

Griffin Bell Biography

Griffin B. Bell is a senior counsel in the law firm of King and Spalding, LLP.

Judge Bell was born in Americus, Georgia, on 31 October 1918. From 1941 to 1946, he served in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of major. In 1948, he graduated *cum laude* from Mercer University Law School in Macon with an LL.B. degree. He has received the Order of the Coif from Vanderbilt Law School and honorary degrees from Mercer University and several other colleges and universities.

From 1948 to 1961, he practiced law in Georgia, joining King & Spalding in 1953 and becoming its managing partner in 1958. He served as senior partner until 1 January 2004, at which time he became senior counsel for the firm.

Judge Bell was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in 1961. Judge Bell served on the Fifth Circuit for 15 years until 1976 and during that time was a director of the Federal Judicial Center. In December 1976, President Jimmy E. Carter nominated him to become the 72nd Attorney General of the United States. Judge Bell received the oath of office from Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in January 1977 and served as Attorney General until August 1979.

During 1980, Judge Bell led the American delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Madrid. In 1981, he served as Co-Chairman of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Violent Crime. He received the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Award in 1984 for excellence in law.

In 1985–86, Judge Bell served as President of the American College of Trial Lawyers. From 1985 to 1987, he served on the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on South Africa. He also was a Director of the Ethics Resource Center for several years and in 1986 served as its Chairman of the Board. From 1986 to 1989, Judge Bell served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for the Commemoration of the United States Constitution. In 1989, he accepted an appointment as Vice Chairman of President George H. W. Bush's Commission on Federal Ethics Law Reform. During the Independent Counsel's investigation of the Iran-Contra Affair, Judge Bell represented President Bush.

Judge Bell continues to practice law and is active in issues involving the U.S. Constitution and our nation's judicial system. In 2002, Judge Bell served on Secretary Rumsfeld's ad hoc Advisory Committee on new rules governing military tribunals. He also served on the Webster Commission, which in March 2002 issued its report on FBI security programs and Russian spy Robert Hanssen. In 2003, he served on the Technology and Privacy Advisory Committee for the Department of Defense and chaired a study group regarding the FBI's Office of Professional Responsibility. Recently, he was selected by the Department of Defense to be a member of the Review Panel for Military Commissions, an appointment that carries the rank of Major General.