shirley and Bob Klocek

April 25 at 4:31 PM

JG

**Jim Gwin** posted:

All the Gwins send our condolences on Denny's death. A great friend. A great Alliance leader. And a wonderful colleague. Denny and Jo were among our parents closest friends. From college time, to neighborhood time, to Florida time, Denny was a wonderful friend. Denny was a great colleague. And a joy to spend campaign events with. But most of all, Denny gave example that love of family and concern for others centers a good life. We extend our thanks for Denny. He is badly missed. Jim, Bonnie Gwin

April 25 at 3:08 PM

DF

**Don Van Fossen** posted:

Our Thursday morning coffee gathering will miss Denny! Don Van Fossen

April 24 at 6:33 AM

RM

**Robert Montgomery** posted:

Robert G Montgomery Shortly after my first election as Probate Judge I drove up to meet with Denny for advice. He asked what he could do for me. I said just tell me everything you know about Being a Probate Judge. He said that won't take very long. We both laughed and nothing could be further from the truth. I was a better Judge and person for having known Judge Clunk! RIP Denny

April 24 at 6:32 AM



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KS

**Kenneth Spicer** posted:

Judge Clunk's affable nature, kind tone of voice and example of continuing to serve on the bench during his eighth decade of life provided an example and encouragement to all of us who followed him. He will be missed. Condolences to Jo and the family. Judge Kenneth J. Spicer (Retired)

April 23 at 1:17 PM

NH

**Nathaniel Hawthorne** posted:

Attorney Clunk represented me in a legal matter in 1966 when I was a senior at Mount Union. It was because of Mr. Clunk that I decided to go to law school. Nate Hawthorne

April 23 at 8:39 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Clunk family.



April 22 at 11:18 AM

CC

**Christine Cook** lit a candle in honor of Judge Denny.

What a wonderful man and family! We are very sorry for your loss! Sympathies, prayers and love to the entire family!



April 22 at 10:56 AM

TT

**Thoma Tribe** posted:

Wonderful man; always with a smile for others! Great family. Condolences to the entire family.

April 22 at 8:56 AM

RR

**Rita Sacco Rust** posted:

My Condolences to The Clunk Family. God Bless You All 🙏

April 22 at 6:04 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Fiery Lily and Rose to the Clunk family.



April 22 at 4:32 AM



**Dennis Furgiuele** posted:

a fine man and catholic,he taught out confraternity class for st.joseph grads in the 1950's,he and charles moushey,many good memories,condolenences

April 21 at 6:14 PM



**Brenda Denny** posted:

Denny was the signature on our marriage license, but I remember most, that before that he shared an extra ticket to hear Carl Sagan of Cosmos speak at Mt. Union. Very gracious. Brenda Kirk Denny

April 21 at 2:43 PM



**Donna Sell** posted:

My prayers and thoughts for all the Clunk family. Denny will surely be missed by so many. I have several good memories, but one particular I thought very special. He sat down beside me while I was waiting on my car at Roy's. He was very kind in asking about Mike and was concerned that I was doing ok as well. We had quite a nice conversation that day. It was a simple thing, but meant a lot to me. Hugs to all of you!Donna Sell

April 21 at 10:06 AM



**Gary Conny** April 24 at 9:17 AM

I was very sorry to hear about Judge Clunk. I have known the Clunk family all of my life. The Judge was a warm and caring man, and his family as well. Our faith teaches us that there is only "life", life on earth and life eternal. Prayers and comfort to the Clunk family.



**Rosemarie A Hall** posted:

Our condolences to the Clunk family. He was an inspiration and served our county well. He will be missed.Judge Rosemarie Hall and Charles Hall.

April 21 at 7:35 AM



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**Anonymous** sent an Arrive in Style to the Clunk family.



April 21 at 6:09 AM



**Jocelyn** posted:

Our deepest condolences to the loss of the Honorable Judge Clunk. He was a true foundation to his family, community and to those he served. He will truly be missed. Sending all of our love and prayers from Judge Kelly L. Badnell and staff at the Richland County Probate Court.

April 21 at 5:23 AM



**Evie Rielger** posted:

My dear husband Ron (now deceased) and I were fortunate to be able to have Judge Clunk perform our marriage for us.(12/28/1997) His welcoming smile to everyone, his jubilant personality, and beautiful service made all of us so happy on our special day. I will never forget his graciousness and kindness that he extended to everyone present. May his memory never be forgotten. Bless you Judge Denny Clunk Evangeline "Evie" Maronitis Riegler

April 21 at 4:45 AM



**Joe Grabiell** posted:

my condolences to the Judge's family over their loss.

