

## Alfred Y. Kirkland, Sr. JD Biography



**Alfred Y. Kirkland, - Class of 1935 -  
b. October 6, 1917 - d. March 19, 2004**

From the EHS Yearbook, the Maroon:  
“*Virgil*” Football 4. President Jr. Class.  
Dramatic Clubs 1-2-3-4. Mirror Staff 2.  
Latin Club 1-2.

Born in Elgin, Illinois, Kirkland received a B.A. from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1941 and a J.D. from University of Illinois College of Law in 1943. He was in private practice in Chicago, Illinois in 1943, but quickly left his practice to serve in the United States Army as a Lieutenant in the Infantry from 1943 to

1946. He was in private practice in Elgin, Illinois from 1946 to 1973, also serving as a special assistant state attorney general of Illinois from 1969 to 1973. He was a judge in the Circuit Court of Illinois, 16th Judicial Circuit from 1973 to 1974.

He was the Elgin city swimming champion from 1937—40. He was also the Central Amateur Athletic Union champion in the 100—yard breaststroke in 1939—40. Al was the captain of the University of Illinois swim team in 1940-41. Upon graduation, he held the school's record in the 100—yard and 200—yard breaststroke. In addition, he was a member of the 300—yard medley relay team that set the University of Illinois record. Al was undefeated in the 200—yard breaststroke in dual meets the entire 1940 season, during which he was also the highest point scorer for the Illini tankmen.

On December 11, 1974, Kirkland was nominated by President Gerald Ford to a seat on the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois vacated by William J. Bauer. Kirkland was confirmed by the United States Senate on December 19, 1974, and received his commission on December 21, 1974. He assumed senior status on April 30, 1979, he sent two former state lawmakers to prison for bribery and barred Chicago police from spying on a legal team that was suing the department. and served in that capacity until his death, in Elgin, Illinois.

“A man of pure integrity, he was a mentor to a lot of young lawyers,” said his son Alfred Jr.

“He was a fine lawyer and a very well respected judge,” said Zalmon Goldsmith, a retired attorney who, along with Judge Kirkland, formed the Kane County Bar Association in the mid-1940s.

Judge Kirkland, 86, who was appointed in 1974 to the federal bench in the Northern District of Illinois by President Gerald Ford, died Friday, March 19, in Sherman Hospital, Elgin, of complications after a fall.

A lifelong Elgin resident, he graduated from Elgin High School in 1935, then spent two years at the Elgin National Watch Co., inspecting watches and working in the accounting department. Always a practical joker, he would set alarms to go off on his boss' desk, his son said.

He spent the next six years at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received undergraduate and law degrees. Judge Kirkland was also captain of his college swimming team. In 1986 he was inducted into by Elgin Sports Hall of Fame.

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He married his high school sweetheart, Gwendolyn, in 1941. Two years later, Judge Kirkland was admitted to the bar, and he worked briefly for the Chicago firm Mayer, Brown & Platt.

He was discharged as a lieutenant and worked as a trial attorney with the firm that became Kirkland, Brady, McQueen and Churchill. While there, he prosecuted criminal cases in Kane County and represented Elgin in property condemnation cases.

Judge Kirkland wrote poetry and law articles, and also wrote regularly about other outdoor activities for local newspapers in the 1960s and '70s.

In 1973 he was appointed a Kane County circuit judge, then was named to the federal bench in Chicago the following year. He retired on medical disability in 1979 after a heart attack.

Gwendolyn Kirkland died in 1996.

In addition to his son, other survivors include another son, James; a daughter, Pamela Jensen; 16 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.