Timeline of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

1701

1722

1776

1790

1838

1850

1874

1961

The Provincial Assembly established the **Provincial Court**, consisting of five judges appointed by Penn, who would 'ride the circuit' to different locations in the province and hear appeals and conduct trials in the most serious civil and criminal cases.

The **Judiciary Act of 1722** renamed the Provincial Court and enshrined the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as the colony's highest court with broad judicial powers.

The **Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790** groups counties into judicial districts, placing president judges at the head of the Courts of Common Pleas to ease the Supreme Court's rapidly increasing workload.

A constitutional amendment was added that required that all Supreme Court justices be elected.

Anne X. Alpern is appointed as the first woman to serve as a justice on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Robert N.C. Nix Jr. becomes the first African American chief justice of any high court in the country.

The Supreme Court begins posting opinions on the Internet.

William Penn, the founder and first proprietor of Pennsylvania, drafted a Frame of Government guaranteeing free and fair trial by jury, freedom of religion, freedom from unjust imprisonment and free elections.

The **Judiciary Act of 1701** renamed and established the Supreme Provincial Court as the head of Pennsylvania's judiciary, comprised of five judges appointed by the governor.

The **Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776**, the first of five Pennsylvania constitutions, lays the groundwork for the development of its judicial system. In addition to establishing Courts of Common Pleas and Orphans' Courts, it sets the tenure for Supreme Court justices at seven years.

The **Pennsylvania Constitution of 1838** allows for a judiciary that was more independent from the executive and legislative branches, providing that the governor might remove any judge, but only for reasonable cause and only with the approval of two-thirds of each chamber of the legislature.

The **Pennsylvania Constitution of 1874** adds two justices to the Supreme Court for the current total of seven.

The **Pennsylvania Constitution of 1968**, the most recent of Pennsylvania's five Constitutions, reorganizes the judiciary, giving the Supreme Court general supervisory and administrative authority over the entire Pennsylvania judiciary, which the Constitution entitles the Unified Judicial System, and the power to promulgate rules of practice, procedure and conduct. It also decreases term limits for justices from 21 to 10 years but allows them to run for re-election.

Juanita Kidd Stout becomes the first African American woman appointed to serve as a justice of any high court in the country.



The Pennsylvania Supreme Court celebrates its 300th anniversary.

1968 ne 1984

1988

1999

2022