April 20 at 5:59 PM



**Leigh Mainwaring** posted:

Judge Clunk was such a nice man and a huge asset for Alliance and Mount Union. I will miss seeing his big smile. Condolences to the family.

April 20 at 2:59 PM



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KW

**Karen Fasone Weaver** lit a candle in honor of Judge Denny.

Sending condolences to the family. May you have strength through this difficult time. 🙏

April 20 at 10:40 AM



DS

**Dr. Loy And Family Vision Care Staff** sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Clunk family.

April 20 at 10:30 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Clunk family.

April 20 at 8:48 AM



JR

**Judge Robert N. Rusu Jr.** posted:

Judge Clunk was my mentor and more importantly my friend. He set the bar on how a Probate Judge should conduct themselves and their Court. He was a true servant to the citizens of the State of Ohio and pillar among Judges in the State of Ohio as well as across the US. He was affectionately called the "Dean of Ohio Probate Law!" Anyone who came into contact with the Judge could not help but instantly like him. I will miss our "road trips" to Columbus together where I learned more Probate Law than any text book or continuing education class could provide. All my best to his lovely wife Jo and his family whom he cherished and adored. Thank you Judge for all you did for me and the numerous other Probate Judges around the State of Ohio.

April 20 at 8:01 AM

LW

**Latecia Wiles** posted:

Judge Clunk was a great mentor when I took the bench in 2012 and I enjoyed serving with him on committees. It was with great sadness that I learned of his passing. He will be greatly missed by myself and many other judges across Ohio.- Judge Latecia Wiles

April 20 at 6:33 AM



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GP

**Gary Philibin** posted:

Had the pleasure of working for the Judge. What a wealth of knowledge and abundance of class. My condolences to the family. Gary Philibin

April 20 at 6:13 AM

SG

**Sally J. Gansel** posted:

Dear Jo and family, So sorry to hear of the passing of the Judge. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Sally Gansel and family

April 20 at 5:32 AM

RB

**Rick Baxter** posted:

So thankful I had the opportunity to get to know Judge Clunk at Alliance Rotary. He was a great man and a true inspiration to many. My thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Clunk family!

April 20 at 5:22 AM

LP

**Liz Phillips** posted:

Dear Clunk family, You are all in my thoughts and prayers at this time of loss. I have memories of him beginning with the signing of our marriage license, babysitting grandchildren who adored him, to more recently being neighbors and board members at Patriots Point Condos. He was a wonderful role model to all. Liz Phillips

April 20 at 4:39 AM

DH

**David L Herbert** posted:

So very, very sorry to hear of Denny Clunk's passing. He was one of the finest men I have ever known. It was always a real pleasure to appear before him to practice law. My deepest condolences. The community has lost a fine and decent man and the legal profession has lost a pillar of dignity and respect. David L Herbert

April 20 at 4:31 AM



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**Randy Biery** posted:

So sorry to hear. A great man and role model. My thoughts and prayers are with the family. Randy Biery

April 19 at 4:04 PM



**Evan And Sue Morris** posted:

Josephine Clunk and Children/Grandchildren. Dear Jo and Family, It is with sadness we received my secretary's advice this am of Denny's passing yesterday. It was most certainly a life well lived. The entire community is so fortunate to have all of you there through the years. My earliest recollections go back to a shared long weekend south with the "Young Lawyers" of the Stark Co. Bar Assn. and our other contemporaries from the Alliance area. Sue and I are reflecting upon a longtime friendship over fifty-five years of practice, resurfacing each others roughly paved backyard tennis courts (your sons providing some of the muscle) and Denny's always considerate and sharing manner of practicing law, his elevation to the Stark Co. Probate Court, and subsequently many cases before him. As an outstanding judge he was elected by his peers to the presiding judge of the Ohio State Bar Association Probate section. You are all in our thoughts. With sympathy and our kindest personal regards, Evan and Sue Morris

April 19 at 1:25 PM



**Larry G. Penny** lit a candle in honor of Judge Denny.



April 19 at 11:53 AM



**Brendan Clunk** shared an album called **Memories Album**.



April 19 at 10:02 AM



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**Shelly Spahlinger** lit a candle in honor of Judge Denny.

Dear Clunk family,,So sorry for your loss. Your family is in our thoughts and prayers. May you find peace during this time. Shelly Spahlinger and family

April 19 at 7:59 AM



**Kevin & Jodie Brandt** April 20 at 6:14 PM

Dear Clunk Family,May you find comfort and peace knowing others care. Sending love and prayers. 🙏 R.I.P. Denny



**Brendan Clunk** shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

April 19 at 10:02 AM



Judge Clunk at his Grandparents 50th wedding anniversary



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Judge Denny by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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