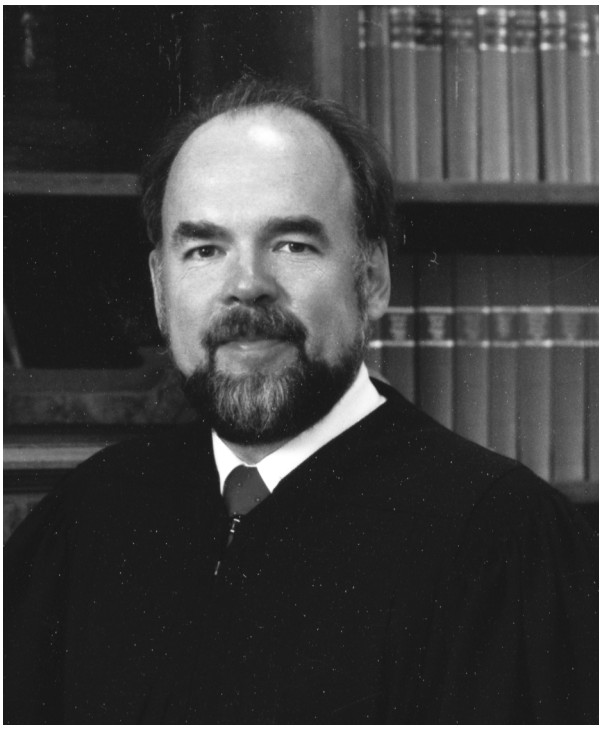
Members of the
South Dakota Supreme Court



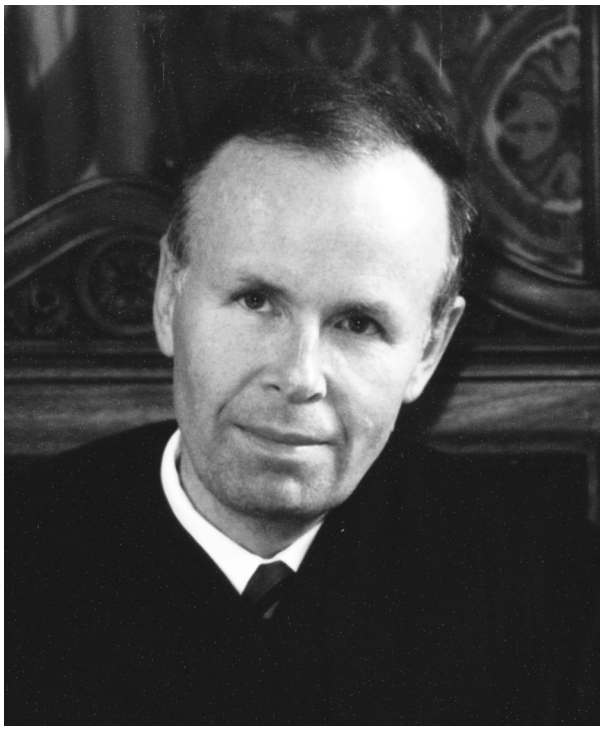
Chief Justice David Gilbertson
Fifth District, Sisseton

Chief Justice Gilbertson, was elected to a 4-year term as Chief Justice by the members of the Supreme Court in September 2001 and was re-elected to a second 4-year term as Chief Justice by the members of the Supreme Court in June 2005. He was appointed to the Supreme Court in April 1995 to represent the Fifth Supreme Court District and was retained by the voters in the 1998 general election and the 2006 general election. Chief Justice Gilbertson received his undergraduate degree from South Dakota State University in 1972 and his Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 1975. He engaged in private practice from 1975 until his appointment to the circuit court bench in 1986. During this time he also served as a deputy state's attorney and as an attorney for several municipalities and school districts. He is Past President of the South Dakota Judges Association; and is a member of the Glacial Lakes Bar Association, the Brown County Bar Association and the South Dakota Bar Association. He is a member of the Conference of Chief Justices and chairs its Committee on Tribal/State Relations. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Conference of Chief Justices from 2005-2007. In 2006, he was the recipient of the distinguished Service Award from the National Center for State Courts for his defense of judicial independence. He serves on the Judicial-Bar Liaison Committee of the State Bar Association and has served as a Court Counselor at South Dakota Boys State since 1995. Born October 29, 1949, he and his wife Deborah, have four children.

