

JOHN CRAWFORD ANDERSON

Twenty-First Chief Justice: 1914-1940

BORN: August 5, 1863; Greene County, Alabama

DIED: April 27, 1940; Montgomery, Alabama



***Portrait by MALTBY SYKES,
American, 1911-1992
Oil on Canvas***

The judicial career of John Crawford Anderson spanned forty-five years, thirty-six of them on the Supreme Court of Alabama. He received his law degree from the University of Alabama in 1883. Three years later, he moved to Marengo County and developed a successful law practice in Linden and Demopolis. Then in 1895, Governor William C. Oates appointed him judge of the First Judicial Circuit, a position he held for nine years.

When the Legislature increased the number of justices on the Supreme Court from five to seven, effective in 1904, Anderson was elected to one of the newly created positions. He held that post for ten years. In 1914, Anderson succeeded James Dowdell as chief justice and presided over the high court for twenty-six years—until his death in 1940. In his memoirs Anderson observed that he was guilty of writing only two "long-winded" opinions: he preferred them short and to the point and observed that writing short opinions required considerably more effort than writing long ones.

John Crawford Anderson married Mary Byrd Martin in 1897. They had two children. After his first wife's death, he married he married Glen David, in 1927, and they had one child.

Junius Moore Riggs Collection

Location: Hallway Outside the Antebellum Gallery, 3rd Floor, Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building