

HOWELL THOMAS HEFLIN

Twenty-fourth Chief Justice - 1971-1977

BORN: June 19, 1921; Poulan, Georgia

After graduating from Birmingham-Southern College in 1942, Howell Thomas Heflin joined the Marine Corps and served in the Pacific during World War II. Upon being discharged, he attended the University of Alabama School of Law and was admitted to the bar in 1948. For the next twenty-three years he practiced law in Tuscumbia. During that period Heflin also served on the faculties of the University of Alabama and Florence State University, where he lectured on government and political science. He was president of the Alabama State Bar for the 1965-66 term.

Running for Alabama's highest judicial post in 1970, Heflin was the first person to be popularly elected chief justice without first having been appointed to the court. Under his leadership, judicial reform, through legislation designed to streamline and modernize the court system at all levels, became a reality. Even before the end of Heflin's term, Alabama's Unified Judicial System came to be recognized nationally as an example of "what can be done...to improve the quality of justice in state courts."¹

In 1978 Heflin was elected to the United States Senate; he was re-elected in 1984 and in 1990.

Howell Heflin married Elizabeth Ann Carmichael of Tuscumbia in 1952. They have one child and two grandchildren.

¹*The New York Times*, January 19, 1975