Justice Richard W. Sabers
Second District, Sioux Falls

Justice Sabers was born in Salem on February 12, 1938. He received his B.A. degree from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota in 1960 and, after graduation, served two years as a lieutenant with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the United States and in Germany. He attended the University of South Dakota School of Law, where he was associate editor of the Law Review. He received his law degree in 1966 and enjoyed an active career as a trial lawyer in Sioux Falls for almost twenty years. He was a partner with the law firm of Moore, Rasmussen, Sabers and Kading at the time of his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1986. Justice Sabers has been retained by the voters three times, in the 1990, 1998 and 2006 general election. Justice Sabers was a member of the South Dakota Trial Lawyers' Association, the American Bar Association, and was President of the Second Judicial Circuit Bar in 1982-83. Justice Sabers lives in Sioux Falls. He and his late wife Colleen have three children, Steven, Susan and Michael. In June 2000 he married Ellie Schmitz, who has three children Jason, Joseph and Ann. Together they have twelve grandchildren.

Justice Sabers has been the recipient of many awards in the last few years, including: The Fred J Nichol award for outstanding S. D. Jurist in 2007 by the S.D. Trial Lawyers Association; an award from the University of South Dakota School of Law for 22 years of public service in 2008; the McKusick Award presented by the U.S.D. Law School and the State Bar of S.D. in 2008; and an award from the South Dakota Law Review for distinguished service in 2008.



Justice John K. Konenkamp
First District, Rapid City

Justice Konenkamp, born October 20, 1944, represents the First Supreme Court District, which includes Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade and Pennington counties. After serving in the United States Navy, he attended the University of South Dakota School of Law, graduating in 1974. He practiced law in Rapid City until 1984 when he was appointed a Circuit Judge. In May 1988, he became Presiding Judge of the Seventh Circuit. He was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1994 after ten years on the trial bench and was retained by the voters in the 1998 and 2006 general elections. He is a member of the National Advisory Council of the American Judicature Society, a Co-Chair of the South Dakota Equal Justice Commission, and a member of the State Bar of South Dakota. Justice Konenkamp and his wife, Geri, are former foster parents for the Department of Social Services. Justice Konenkamp has served on a number of boards advancing the improvement of the legal system and the protection of children. Justice Konenkamp and his wife have two adult children, Kathryn and Matthew.

Justice Steven L. Zinter
Third District, Pierre

Justice Zinter, of Pierre, was appointed to the Supreme Court on April 2, 2002. Justice Zinter received his B.S. degree from the University of South Dakota in 1972. He received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 1975. Upon graduation, Justice Zinter practiced law as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of South Dakota. From 1978 to 1986 he was engaged in the private practice of law in Pierre. Justice Zinter also served as the Hughes County State's Attorney. He was appointed as a Circuit Judge in 1986 and served in that capacity until 1997. In 1997, he was appointed Presiding Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit and served in that capacity until his appointment to the Supreme Court. He was retained by the voters in the 2006 general election. Justice Zinter is a member of the American Bar Association, the State Bar Association, and the South Dakota Judges Association. He is a past President of the South Dakota Judges Association, a former trustee of the Harry S. Truman Foundation, and a member of a number of other boards and commissions. Justice Zinter and his wife Sandra have two children.

Justice Judith Meierhenry
Fourth District, Lincoln County

Justice Meierhenry was born January 20, 1944. She received her B.S. degree in 1966, her M.A. in 1968, and her J.D. in 1977 - all from the University of South Dakota. She was an English Instructor at the University of South Dakota from 1968 to 1970 and taught at Todd County High School, Mission, SD from 1970 to 1974. She practiced law in Vermillion from 1977 to 1978 and was appointed by Governor Janklow in 1979 to the State Economic Opportunity Office. She was then appointed as Secretary of Labor in 1980 and Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs in 1983. She was a Senior Manager and Assistant General Counsel for Citibank South Dakota in Sioux Falls from 1985 to 1988. In 1988 she was appointed by the late Governor George S. Mickelson as a Second Circuit Court Judge and in 1997 was named as Presiding Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit. Justice Meierhenry was appointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Janklow in November 2002 and was retained by the voters in the 2006 general election. She is the first woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court in South Dakota. Justice Meierhenry is a member of the South Dakota Bar Association, the Second Circuit Bar Association, the Clay-Union Bar Association and the National Association of Women Judges. She served as President of the South Dakota Judge's Association and was a member of the South Dakota Civil Pattern Jury Instruction Committee. Justice Meierhenry and her husband Mark live in Sioux Falls. They have two children and seven grandchildren.