

Judge Curtis L. Collier
Law

Chief United States District Judge Curtis Collier presides over the federal courts in the Eastern Judicial District of Tennessee. The Eastern District is the largest in Tennessee both in terms of population and territory.

Chief Judge Collier is the first African American federal judge in the District, the second in the state of Tennessee and the first African American Chief Judge in the Eastern District. Judge Collier has presided over a number of noteworthy trials and cases including the first federal death penalty case tried in the district, the criminal trial of noted gospel musician Phil Driscoll, and the multi-million dollar class action case against Unum Provident Company.

Chief Judge Collier is a native of Marianna, Arkansas and is one of nine children born to Lenzora and Lucille Collier. He obtained his Bachelor of Science degree from Tennessee State University in 1971. His Juris Doctor degree was obtained from Duke University Law School in 1974.

Collier began his legal career in the United States Air Force from 1974 to 1979. Collier was an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana from 1979 to 1987 and then for the Eastern District of Tennessee from 1987 to 1995.

On February 13, 1995, President William Clinton nominated him for a Federal District Court Judgeship. On May 8, 1995, the Senate confirmed his nomination. He was sworn in as a United States District Judge on June 2, 1995. On October 7, 2005 he became Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, the position he currently holds.

Judge Collier has won numerous awards and commendations including being named a 2009 NAFEO Distinguished Alumni of Tennessee State University, a Distinguished Alumnus of Tennessee State University by the TSU Student Government Association, receiving the Charles S. Murphy Public Service Award from Duke University Law School, the Pioneer Award from the 100 Black Men of Chattanooga, Inc., the President's Award from the Chattanooga Bar Association, and named a Fellow of both the Tennessee Bard Foundation and the Chattanooga Bar Foundation. Military Awards and decorations include: Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal (4), and Small Arms Expert Marksman Ribbon.

He is a member of a number of civic, fraternal, social and religious organizations. He is married to the former Cheryl Hollingshed and they have three children.